

# Trends in Employment, Employment Program Use, and Earnings Before, During, and After Periods of Homelessness in the District of Columbia

Natnaell Mammo,<sup>1</sup> Amelie Hecht, Sam Quinney

## Abstract

Every five years the District of Columbia lays out a strategic plan for addressing homelessness, known as *Homeward DC*. To create this plan, the DC Interagency Council on Homelessness brings together experts and stakeholders who are deeply involved in addressing the issue of homelessness. Their discussions and planning are informed by what the available data on homelessness shows. Qualitative information shows that people experiencing homelessness most often cite a lack of employment and income when describing both what may have prevented their episode(s) of homelessness *and* what prevents them from obtaining permanent housing. Yet, from a quantitative perspective, little is known about how—or if—employment relates to exit from homelessness. The Lab @ DC combined data from the DC Department of Employment Services and the Homeless Management Information System to describe the relationship between homelessness, employment, earnings, and use of employment services to help inform the 2020-2025 Homeward DC plan. Our findings highlight that while employment is not uncommon for this population, employment stability is markedly low, and earnings achieved are too low to maintain housing—let alone other basic needs—in the District.



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<sup>1</sup> Contact: The Lab @ DC, Office of the City Administrator, Executive Office of the Mayor, District of Columbia Government, 955 L'Enfant Plaza SW, Suite 3000; Email: [thelab@dc.gov](mailto:thelab@dc.gov). Open Science Framework: <https://osf.io/upb43/>.

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# Executive Summary

The District of Columbia [Interagency Council on Homelessness \(ICH\)](#) was established by the Homeless Services Reform Act of 2005 to facilitate interagency coordination related to programs and policies to address homelessness in the District. *Homeward DC*,<sup>2</sup> the strategic plan prepared and published by ICH every five years, is shaped by the use of data and insights from collaborative conversations between a number of deeply involved stakeholders: people experiencing homelessness, nonprofit leaders, members of the business community, government officials, philanthropists, and advocates.

This report responds to a call from ICH leadership for data analysis on the employment trends, earnings, and use of employment services by residents experiencing homelessness. The analysis presented in this report informed the group's 2020-2025 *Homeward DC* plan, which, among other recommendations, models potential housing interventions to address homelessness in the District and estimates resources needed to implement those strategies.

For this report, [The Lab @ DC](#) conducted administrative data analysis by partnering with ICH, the DC Department of Employment Services (DOES), and The Community Partnership for the Prevention of Homelessness (TCP). We combined data from the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS), DOES databases, and the Unemployment Insurance (UI) system about people in the homelessness Continuum of Care (CoC)—DC's homeless services system.

As with all descriptive analyses of administrative data, there are considerable limitations that should be taken into account when interpreting these results. We outline key limitations below and provide more detail for each limitation in the report's penultimate section. These limitations do not invalidate the findings; rather, they often help us understand when we may be overestimating or underestimating the true results (for example, because we only have employment data from DC employers, we know that any measures of employment rates and income are certainly underestimates).

## Key Limitations

- Our analysis explains **what** is happening, but not **why**. **No causal relationships** between income, employment, services, and homelessness can be inferred from this analysis.
- Our analysis **underestimates** how many adults experiencing homelessness are employed and how many use employment services. The actual numbers are likely higher, because:
  - We have wage data from DC-based employers, but not MD, VA, or federal employers.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> You can learn more about the Homeward DC Plan: <https://ich.dc.gov/page/homeward-dc-20-ich-strategic-plan-fy2021-fy2025> .

<sup>3</sup> In 2015, 67% of employed DC residents worked their primary job in DC. 31.5% worked in MD or VA. (Source: DOES Office of Labor Market Information)

- We only have wage data from formal employment and are missing data about informal employment. We may also be missing wage data from self-employment and independent contractors if the individual did not report their wages.
- We only report use of DOES employment services. While DOES directly provides most workforce development services in the District, there are other agencies and organizations that provide substantial employment services (often funded by DOES) and use of their employment services is not captured in our data.
- Our analysis only includes people who use one of five locally and federally funded homeless services: low-barrier shelter, emergency shelter, transitional housing, rapid re-housing, and permanent supportive housing in DC. People who are doubled-up, living in motels or cars, staying outside, or who only use certain types of funded services (meal assistance, for example) are not included.

## Study Sample

Our analysis covers January 2015 through December 2018.<sup>4</sup> In those four years, approximately 30,700 adults used homeless services in the District. This is inclusive of both adults participating in the system as single individuals (referred to as “single adults” herein) and as part of a family (referred to as “adults in families” herein). Over the four-year time period, about 11,700 (4 out of 10) of these adults earned wages from a DC-based employer at any time, and about 9,400 (3 out of 10) used employment services at DOES at any time. About 6,000 (2 out of 10) earning adults used employment services at the same time they were receiving homeless services.

## Key Takeaways: Employment and Earnings

- During the *quarter* people used homeless services, about 1 in 6 were employed. During the *year* people used homeless services, less than 1 in 10 were stably employed (four consecutive quarters of wages).
- When employed, people who used homeless services earned about \$4,000 per quarter. Monthly, this is less than what it costs to rent the average studio apartment in the District.
- Almost half of earning amounts were less than \$2,500 per quarter.
- Men in families made an average of \$600 more per quarter than women in families, and an average of \$250 more per quarter than single adult men.
- When they earned, only 8% of adults in families and 14% of single adults earned above 30% of Median Family Income.
- Earners in Rapid Re-Housing and Transitional Housing programs experienced meaningful gains in earnings after entering homeless services (increases of around \$820 and \$1,150 after two years, respectively).

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<sup>4</sup> This time frame corresponds with Mayor Muriel Bowser’s first term and the time period covered by the first Homeward DC plan. Going back further complicates the analysis, because there was more variation in programming. By focusing on this timeframe, we can focus on the interaction between current CoC programming, current DOES programming, earnings, and employment history.

- Few single adults and adults in families gained stable employment while in Rapid Re-Housing. They returned to homeless services at similar rates to those who did not gain stable employment.

### **Key Takeaways: Employment Services**

- 1 in 5 people who experienced homelessness between 2015 and 2018 used DOES employment services at some point during those four years.
- Women, African Americans, Non-Hispanics, younger adults, recent earners, and adults in families used employment services at higher rates than other groups.
- People who used employment services had a higher employment rate than those who didn't, despite having a similar employment rate before using homeless services.
- Earnings were higher for those that used more intensive employment services. Tracking earnings over three years, adults who used employment services beyond just a job search earned \$600 more per quarter than those with a similar earnings history when they entered the continuum of care.

This report begins with an explanation of the data sources and our matching technique and how we defined terms for this analysis. Then, we provide a descriptive analysis of employment rates and earning amounts, followed by an overview of how earnings change over time and in relation to the use of homeless services. Finally, we examine patterns in the use of employment services, as well as the relationship of using employment services to earnings.

# Data Sources and Matching

This analysis combines administrative data from the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS),<sup>5</sup> Department of Employment Services (DOES) databases, and Unemployment Insurance (UI) system.

## Homeless Management Information System (managed by TCP)

According to The Community Partnership for the Prevention of Homelessness, HMIS is the “primary repository for client level data for consumers of homeless services in DC.”<sup>6</sup> The system records the use of formal homeless services that are funded by local and federal dollars.<sup>7</sup> The spectrum of homeless services—ranging from homelessness prevention programs to permanent supportive housing—are provided through the Continuum of Care (CoC), which is composed of nonprofit service providers and local government agencies.

There are two ways that people enter into the CoC. **Families** enter through a central intake process. Single adults enter through low-barrier shelters and severe weather shelters (when those are available). The intake process for single adults is decentralized, and data collection and service coordination are much less consistent than for families.

For this analysis, only people in low-barrier shelter, emergency shelter, transitional housing, rapid re-housing, and permanent supportive housing<sup>8</sup> are included. Both adults in families and single adults are included in this analysis. HMIS data includes a household ID which is used to determine whether an individual belongs to a family for each quarter. Overall, 87% of adults in HMIS had a recorded Social Security number (SSN).

## Unemployment Insurance System (managed by DOES)

The Unemployment Insurance (UI) system collects taxes from all District employers to provide temporary benefits to workers who become unemployed. Since all employees contribute, the UI system contains earnings for all District workers who are employed by a DC-based employer. Unfortunately, this system excludes data on federal employers and certain international organizations such as the World Bank and International Monetary Fund.

## Employment Services Data (managed by DOES)

DOES employment services data is housed in two databases: PeopleFirst and Virtual One Stop. Appendix A describes the employment services we included in our analysis.

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<sup>5</sup> <https://www.hudexchange.info/programs/hmis/>

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.community-partnership.org/providers/hmis>

<sup>7</sup> HMIS homeless services will include low-barrier shelter, emergency shelter, transitional housing, rapid re-housing, and permanent supportive housing.

<sup>8</sup> Some homeless services provided by the DC Department of Human Services (DHS) are not recorded in HMIS, including some permanent supportive housing and targeted affordable housing vouchers.

## Data Matching

DOES performed the match between HMIS data and their UI and employment services data, using SSNs. They then shared the matched lists with us. This analysis will only include adults with a valid nine-digit SSN.<sup>9</sup>

Of the adults with valid SSNs in the HMIS data, 98% had the same name or a very similar name in the employment services data, indicating a strong match. We were not able to perform this same match check between HMIS data and the UI data because we did not have access to names in the UI dataset due to privacy restrictions for UI data.

If an individual did not provide an SSN to DOES or into HMIS, did not provide an SSN that met our requirements, or did not have an SSN, they are not included in this analysis, and we do not capture their earnings, employment, or use of employment services. Without knowing how this group differs from people who shared SSNs that met our requirements, we cannot say whether this decision biases our results.

## Definitions and Measures

Below is a list of definitions for terms used throughout the report.

**Employed** or **Earning** means an adult has reported wages in a given time period. This does not include income from public benefits and only includes wages from non-federal DC-based employers.

**Stably Employed** or **Stably Earning** means an adult has reported at least \$1 of wage for four consecutive quarters. This does not mean that someone is employed full-time, that they are consistently employed throughout the quarter, or that they earn a meaningful amount each quarter.

**Use of Employment Services** varies greatly. This term encompasses self-service activities, guided one-time services, and long-term programs –for example, this term includes everything from using a DOES computer for a job search to participating in an intensive transitional employment program, like Project Empowerment.<sup>10</sup> We *only* have data about the use of DOES employment services; DC Government offers services through at least 7 other agencies outside of DOES.

People who use **Homeless Services** or are **in the Continuum of Care (CoC)** received assistance from at least one of these specific programs: Rapid Re-Housing, Emergency Shelter, Permanent

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<sup>9</sup> SSNs recorded with the first three digits as “000,” “666,” or in the 900 series, middle digits as “00,” and the last four digits as “0000” were not included in this analysis.

<sup>10</sup> <https://does.dc.gov/service/project-empowerment-program>

Supportive Housing, Targeted Affordable Housing, and Transitional Housing, described in Table 1.

**Table 1. Types of Homeless Services Programs Included in Analysis.**

| Type of Program                           | Description   |
|---|---|
| <b>Rapid Re-Housing (RRH)</b>             | Housing subsidy and short- to medium- term supportive services. This encompasses both the Rapid Rehousing Program for single adults and the Family Rehousing Stabilization Program. |
| <b>Emergency Shelter (ES)</b>             | Short-term housing that offers additional supportive services and case management.  |
| <b>Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH)</b> | A long-term housing subsidy or affordable unit provided alongside intensive, wrap-around supportive services for households with substantial barriers to stable housing             |
| <b>Targeted Affordable Housing (TAH)</b>  | A long-term housing subsidy or affordable unit, for families that do not require intensive case management  |
| <b>Transitional Housing (TH)</b>          | Therapeutic, communal environment for special populations (e.g., victims of domestic violence and adults with substance abuse issues)   |

Definitions drawn from the [ICH Strategic Plan 2015-2020](#).

As a note, when we refer to the **use of employment services while in the CoC**, this means that a person used employment services at some point during the same quarter they were in the CoC. Use of employment services before CoC entry or after CoC exit is not captured in this measure.

Finally, people with serious mental illness, substance use disorder, and those in permanent supportive housing have been included in this analysis for informative purposes. This should not be interpreted as an expectation of full economic self-sufficiency for those adults—or for everyone in the CoC.



## ANALYSIS

# Demographics

In analyzing earning and employment data, it is important to bear in mind the overall demographics of adults in the CoC. Table 2 shows the demographics of adults in HMIS from 2015-2018. Overall, our sample is predominantly African American, non-Hispanic, female, and participating in the homeless system as a single adult. Forty-five percent of our sample is aged 45 or older. These demographic categories are used in breakdowns of our analysis throughout this report.

**Table 2. Demographics of Adults Receiving Homeless Services in the District, 2015-2018**

| <b>RACE</b>             | <b>PERCENTAGE (N)</b> |
|-------------------------|-----------------------|
| African American        | 88% (27,035)          |
| White                   | 7% (2,205)            |
| Asian                   | 1% (162)              |
| Other/Not Listed        | 4% (1,261)            |
|                         |                       |
| <b>ETHNICITY</b>        | <b>PERCENTAGE (N)</b> |
| Hispanic/Latino         | 4% (1,084)            |
| Non-Hispanic/Non-Latino | 92% (28,360)          |
| Other/Not Listed        | 4% (1,219)            |
|                         |                       |
| <b>GENDER</b>           | <b>PERCENTAGE (N)</b> |
| Male                    | 40% (12,272)          |
| Female                  | 59% (18,078)          |
| Other/Not Listed        | 1% (313)              |
|                         |                       |
| <b>AGE</b>              | <b>PERCENTAGE (N)</b> |
| 18 - 23                 | 13% (4,490)           |
| 24 - 29                 | 17% (5,961)           |
| 30 - 44                 | 25% (8,508)           |
| 45 - 59                 | 31% (10,672)          |
| 60 +                    | 14% (5,003)           |
|                         |                       |
| <b>FAMILY TYPE</b>      | <b>PERCENTAGE (N)</b> |
| Adult in Families       | 27% (8,960)           |
| Single Adult            | 73% (23,681)          |
|                         |                       |

| AGE OF YOUNGEST CHILD | PERCENTAGE (N) |
|-----------------------|----------------|
| 0 – 5                 | 17% (5,936)    |
| 6 – 13                | 11% (3,697)    |
| 14 - 17               | 3% (1,102)     |
| No Child              | 69% (23,681)   |

## ANALYSIS

# Employment and Employment Stability

### KEY TAKEAWAYS:

- About 1 in 6 people were employed during the quarter they used homeless services.
- During the year they used homeless services, fewer than 1 in 10 people were stably employed (four consecutive quarters of wages).

On average, 17.2% of people held formal employment with a DC-based employer during the same quarter they used homeless services. Only a fraction of those employed, however, were stably employed—only 8.4% on average worked during every quarter in the year they used homeless services. When examining trends between 2015 and 2018 in Table 3, the fraction of people employed and stably employed, as well as average quarterly earnings, appear to generally increase over time. We also see a pattern of increased use of homeless services during the first and fourth quarter of each year relative to the second and third quarters, which may reflect the system expanding to serve the most vulnerable clients each winter.

**Table 3. Employment and Earnings by Quarter, All Adults, 2015-2018**

| Quarter | Employed | Stably Employed | Total  | % Employed | % Stably Employed | Average Quarterly Earnings For Those w/ Earnings |
|---------|----------|-----------------|--------|------------|-------------------|--|
| 2015 Q1 | 1,407    | 657             | 10,447 | 13.5%      | 6.3%              | \$3,398.46                                       |
| 2015 Q2 | 1,455    | 636             | 9,161  | 15.9%      | 6.9%              | \$3,478.71                                       |
| 2015 Q3 | 1,495    | 688             | 9,260  | 16.1%      | 7.4%              | \$3,704.31                                       |
| 2015 Q4 | 1,669    | 741             | 10,161 | 16.4%      | 7.3%              | \$3,912.36                                       |
| 2016 Q1 | 1,713    | 890             | 11,397 | 15.0%      | 7.8%              | \$3,729.58                                       |
| 2016 Q2 | 1,879    | 885             | 10,664 | 17.6%      | 8.3%              | \$3,801.85                                       |
| 2016 Q3 | 1,865    | 884             | 10,482 | 17.8%      | 8.4%              | \$3,908.86                                       |
| 2016 Q4 | 2,030    | 947             | 11,510 | 17.6%      | 8.2%              | \$3,981.66                                       |
| 2017 Q1 | 2,083    | 1,012           | 12,058 | 17.3%      | 8.4%              | \$3,896.61                                       |

|         |       |       |        |       |      |            |
|---------|-------|-------|--------|-------|------|------------|
| 2017 Q2 | 2,064 | 995   | 11,080 | 18.6% | 9.0% | \$3,956.09 |
| 2017 Q3 | 2,119 | 1,012 | 10,929 | 19.4% | 9.3% | \$4,138.77 |
| 2017 Q4 | 2,249 | 1,109 | 12,089 | 18.6% | 9.2% | \$4,312.38 |
| 2018 Q1 | 2,153 | 1,144 | 13,025 | 16.5% | 8.8% | \$4,305.25 |
| 2018 Q2 | 2,170 | 1,130 | 12,051 | 18.0% | 9.4% | \$4,336.45 |
| 2018 Q3 | 2,151 | 1,126 | 11,688 | 18.4% | 9.6% | \$4,460.88 |
| 2018 Q4 | 2,228 | 1,138 | 12,459 | 17.9% | 9.1% | \$4,553.99 |

Table 4 and 5 look at how many people earn at any point during the calendar year they experience homelessness instead of the specific quarter they experienced homelessness (as in Table 3). Table 4 reports on adults in families, while Table 5 reports on single adults. Both tables also report rates of stable employment (employed for all four quarters of the calendar year).

On average, a fewer than half of families using homeless services earn at any point during that same calendar year.<sup>11</sup> When we look at stable employment rates, the proportion drops significantly. Fewer than 1 in 5 of families earned during all four quarters of the year they experienced homelessness, meaning that about 80% of families went one or more quarters (three or more months) with no formal earnings from a DC-based employer.

**Table 4. Earnings for Families, 2015-2018**

| <b>FAMILIES</b>                      | <b>2015</b> | <b>2016</b> | <b>2017</b> | <b>2018</b> |
|--------------------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| <b>Count of All Households</b>       | 4,535       | 5,299       | 5,115       | 5,294       |
| <b>Households with Earnings</b>      | 1,869       | 2,365       | 2,512       | 2,472       |
| <b>% with Earnings</b>               | 41%         | 45%         | 49%         | 47%         |
| <b>% Stably Earning<sup>12</sup></b> | 13%         | 16%         | 18%         | 18%         |

<sup>11</sup> For families, at least one adult member of the household needs to have recorded earnings.

<sup>12</sup> The percent of stably earning households out of *all* households, not just earning ones.

The same measures of employment and earnings are much lower for single adults. Only about 1 in 5 single adults using homeless services earn in any quarter during the same calendar year. Stable employment rates are even lower: about 1 in 20 single adults earned throughout the year.

**Table 5. Earnings for Single Adults, 2015-2018**

| <b>SINGLES</b>                     | <b>2015</b> | <b>2016</b> | <b>2017</b> | <b>2018</b> |
|------------------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| <b>Count All Single Adults</b>     | 10,144      | 10,311      | 11,253      | 11,983      |
| <b>Single Adults with Earnings</b> | 1,697       | 1,792       | 2,151       | 2,246       |
| <b>% with Earnings</b>             | 17%         | 17%         | 19%         | 19%         |
| <b>% Stably Earning</b>            | 5%          | 5%          | 6%          | 6%          |

Table 6 reports earnings differences across gender and family status. On average, men make more than women, and men in families make more than single men. The difference between men and women is substantial, given the low overall earnings: almost \$600 between men and women in families and about \$350 between single men and women. Single women and women in families earn almost the same amount, on average.

**Table 6: Earnings by Gender, 2015-2018**

|                     | <b>Men</b> | <b>Women</b> | <b>Difference</b> |
|---------------------|------------|--------------|-------------------|
| <b>In Family</b>    | \$4,466    | \$3,870      | \$596             |
| <b>Single Adult</b> | \$4,222    | \$3,878      | \$344             |
| <b>Difference</b>   | \$244      | \$8          |                   |

## ANALYSIS

# Earnings in Perspective

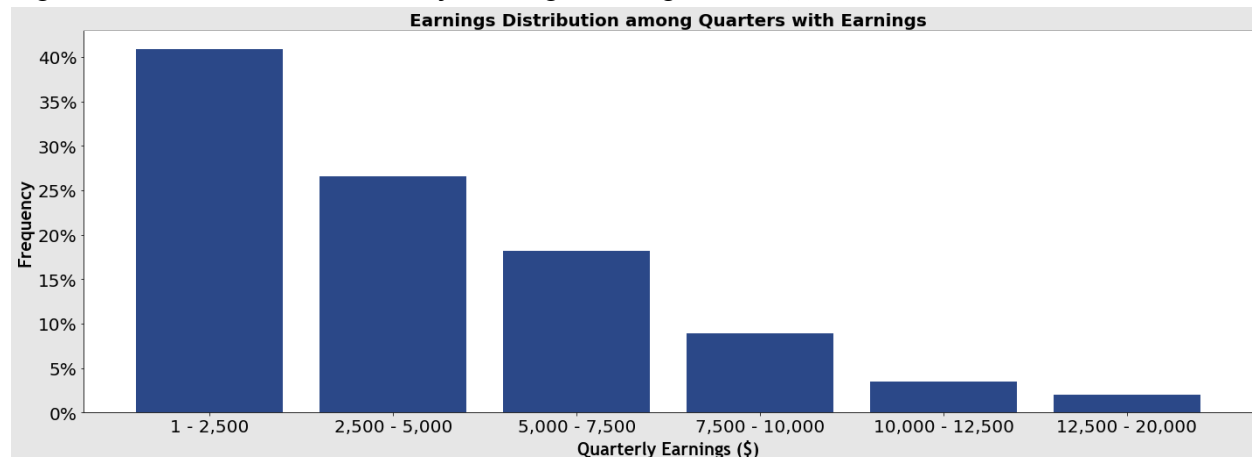
### KEY TAKEAWAYS:

- People using homeless services who are earning income average about \$4,000 in earnings per quarter. Monthly, this is less than what it costs to rent a studio apartment in the District.
- Almost half of quarterly earning amounts are less than \$2,500.

Earners, on average, made \$4,034.74 quarterly. Assuming equal earnings each month, this breaks this down to \$1,344.91 monthly. For perspective, Fair Market Rent (FMR) in DC for an efficiency apartment is \$1,415 and \$1,665 for a two-bedroom, making rent costs higher than average monthly earnings for even the smallest apartment size available.<sup>13</sup> This simple comparison illustrates the disparity between earnings and housing costs.

While earners made \$4,034.74 on average per quarter, it is crucial to also examine the distribution of quarterly earnings. The graph below shows that even among earners, almost 45% of earnings amounts fall between \$1 and \$2,500 per quarter. Close to 26% fall between \$2,500 and \$5,000, and 16% fall between \$5,000 and \$7,500 per quarter. Only around 10% of quarterly earnings were over \$7,500, which is equivalent to \$30,000 per year.

**Figure 1. Distribution of Quarterly Earnings Among Earners, 2015-2018**

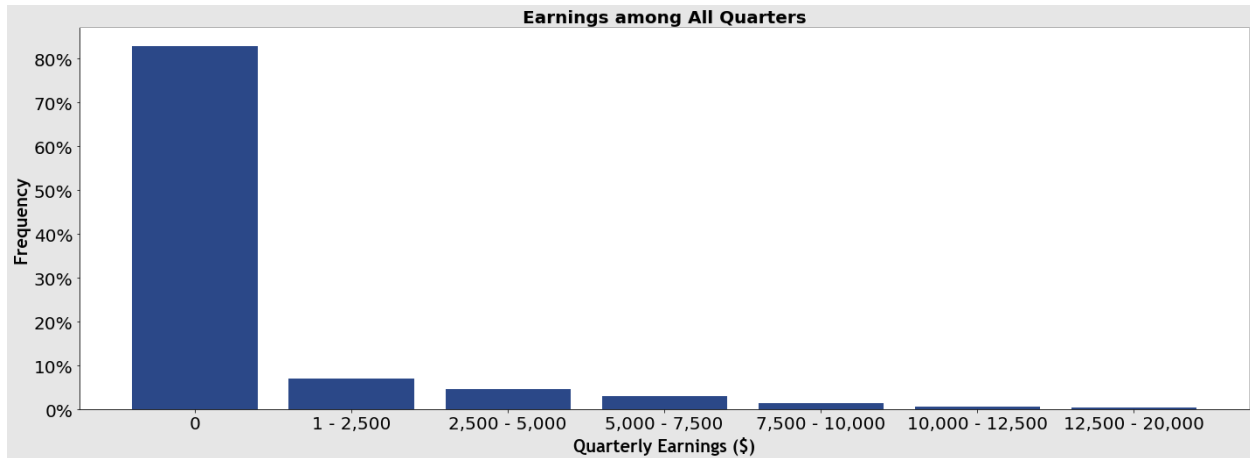


The distribution in Figure 1 does not include quarters where no earnings were observed. In contrast, Figure 2 includes quarters where people earned \$0 from DC-based employers. In that distribution we can see that people using homelessness services have no earnings for 85% of the time they used homeless services. Because informal employment earnings and earnings from the federal government, Maryland, and Virginia are not included in this analysis, this

<sup>13</sup> [FY 2019 Fair Market Rent Documentation System](#)

overestimates the percentage of quarters with \$0 in earnings, but we cannot know by how much with the data available for this report.

**Figure 2. Distribution of Quarterly Earnings, All Adults, 2015-2018**



In addition to Fair Market Rent, “Median Family Income” provides another way to understand earnings in context. In 2019, the Washington Metropolitan Statistical Area Median Family Income (MFI; previously referred to as Area Median Income (AMI)) was \$121,300 for a family of four.<sup>14</sup> Table 7 compares the earnings of adults in families to the MFI for DC. In the table, we can see that very few households even earned over 30% MFI while using homeless services.

Looking only at families with earnings, fewer than 1 in 10 earn above 30% MFI, about 1 in 100 earn above 50% MFI, and fewer than 1 in 100 earn above 80% MFI in the year they experienced homelessness.

<sup>14</sup> [2019 Maximum Income, Rent and Purchase Price Schedule](#)

**Table 7. Family Earnings versus Median Family Income (MFI), 2015-2018**

| <b>FAMILIES</b>               | <b>2015</b> | <b>2016</b> | <b>2017</b> | <b>2018</b> |
|-------------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| All Households                | 4,535       | 5,299       | 5,115       | 5,294       |
| Households with Earnings      | 1,869       | 2,365       | 2,512       | 2,472       |
| Above 30% MFI                 | 110         | 172         | 225         | 210         |
| % of all Households           | 2%          | 3%          | 4%          | 4%          |
| % of Households with Earnings | 6%          | 7%          | 9%          | 8%          |
| Above 50% MFI                 | 23          | 28          | 41          | 36          |
| % of all Households           | 1%          | 1%          | 1%          | 1%          |
| % of Households with Earnings | 1%          | 1%          | 2%          | 1%          |
| Above 80% MFI                 | 11          | 14          | 12          | 16          |
| % of All Households           | 0%          | 0%          | 0%          | 0%          |
| % of Households with Earnings | 1%          | 1%          | 0%          | 1%          |

MFI changes based on household size. Using the household ID variable in HMIS data, we grouped people into households, and summed members' incomes. This total was measured against MFI thresholds.

Table 8 provides the same comparison of earnings to MFI, but for single adults. Single adults have a lower MFI because their household size is one, but similarly, we see very few adults earning wages comparable to other area residents. Looking only at single adults with earnings, about 15% earn above 30% MFI, fewer than 1 in 20 earn above 50% MFI, and about 1 in 50 earn above 80% MFI in the calendar year they experienced homelessness.

**Table 8. Single Adult Earnings versus Median Family Income, 2015-2018**

| <b>SINGLE ADULTS</b>          | <b>2015</b> | <b>2016</b> | <b>2017</b> | <b>2018</b> |
|-------------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| All Adults                    | 10,144      | 10,311      | 11,253      | 11,983      |
| Adults with Earnings          | 1,697       | 1,792       | 2,151       | 2,246       |
| Above 30% MFI                 | 220         | 245         | 330         | 331         |
| % of all Adults               | 2%          | 2%          | 3%          | 3%          |
| % of all Adults with Earnings | 13%         | 14%         | 15%         | 15%         |
| Above 50% MFI                 | 64          | 68          | 83          | 93          |
| % of all Adults               | 1%          | 1%          | 1%          | 1%          |
| % of Adults with Earnings     | 4%          | 4%          | 4%          | 4%          |



|                                      |    |    |    |    |
|--------------------------------------|----|----|----|----|
| <b>Above 80% MFI</b>                 | 33 | 29 | 29 | 41 |
| <b>% of all Adults</b>               | 0% | 0% | 0% | 0% |
| <b>% of all Adults with Earnings</b> | 2% | 2% | 1% | 2% |

## ANALYSIS

# Earnings by Program Types in the Continuum of Care

### KEY TAKEAWAYS:

- On average, participants in Rapid Re-Housing and Transitional Housing experience a meaningful increase in earnings after entering the CoC.
- Of adults not stably employed at program entry, few (7% of single adults and 15% of adults in families) gain stable employment while in Rapid Re-Housing or Transitional Housing.

While the previous section analyzed earnings and employment trends overall, this section will examine how these trends vary across some of the different homelessness services used. These analyses were restricted to adults who had earnings during one or more quarters between 2015-2018 to compare trends among people with a history of earnings from DC-based employers. Table 9 shows the earnings of program participants at CoC entry and 8 quarters (2 years) later, while Figure 3 plots earnings for the 8 quarters before and after CoC entry. We cannot draw a causal link between using specific homeless services and earnings, both because this is a purely descriptive analysis and because different types of programs support different populations. For example, people in permanent supportive housing are more likely to have a disability than those in other program types.

While adults in the CoC have very low earnings overall, average earnings increase for participants in Rapid Re-Housing and Transitional Housing after starting the programs (increases of around \$820 and \$1,150 after two years, respectively). These gains are substantially larger than those for adults in Emergency Shelter (about \$450) and for those in Permanent Supportive or Targeted Affordable Housing (about \$420 across both programs).

**Table 9. Earnings At Entry to the Continuum of Care and After Eight Quarters**

| KEY | TYPE OF PROGRAM   | # OF PEOPLE | QUARTERLY EARNINGS AT COC ENTRY | QUARTERLY EARNINGS AFTER 8 QUARTERS | CHANGE     |
|-----|---|-------------|---------------------------------|-------------------------------------|------------|
|     | <b>Rapid Re-Housing</b>   | 646         | \$1,312.00                      | \$2,129.48                          | \$817.49   |
|     | <b>Emergency Shelter</b>  | 1,717       | \$993.54                        | \$1,438.20                          | \$444.66   |
|     | <b>Transitional Housing</b>   | 404         | \$716.98                        | \$1,863.11                          | \$1,146.13 |
|     | <b>Targeted Affordable Housing and Permanent Supportive Housing</b> | 142         | \$610.05                        | \$1,031.58                          | \$421.54   |

**Figure 3. Earnings Eight Quarters Before and After Entering the Continuum of Care**

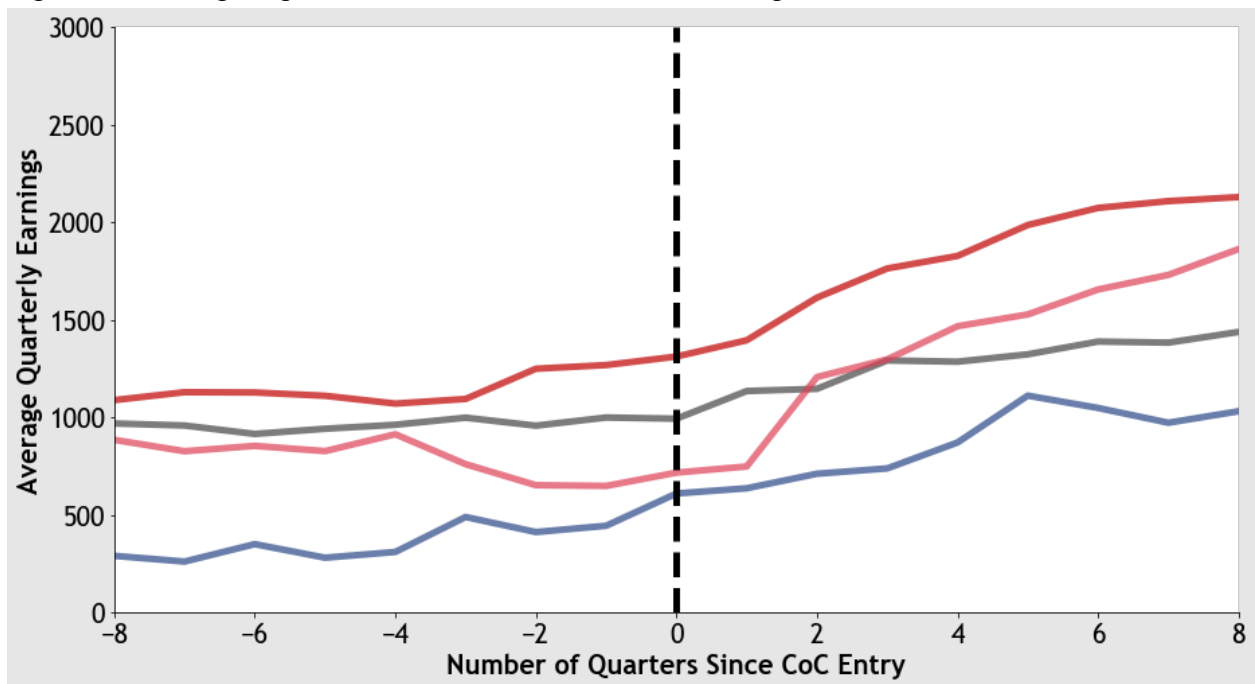


Table 10 shows the rates at which unemployed adults in families became employed after entering the Rapid Re-Housing program. Thirteen percent (13%) of adults in families gained stable employment while in Rapid Re-Housing. Both families who did and did not gain stable employment returned to Virginia Williams (30%-33%) or to emergency shelter and transitional housing (8-11%) within one year of exit at similar rates, however.

**Table 10. Adults in Families Outcomes after Rapid Re-Housing Entry in 2015 and 2016**

|                                       | <b>% of Adults in Families</b> | <b># of Adults in Families</b> | <b>Returned to Virginia Williams w/n 1 Year After Exit</b> | <b>Returned to Emergency Shelter or Transitional Housing w/n 1 Year After Exit</b> |
|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|--|--|
| <b>Gained Stable Employment</b>       | 13%                            | 166                            | 30%  | 8%   |
| <b>Did Not Gain Stable Employment</b> | 87%                            | 1099                           | 33%  | 11%  |

Table 11 reports the same employment trends, but for single adults. While in a Rapid Re-Housing program,<sup>15</sup> few single adults who did not have stable employment at entry gained stable employment.<sup>16</sup> One year after exit, single adults returned to Virginia Williams or a low-barrier shelter (29% and 32%, respectively) and emergency shelter and transitional housing (18 and 20%) within one year of exit at similar rates regardless of whether they gained stable employment while in the CoC. If anything, single adults who gained stable employment returned to these homeless services at slightly higher rates than those that did not gain stable employment.

**Table 11. Single Adult Outcomes after Rapid Re-Housing Entry in 2015 and 2016**

|                                       | <b>% of Single Adults</b> | <b># of Single Adults</b> | <b>Returned to Virginia Williams or low-barrier shelter w/n 1 Year After Exit</b> | <b>Returned to Emergency Shelter or Transitional Housing w/n 1 Year After Exit</b> |
|---------------------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|---|--|
| <b>Gained Stable Employment</b>       | 6%                        | 94                        | 32%   | 20%  |
| <b>Did Not Gain Stable Employment</b> | 94%                       | 1493                      | 29%   | 18%  |

<sup>15</sup> This analysis only includes people who entered Rapid Re-Housing between Q1 2015 and Q4 2016, to allow time to elapse after they exited programs.

<sup>16</sup> We define gaining stable employment as beginning a period of four consecutive quarters of employment while in the program.

## ANALYSIS

# Use of Employment Services

### KEY TAKEAWAY:

- About 1 in 5 adults use DOES employment services while in the CoC. Women, younger adults, and those in families use employment services at higher rates than others.

Despite the desire among people using homeless services to work,<sup>17</sup> the results in the previous sections demonstrate that many remain unemployed or earn low wages. This section examines how the employment services the DOES offers serve people experiencing homelessness.

Figure 4 reports the rates of participation in DOES employment services while in the CoC. Between 2015 and 2018, 30,663 adults used homeless services in DC. During the same time period, 30.6% (9,397) of them participated in DOES employment services at some point. Of those, 63.6% (5,973) participated during the same quarter they were in the CoC. For example, 8% of adults who were in the CoC during Q3 of 2018 also participated in employment services at some point during that same quarter.

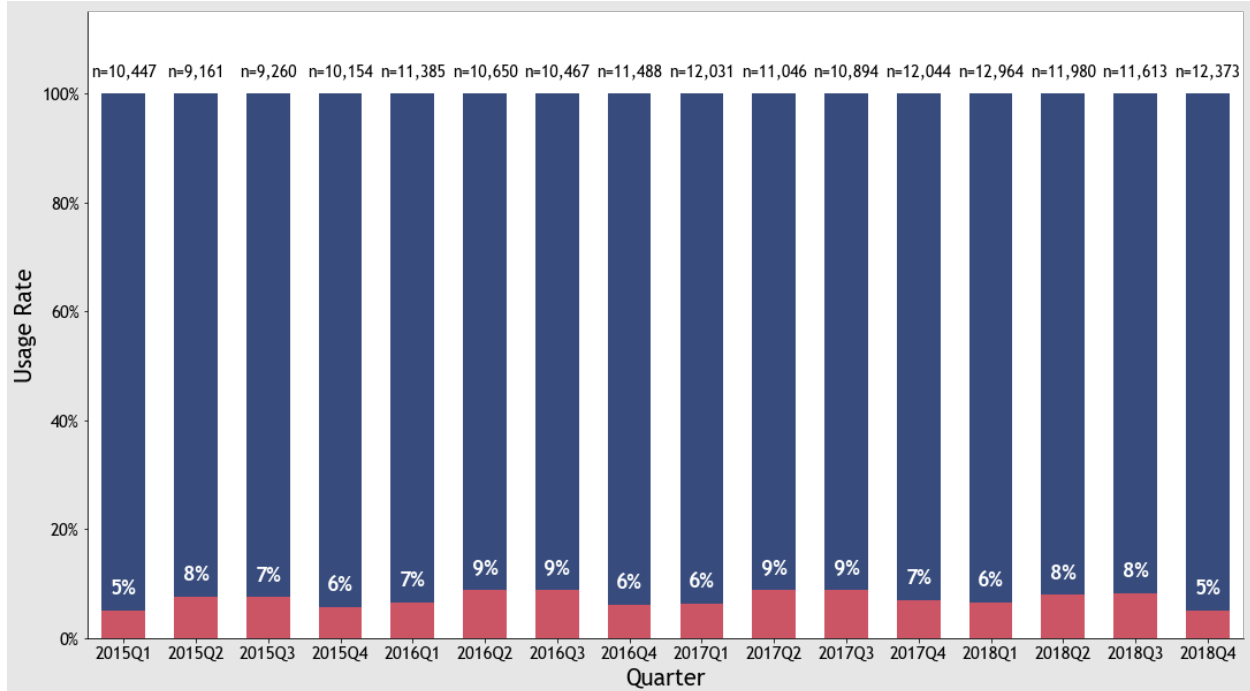
Participation in employment services fluctuated between 5% and 9% per quarter from 2015 and 2018. There is a cyclical increase in participation during summer quarters (Q2 and Q3) due to participation in the District's Mayor Marion S. Barry Summer Youth Employment Program (SYEP). The program is open to District youth between the ages of 14 and 24 and provides "enriching and constructive summer work experiences through subsidized placements in the private and government sectors." Over 600 adults in the CoC over the age of 18 participated in this program between 2015 and 2018, making it the second most-utilized DOES program by this population.

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<sup>17</sup> PIT+ Survey

[https://dhs.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/dhs/page\\_content/attachments/PIT%20Plus%20Survey%20Analysis%20%28Weighted%29.pdf](https://dhs.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/dhs/page_content/attachments/PIT%20Plus%20Survey%20Analysis%20%28Weighted%29.pdf)

**Figure 4: Participation in Employment Services while in the Continuum of Care, 2015-2018**



Reporting aggregate statistics about the use of employment services masks how different groups or people use services. Breaking down how different groups use, and do not use, employment services can help a) target research, b) target outreach, and c) better interpret aggregate results. The following tables (Tables 12-18) report on how participation rates vary across individual characteristics. Each table includes a brief summary of the results. Overall, we see that women, African Americans, Non-Hispanics, and adults in families use employment services at higher rates than other groups. People who are younger and people who earned more recently also use services at higher rates than other groups.

**Table 12. Employment Services Use by Gender, 2015-2018**

Women in the CoC use employment services at higher rates than men.

| GENDER | USAGE RATE | GROUP SIZE, 2015-2018 |
|--------|------------|-----------------------|
| Male   | 16%        | 18,078                |
| Female | 25%        | 12,272                |

**Table 13. Employment Services Use by Race, 2015-2018**

African Americans use employment services at higher rates than other racial groups. <sup>18</sup>

| RACE             | USAGE RATE | GROUP SIZE, 2015-2018 |
|------------------|------------|-----------------------|
| African American | 21%        | 27,035                |
| White            | 6%         | 2,205                 |
| Asian            | 11%        | 162                   |
| Other/Not Listed | 9%         | 1,261                 |

**Table 14. Employment Services Use by Ethnicity, 2015 - 2018**

Non-Hispanics use employment services at almost twice the rate of Hispanics in the CoC.

| ETHNICITY               | USAGE RATE | GROUP SIZE, 2015-2018 |
|-------------------------|------------|-----------------------|
| Hispanic/Latino         | 11%        | 1,084                 |
| Non-Hispanic/Non-Latino | 20%        | 28,360                |

**Table 15. Employment Services Use by Family Type, 2015-2018**

Adults in families in the CoC use employment services at higher rates than single adults.

| FAMILY TYPE        | USAGE RATE | GROUP SIZE, 2015-2018 |
|--------------------|------------|-----------------------|
| Adults in Families | 28%        | 8,960                 |
| Single Adults      | 16%        | 23,681                |

<sup>18</sup> This table includes a category for Other/Not Listed, leading to a different total count compared to other tables.

**Table 16. Employment Services Use by Age of Adult and Family Type, 2015-2018**

Use of employment services decreases as age increases among adults in the CoC.

| AGE     | IN FAMILIES / SINGLE | USAGE RATE | GROUP SIZE, 2015-2018 |
|---------|----------------------|------------|-----------------------|
| 18 – 23 | Adults in Families   | 32%        | 2,746                 |
|         | Single Adults        | 26%        | 2,322                 |
| 24 – 29 | Adults in Families   | 26%        | 3,767                 |
|         | Single Adults        | 18%        | 2,829                 |
| 30 – 44 | Adults in Families   | 21%        | 3,230                 |
|         | Single Adults        | 16%        | 5,782                 |
| 45 – 59 | Adults in Families   | 16%        | 811                   |
|         | Single Adults        | 15%        | 10,059                |
| 60 +    | Adults in Families   | 5%         | 99                    |
|         | Single Adults        | 6%         | 4,937                 |

**Table 17. Employment Services Use by Age of Youngest Child for Adults in Families, 2015-2018**

People with younger children in the CoC use employment services at slightly higher rates than people with older children.

| AGE OF YOUNGEST CHILD | USAGE RATE | GROUP SIZE, 2015-2018 |
|-----------------------|------------|-----------------------|
| 0-5                   | 26%        | 5,936                 |
| 6-13                  | 24%        | 3,679                 |
| 14-17                 | 21%        | 1,102                 |

**Table 18. Employment Services Use by Earnings History, 2015-2018**

People in the CoC with earnings in the past two years are more likely to use employment services than those with no earnings.

| EARNINGS HISTORY                | USAGE RATE | GROUP SIZE, 2015-2018 |
|---------------------------------|------------|-----------------------|
| Earnings within Past Six Months | 33%        | 6,013                 |
| Earnings within Past Year       | 29%        | 1,184                 |
| Earnings within Past Two Years  | 27%        | 1,605                 |
| No Earnings for Over Two Years  | 15%        | 23,691                |

This list only represents characteristics observable in the data and may mask other characteristics driving differences in participation rates. Importantly, these measures look at



everyone who used employment services between 2015 and 2018, regardless of if they used employment services before, after, or during their use of homeless services.

Additional comparisons of employment services use can be found in Appendix IV.

## ANALYSIS

# Use of Employment Services by Type

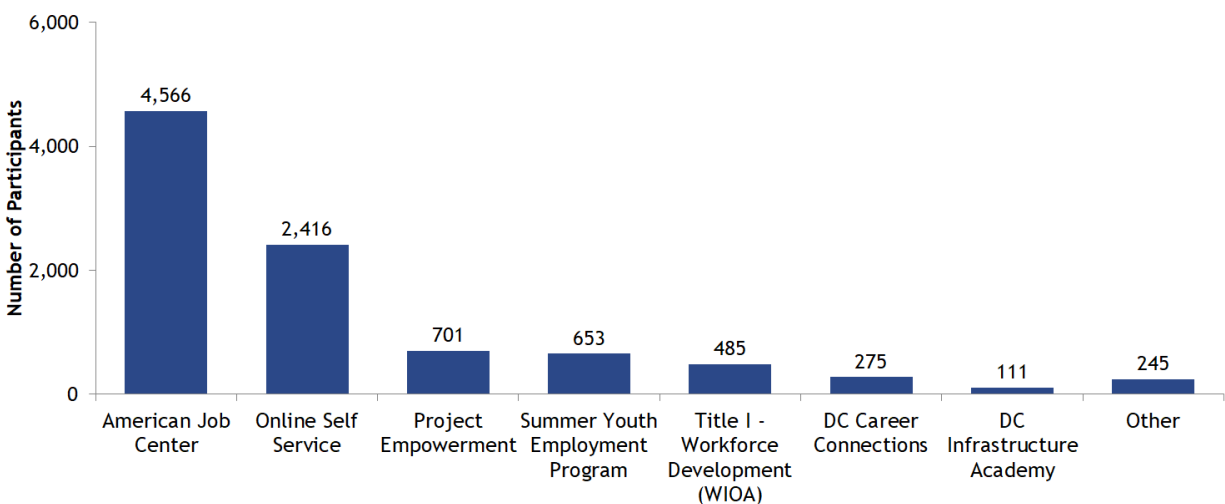
### KEY TAKEAWAY:

- Searching for a job at an American Job Center is by far the most common use of employment services while in the CoC.

DOES provides a number of different employment services for residents. Some are basic career services like using a DOES computer for a job search and are provided immediately to residents who walk into a DOES center. Some are individualized career services provided following a longer application process, like participating in an intensive transitional employment program, such as Project Empowerment (a program which provides education, training, and subsidized employment placements for adults facing multiple barriers to employment).

Adults in the CoC who also use employment services are most likely to use services, such as the use of a resource room and job searching activities, available at an American Job Center (see Figure 5). The second highest-utilized service is “online self-service,” meaning that participants are logging on with an account to DOES job boards and resources (from anywhere). Project Empowerment and the Summer Youth Employment Program are the third and fourth highest-utilized services.

**Figure 5. Participation in DOES Employment Services by Service Type, 2015-2018**



Programs are also listed below based on their services offered in 2018, alongside a short explanation of the offering. The categories listed are not mutually exclusive. For example, a person who participates in Project Empowerment (held at an American Jobs Center) would appear in both categories.

**Table 19. Description of Department of Employment Services Programs and Services**

| PROGRAM/<br>SERVICE                    | DESCRIPTION   |
|--|---|
| American Job Center                    | The four American Job Centers in the District serve as the starting point for many jobseekers. Each center provides access to a wide array of employment-related services including career counseling, resume assistance, job placement, and vocational training.   |
| Online Self Service                    | Job seekers are able to search for the latest job listings using a self-service account.  |
| Project Empowerment                    | A transitional employment program for residents who face multiple barriers to employment such as homelessness, lack of a high school diploma, or criminal records. The program connects participants to employment and training opportunities.  |
| Summer Youth Employment Program        | The Mayor Marion S. Barry Summer Youth Employment Program offers all District youth, ages 14-24, opportunities for paid summer work.  |
| Title I - Workforce Development (WIOA) | These programs provide credential preparation, workforce preparation, occupation skills training, case management, job search, job placement to adults and dislocated workers. Additional services, such as academic enrichment, basic education, and career awareness counselling are available for youth. |
| DC Career Connections                  | Career Connections is a work readiness program designed to provide unemployed young adults with opportunities to gain work experience, skills training, and individualized coaching and any additional supports.  |
| DC Infrastructure Academy              | The DC Infrastructure Academy trains and recruits District residents to fulfill the needs of the infrastructure industry in areas such as auto mechanic training and solar panel installation.  |
| Other                                  | Senior Community Services Employment Program, Solar Works   |

## ANALYSIS

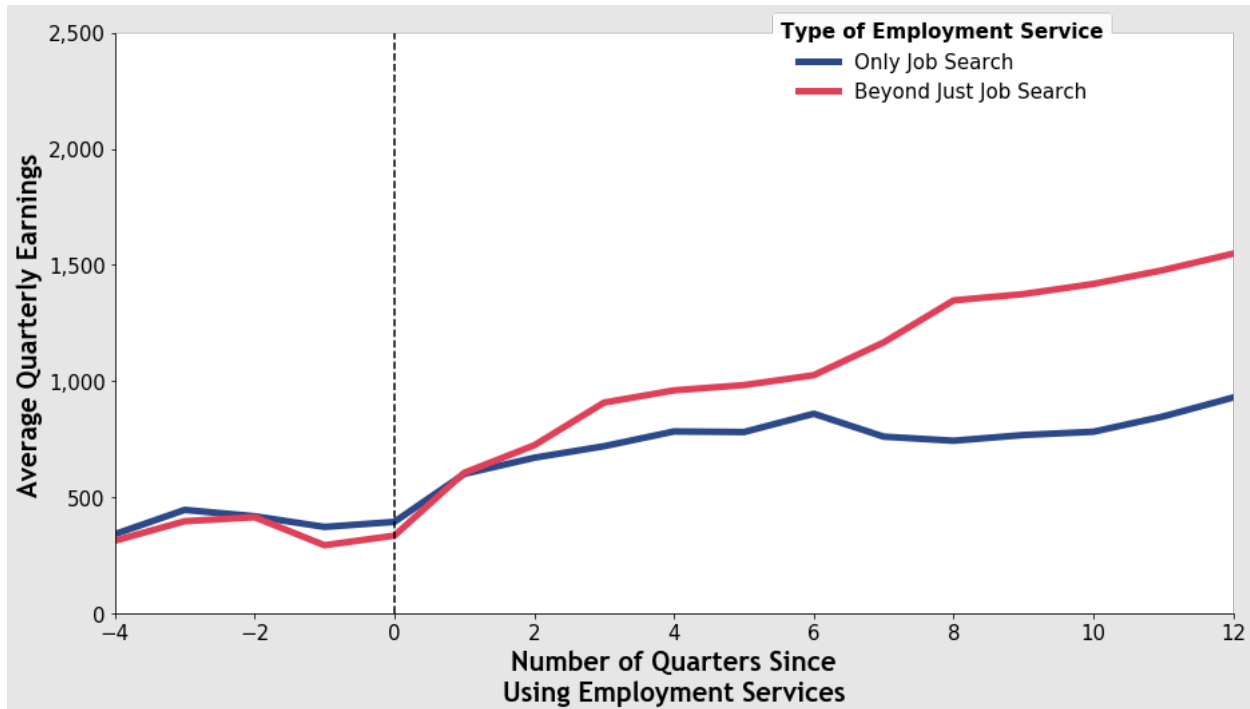
# Use of Employment Services and Earnings

### KEY TAKEAWAY:

- Over time, adults who use employment services earn more than those who do not use them. This trend is especially true for those who use employment services beyond just job search activities, such as training and career counseling. Tracking earnings over three years, adults who used employment services beyond just a job search earned \$600 more per quarter than those who earned similarly when they entered the continuum of care.

Our analysis does not allow us to measure changes in earnings *caused* by using employment services, we can observe what *happens* after people use employment services. Figure 6 reports earnings for adults in the CoC before and after use of employment services, broken down by those who participate only in job search services and those who participate in services that go beyond a job search. We see that people who use a service beyond a job search at DOES earn substantially more over time than people who just visit for help with a job search. Both groups make almost equal amounts when they enter the CoC, but after three years, people who used services beyond a job search earned \$600 more per quarter.<sup>19</sup>

**Figure 6. Earnings Before and After Use of Employment Services by Service Type, 2015-2018**



<sup>19</sup> To show outcomes three years after CoC entry, only people who entered the CoC between Q1 2015 and Q4 2015 were included in this analysis.

Table 20 summarizes the earnings from adults in the CoC who used employment services at the start of employment service use and 12 quarters (three years) later. Again, these are broken down by those that only engage in job search activities and those who engage in activities beyond a job search. In Figure 6 and Table 20, as well as the analyses that follow, it is important to note that some individualized career services include subsidized employment, which would be included in their earnings.

**Table 20: Earnings at Start of Employment Services and After 12 Quarters by Service Type, 2015-2018**

| GROUP                         | GROUP SIZE | QUATERLY EARNINGS AT START OF EMPLOYMENT SERVICE USE | QUARTERLY EARNINGS AFTER 12 QUARTERS | CHANGE     |
|-------------------------------|------------|--|--------------------------------------|------------|
| <b>Beyond Just Job Search</b> | 542        | \$336.70   | \$1,348.00                           | \$1,011.30 |
| <b>Only Job Search</b>        | 187        | \$395.91   | \$744.72                             | \$348.81   |
| <b>Difference</b>             | NA         | - \$59.21  | \$603.28                             | \$662.49   |

Earnings rounded to nearest cent.

We can also explore what happens when people using homeless services use employment services, generally. Figure 7<sup>20</sup> shows the relationship between several events broken into groups by when adults in the CoC started using DOES employment services, if at all. The vertical dashed line indicates the point in time when a group enters the homeless service system, and the horizontal lines change from dashes to solid when a group begins to use employment services.<sup>21</sup> We should not over-interpret trends from this graph, because some groups are relatively small (as few as 200 adults), and the decision about when to use employment

<sup>20</sup> To show outcomes two years after CoC entry, only people who entered the CoC between Q1 2015 and Q4 2016 were included in this analysis.

<sup>21</sup> In our [pre-analysis plan](#), we stated we would “look at employment rates and earnings for (1) people who participate two quarters after entering the CoC, (2) people who participate four quarters after entering, (3) people who participate six quarters after entering, (4) people who participate eight quarters after entering, (5) people who do not participate in employment services within eight quarters of entering the CoC and (6) people who never participate in employment services.” Upon execution, we realized we needed to be more clear. Therefore, in the same spirit, we “looked at employment rates and earnings for (1) people who participate *within* two quarters after entering the CoC, (2) people who participate *three or four* quarters after entering, (3) people who participate *five or six* quarters after entering, (4) people who participate *seven or eight* quarters after entering, (5) people who do not participate in employment services within eight quarters of entering the CoC and (6) people who never participate in employment services and (7) *people who participate in employment services in the year before entry*.”

services is non-random.<sup>22</sup> With that understanding, there are still trends of interest. Over time, earners who use employment services typically earn more than earners who never use employment services, even though the “never users” earn similar amounts from DC-based employers before entering the CoC. Next, people who used employment services in the year before entering the CoC earn slightly more than the other groups on average. Finally, earnings begin to climb for all groups around the same time they start using homeless services.

**Figure 7. Earnings Relative to the Use of Employment Services and Entering the Continuum of Care, 2015-2018**

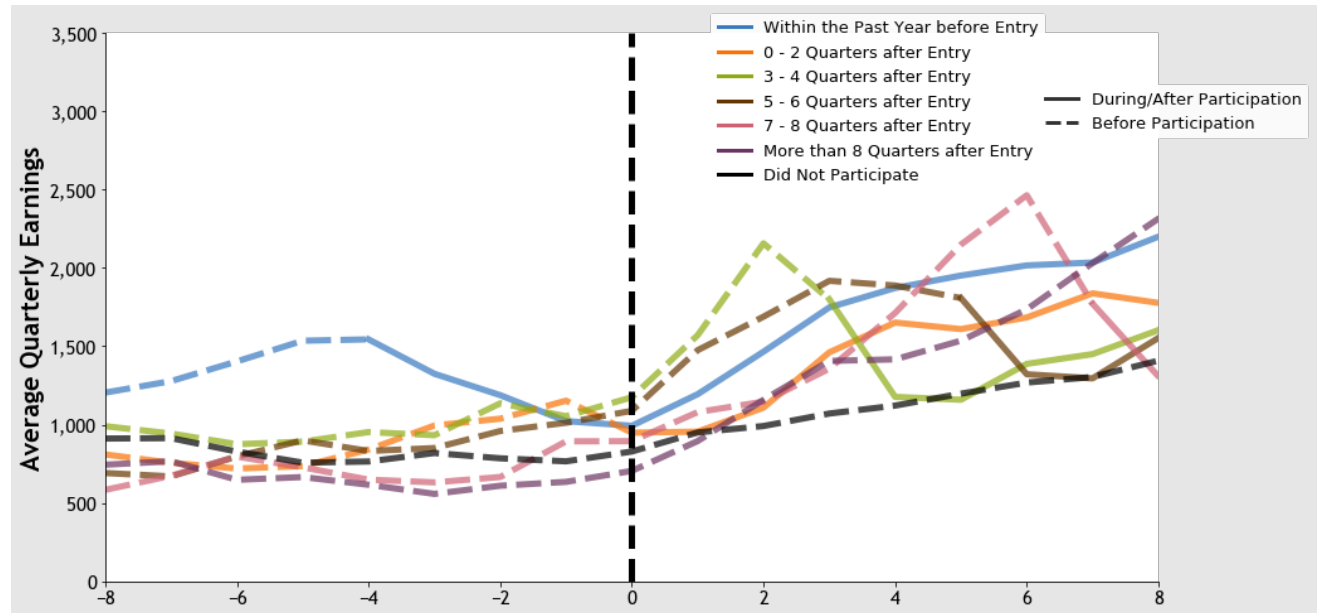


Table 21 summarizes the earnings of each group in Figure 7 at 4 quarters before entering the CoC.

<sup>22</sup> We can see how different these groups are by simply by looking at how average quarterly wages differ for each group two years before they entered the CoC (Table 21). Some groups’ average quarterly earnings are almost \$1000 apart. In order to discourage comparison between groups, we wrote in our pre-analysis plan that we would report the summary statistics of some key characteristics for both participants (aggregating groups 1 through 5 above) and non-participants (group 6 above) such as demographics, recent employment history, earnings at entry, disability, and substance abuse history, demonstrating systemic ways in which participants and non-participants may differ. For the same reason, we noted we would report summary characteristics for each of the groups 1-6. However, due to time constraints, we have omitted this summary reporting.

**Table 21. Earnings Four Quarters Before Entering CoC by Timing of Use of Employment Services Relative to CoC Entry, 2015-2018**

| USED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES                     | AVERAGE QUARTERLY EARNINGS ONE YEAR BEFORE CoC ENTRY |
|--|--|
| <b>Within the Past Year before CoC Entry</b> | \$1,543.74   |
| <b>0 - 2 Quarters after CoC Entry</b>        | \$840.96   |
| <b>3 - 4 Quarters after CoC Entry</b>        | \$952.53   |
| <b>5 - 6 Quarters after CoC Entry</b>        | \$831.90   |
| <b>7 - 8 Quarters after CoC Entry</b>        | \$648.99   |
| <b>More than 8 Quarters after CoC Entry</b>  | \$616.36   |
| <b>Did Not Participate</b>                   | \$764.76   |

When examining *employment rates*, use of employment services, and use of homeless services, we see some similar patterns:

- For the most part, use of employment services coincides with a decline in employment rates, which could indicate that adults in the CoC choose to enroll in employment services after losing employment—a common occurrence that economists refer to as [“Ashenfelter’s Dip.”](#)
- Two years after entering the CoC, people who use employment services have a higher employment rate than those who don’t, despite having a similar employment rate before using homeless services.

# Limitations

Like all analyses of administrative data, there are considerable limitations that affect the interpretation of results. These limitations do not invalidate the findings, but, importantly, inform the interpretation of the findings.

## **We cannot infer any causal relationships.**

This analysis is entirely descriptive and exploratory. They should not be inferred as describing causal relationships. People opt into employment services independently, and we cannot account for unobserved reasons or circumstances that might explain their decision to participate in employment services or decided to accept a job offer. Some people also face barriers to workforce participation that may discourage participation in employment services and employment in general, such as a lack of child care or “[benefits cliffs](#)” that discourage earnings among public benefits recipients. Others may choose not to participate because they don’t believe they will benefit from employment services.

For these reasons, we need to be careful not to attribute differences in employment and earnings to participation in employment services or homeless services overall or to participation in specific programs.

## **The data match between HMIS and DOES matches on Social Security Number, underestimating counts of earners and use of employment services.**

Due to restrictions on sharing employment and earnings data, DOES provided us with employment services and Unemployment Insurance datasets that only contain records for people also found in HMIS data. Data matching is solely based on Social Security Number (SSN). With this matching method, we cannot distinguish between true negatives and false negatives in our matches. In other words, we are not able to tell who in the CoC is truly not participating in employment services (or not employed) and who we simply failed to match because of a missing or incorrectly recorded SSN. In general, this limitation means we will underestimate the counts of earners and the use of employment services, because we do not have this data for people not included in the match.

In addition, matching on SSN is less robust than a match on SSN and full name. When we checked whether the matched HMIS and employment services data had the same SSN and name, we found that 98% of the SSN matches also matched on name. However, we were not able to conduct the same verification check between HMIS and Unemployment Insurance data, due to the same data sharing restrictions.

## **DC residents often work in Maryland and Virginia, but with only DC unemployment insurance data, we are underestimating earnings and employment rates.**

DC has porous borders, and many DC residents work in Maryland or Virginia and vice versa. According to the DOES Office of Labor Market Information, 67% of DC residents worked their



primary job in DC and 31.5% worked in MD or VA in 2015. Without data on employment and earnings in Maryland and Virginia, we will underestimate employment and earnings overall.

**We do not have data on *all* homelessness and employment services provided in the District, affecting the estimates on use of employment services.**

There are seven District agencies that offer employment services; however, we do not have data on participation in programs beyond those offered by DOES so do not know the extent that residents in the CoC are utilizing those services. Those services could provide similar benefits to DOES employment services but would not be reflected in our analyses.

Our analysis only includes people who use one of five locally and federally funded homeless services: low-barrier shelter, emergency shelter, transitional housing, rapid re-housing, and permanent supportive housing in the District of Columbia. People who are doubled-up, living in motels or cars, staying outside, or who only use certain types of funded services (meal assistance, for example) are not included. DOES employment services are likely also serving residents experiencing these forms of homelessness but would not be reflected in our analysis.

# Conclusion

This report contributes to recent wave of research linking administrative data<sup>23,24</sup> records across multiple areas of service that allows researchers to have a more comprehensive view of the challenges faced by people experiencing homelessness.<sup>25</sup>

Our administrative data analysis sheds additional light on the evidence collected through surveys of District residents. For example, in the Point In Time Plus survey, people experiencing homelessness most often cite a lack of employment and income (or income assistance) when describing both what may have prevented their first or current episode of homelessness, and what prevents them from obtaining permanent housing.

Our findings highlight that for this population employment is not uncommon, but employment stability is markedly low, and earnings achieved are almost always too low to maintain housing—let alone other basic needs—in the District. Gaining and maintaining any job is not enough. It must also be a well-paying and stable job to sustain private market housing.

Our findings invite further descriptive research into several topics, including:

- What types of jobs do adults in the CoC hold, and are their jobs part-time or full-time?
- What leads to employment instability for people experiencing homelessness?
- What skills do people in the CoC typically have and need to gain to obtain jobs with a living wage?
- How do earnings and employment trends change with the inclusion of Maryland and Virginia data?
- What we can learn qualitatively from single adults and adults in families who have exited the CoC and maintained stable housing and employment?

In addition, our findings encourage more rigorous, causal research into related topics, such as:

- Do DC's employment services increase stable employment and sustainable earnings for people experiencing homelessness? (builds on our descriptive analysis showing a positive association between earnings and the use of employment services)
- What types of employment services work best for people experiencing homelessness? (builds on our finding that use of employment services beyond job-searching is associated with higher earnings)

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<sup>23</sup> Dennis P. Culhane. "The Potential of Linked Administrative Data for Advancing Homelessness Research and Policy," *European Journal of Homelessness*. (2016) 10(3):109 - 126

<sup>24</sup> Gary Shaheen and John Rio. 2007. "Recognizing Work as a Priority in Preventing or Ending Homelessness," *Journal of Primary Prevention*. 28(3-4):341-358.

<sup>25</sup> Stephen Metraux, Jamison Fargo, Nicholas Eng, and Dennis P. Culhane. 2018. "Employment and Earnings Trajectories During Two Decades Among Adults in New York City Homeless Shelters," *Cityscape: A Journal of Policy Development and Research*. 20(2):117 - 146.

- Can we predict who is likely to need homeless services before they seek them and who is likely to return to homelessness after exit to better target support?

In the interim between this report and additional research, we hope our findings push forward the pressing and solution-oriented conversations about homelessness in the District.

# Appendix

## Appendix I: Pre-Registered Analyses Not Reported

| ANALYSIS DESCRIPTION   | REASON FOR NON-REPORT   |
|--|---|
| a summary table showing quarterly trends in employment services participation  | These numbers are reported and easily accessible in the graph shown in Figure 4.  |
| the number of adults who participated in employment services after 2015 in the four quarters <i>prior</i> to entering the CoC, as well as the number of adults who participated up to four quarters <i>after</i> leaving the CoC | To keep this analysis more readable, we did not report “the number of adults who participated up to four quarters <i>after</i> leaving the CoC,” as all the other measures began from entry.  |
| How participation [in employment services] varies by household size  | Due to time constraints, we prioritized more actionable analyses. As a proxy for this measure, we see slightly higher rates of employment service use among adults in families (Table 15).  |
| How use of employment services varies by employment service characteristics, including eligibility requirements (such as drug testing) and services offered (such as case management and subsidized employment)                  | <p>Employment service programs vary in size, and in order to accurately portray which employment services are used more often by adults in the CoC, we would need to report their use as a percent of total use. We were unable to secure exact total participant counts, only averages.</p> <p>In addition, we saw that people in the CoC only participated in a small number of programs, making it difficult to group services by characteristics.</p> |
| For each employment service, we will calculate the percentage of participants that are in the CoC.   | We were not able to do so without the exact number of total participants for each program over four years.  |
| The number and percent of people who earn a living wage, as defined by the <a href="#">District of Columbia’s Living Wage Act of 2006</a>  | During the analysis, stakeholders determined that this measurement would ultimately be unhelpful for the project’s broader goals.   |

|   |  |
|---|--|
|   | <p>The “living wage” noted in the Act is increased on an annual basis by the annual average increase, if any, in the Consumer Price Index for all Urban Consumers in the Washington Metropolitan Statistical Area published by the Bureau of Labor Statistics of the United States Department of Labor up to 3%.</p> <p>All recipients of contracts or government assistance (example: grant, loan, or tax increment) of \$100,000 or more must pay their employees this wage. However, the act does not define a “living wage” in a way that is truly reflective of what a family or individual would need to earn to be self-sufficient in DC; this is not what it was intended for.</p> <p>While we did not report earnings against this exact benchmark, we have reported earnings against AMI benchmarks and also reported the distribution of actual earnings amounts.</p> |
| <p>The difference between people’s earnings and a full-time living wage, including the mean, median, standard deviation, and interquartile range of those differences</p> | <p>We could not report the difference between people’s earnings and a full-time living wage because we decided not to use to the living wage measure, per above.</p>   |
| <p>Breaking out the analysis by those with Social Security numbers vs those without. Also not breaking out central intake vs low-barrier</p>                              | <p>We are not able to observe employment outcomes for adults without a Social Security number. Also, breaking out by central intake vs low-barrier for each dimension is not informative.</p>  |
| <p>We will report the number and percentage that earn below 30, 50, and 80 percent area median income (AMI) quarterly.</p>  | <p>We opted to show this information for single adults and families, during the year they experienced homelessness to present the most relevant information in the most digestible way.</p>  |

## Appendix II: Participation in Employment Services by Program Characteristic

In lieu of a quantitative analysis of this question, we've listed eligibility criteria for the eight most popular programs below.

| PROGRAM/SERVICE  | PARTICIPANTS IN COC (2015-2018) | ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA   |
|--|---------------------------------|--|
| <a href="#">American Job Center</a>                    | 4,566                           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Register for the event</li> </ul>   |
| Online Self Service                                    | 2,416                           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• System registration</li> </ul>  |
| <a href="#">Project Empowerment</a>                    | 701                             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 22-54 years old</li> <li>• District resident</li> <li>• Currently unemployed</li> <li>• Drug-free</li> </ul>  |
| <a href="#">Summer Youth Employment Program</a>        | 653                             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Applicants under the age of 18 must submit a parental consent form</li> <li>• Document to verify age</li> <li>• Document to verify residence</li> <li>• Verified Social Security number</li> <li>• Document to verify permission to work</li> </ul> |
| <a href="#">Title I - Workforce Development (WIOA)</a> | 485                             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• District Resident</li> <li>• Citizen or Noncitizen authorized to work in U.S.</li> <li>• Selective Service Requirements (males only)</li> <li>• Additional eligibility criteria specific to adult, youth, or dislocated programs.</li> </ul>        |
| <a href="#">DC Career Connections</a>                  | 275                             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• District of Columbia resident</li> <li>• Age 20-24 years old</li> <li>• Permission to work in the United States</li> <li>• Willing to take urinalysis drug tests throughout the program</li> </ul>  |

|   |     |   |
|---|-----|---|
| <a href="#">DC Infrastructure Academy</a> | 111 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Varies by program</li></ul> |
| Other                                     | 245 |   |

### Appendix III: Additional Pre-Registered Analyses

Summary statistics for adults matched within the Unemployment Insurance data.

| MEASURE            | ALL QUARTERS | ONLY QUARTERS WITH EARNINGS |
|--------------------|--------------|-----------------------------|
| Count              | 220,799      | 36,396                      |
| Mean               | \$653        | \$3,963                     |
| Standard Deviation | \$2,073      | \$3,598                     |
| Minimum            | \$0          | \$1                         |
| 25%                | \$0          | \$1,200                     |
| 50%                | \$0          | \$3,206                     |
| 75%                | \$0          | \$5,820                     |
| Maximum            | \$136,768    | \$136,768                   |



## Appendix IV: Demographics And Employment Service Use

The following analyses were pre-registered but were not included in the body of the report due to space constraints.

**Veterans use DOES employment services at a slightly lower rate than non-veterans.** There are, however, several other employment service programs available to veterans in the District beyond those offered directly by DOES, including those offered by the Mayor’s Office of Veterans Affairs, the US Department of Veterans Affairs.

| VETERAN STATUS | USAGE RATE | GROUP SIZE, 2015-2018 |
|----------------|------------|-----------------------|
| Veteran        | 25%        | 4,083                 |
| Non-Veteran    | 32%        | 25,120                |

**Concurrent use of employment services (use of employment services during the same quarter an individual is in the CoC) is highest for those in Transitional Housing and Rapid Re-Housing. An individual may appear in more than one category.**

| TYPE OF PROGRAM              | USAGE RATE | GROUP SIZE, 2015-2018 |
|------------------------------|------------|-----------------------|
| Rapid Re-Housing             | 25%        | 8,151                 |
| Emergency Shelter            | 17%        | 9,046                 |
| Permanent Supportive Housing | 21%        | 5,589                 |
| Transitional Housing         | 25%        | 5,467                 |

**Between 2015 and 2018, people in Permanent Supportive Housing used employment services at a lower rate than those in other types of shelter<sup>26</sup>.**

| PROVIDER TYPE     | USAGE RATE | GROUP SIZE, 2015-2018 |
|-------------------|------------|-----------------------|
| Rapid Re-Housing  | 43%        | 8,151                 |
| Emergency Shelter | 40%        | 9,046                 |

<sup>26</sup> Individuals in Permanent Supportive Housing often receive wraparound services that can include employment services. Those employment services may be offered by a provider not captured in our data.

|                              |     |       |
|------------------------------|-----|-------|
| Permanent Supportive Housing | 29% | 5,589 |
| Transitional Housing         | 43% | 5,467 |

**Use of employment services is highest among people with a high school diploma or GED, and lowest for people with less than high school attainment.**

| HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION   | USAGE RATE | GROUP SIZE, 2015-2018 |
|------------------------------|------------|-----------------------|
| Less than High School        | 18%        | 929                   |
| Some High School             | 23%        | 4,901                 |
| High School Diploma or GED   | 27%        | 9,229                 |
| At Least Some Post-Secondary | 25%        | 3,974                 |

**People with disabilities and people without disabilities use employment services at almost identical rates.** “Disability” is self-reported as part of assessments conducted as individuals enter or exit the CoC and can mean a mental health problem, substance abuse, or a chronic health condition.

| ANY DISABILITY | USAGE RATE | GROUP SIZE, 2015-2018 |
|----------------|------------|-----------------------|
| Disability     | 19%        | 14,325                |
| No Disability  | 22%        | 13,819                |

**People with a history of substance abuse use employment services at slightly lower rates than people with no history of substance abuse.** In this case, substance abuse is self-reported as part of assessments conducted as individuals enter or exit the CoC and includes both alcohol and drug use.

| HISTORY OF SUBSTANCE ABUSE | USAGE RATE | GROUP SIZE, 2015-2018 |
|----------------------------|------------|-----------------------|
| History                    | 23%        | 3,986                 |
| No History                 | 28%        | 12,315                |

## Differences between Users and Non-Users of Employment Services

|                            | USED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES | DID NOT USE EMPLOYMENT SERVICES |
|----------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Disability                 | 38%                      | 42%                             |
| No Disability              | 62%                      | 58%                             |
| History of Substance Abuse | 14%                      | 14%                             |
| Male                       | 43%                      | 47%                             |
| Female                     | 57%                      | 52%                             |

\*Percentages rounded to the nearest whole percentile.

**We see higher concurrent usage rates with people who are in the CoC longer.** However, this association is unlikely to illustrate much, if anything; people who are in the CoC for more quarters have more “opportunities” to use employment services concurrently.

