



## Jobs-Plus

### Transforming Public Housing Developments into High-Employment Communities

*Jobs-Plus* provides a platform to help residents of public housing developments enhance their skills and work histories, so that these residents can increase their short- and long-term earnings. A distinctive feature of the *Jobs-Plus* model is its goal to operate at “saturation” levels, meaning that services and work incentives are targeted to all working-age residents in the development, rather than focusing on a subset of eligible individuals.

*Jobs-Plus* is a place-based workforce development program being replicated through the national Social Innovation Fund (SIF). The Social Innovation Fund, administered by the Corporation for National and Community Service, is a public-private partnership to replicate successful programs and build evidence for more impactful ways to reduce poverty and improve communities. The SIF requires a 3:1 private match and its focus on evaluation builds in accountability for results.

#### THE JOBS-PLUS MODEL

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*Jobs-Plus* offerings are tailored to residents’ individual needs, and draw from a menu of on-site and referral services. Rigorous research shows that, when all three components of the model described below are implemented properly, *Jobs-Plus* provides a large and sustained boost to residents’ earnings. These positive earnings effects were observed for housing developments in very different cities and for diverse racial and ethnic groups. Below is a more detailed description of the SIF *Jobs-Plus* elements, which providers in each participating city are adapting to local conditions:

- **Employment-related services to help residents secure and retain employment.** These services include activities such as help with job searches (facilitated by the program’s job development efforts), coaching to help residents adjust to the world of work, vocational training (usually short-term), General Educational Development (GED) and English as a Second Language (ESL) courses, subsidized supported work positions to help especially hard-to-employ residents make a transition to the world of work, and referral to a range of support services such as child care arrangements. Some services are conveniently provided on site in a job center located within the housing development, while others are provided in the community.
- **Financial incentives to increase residents’ awareness of public housing rent rules that help “make work pay.”** When public housing residents increase their earnings, they can be subject to rent increases because the rent is calculated as a percentage of income. However, *Jobs-Plus* sites offer working residents rent-based incentives, such as a flat rent (one that does not rise as the household’s income rises), and help them take full advantage of current HUD rules that, for some residents and for a limited time, allow increased earnings to be disregarded in calculating rent levels.
- **Community support for work.** In order to promote the “saturation” goal of *Jobs-Plus*, the program staff recruit, train, and supervise a small cadre of residents to encourage their neighbors to use *Jobs-Plus* services and incentives

#### Program Providers

##### New York City

- BronxWorks

##### San Antonio, TX

- San Antonio Housing Authority

and, more generally, to convey neighbor-to-neighbor, through resident social networks, information about work and other opportunities that can improve their employment situations. The fundamental purpose is to send the message in public housing that “work pays,” that “employment goals are attainable,” and that assistance in attaining them is readily available, thereby creating a social environment in which an emphasis on work is pervasive.

The comprehensive nature of the *Jobs-Plus* model requires that the provider work in cooperation with key city agencies. At minimum, *Jobs-Plus* staff must collaborate with the housing authority (unless, as in San Antonio, the housing authority itself is the provider) to create a process for offering rent incentives to participants and to share certain information for outreach and evaluation purposes. In addition to the housing authority, other important local partners typically include welfare and workforce development agencies, educational institutions, transportation providers, and social service agencies.

## EVALUATION

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While the *Jobs-Plus* model has been proven to be effective through a rigorous, seven-year evaluation, the SIF implementation research examines questions related to *Jobs-Plus* replication, including how providers adapt the model in new cities and in economic, service, and policy environments that differ from those in the original demonstration. Using management and information systems developed by the *Jobs-Plus* providers, the MDRC evaluators are examining residents’ participation in services, use of rent incentives, and achievement of employment-related outcomes. The evaluators have also estimated the cost of operating the new *Jobs-Plus* Programs.

If feasible, the evaluators will also conduct a limited impact analysis to confirm the effects of the *Jobs-Plus* replication by comparing the employment and earnings trajectories of residents in targeted buildings with those in comparable developments. Note that as a saturation initiative, the effectiveness of *Jobs-Plus* is measured by the economic trajectories of the entire working-age population of the development.