

**WORKFORCE INVESTMENT ACT**  
**Title 1-B Adults and Dislocated Workers**  
**July 2002-June 2003**

**FLOW OF INDIVIDUALS WITH LIMITED  
ENGLISH LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY (LEP)  
THROUGH WIA CORE, INTENSIVE, AND TRAINING SERVICES  
AND EMPLOYMENT STATUS AND EARNINGS  
FIRST QUARTER AFTER WIA EXIT**

Administrative Data Research and Evaluation (ADARE) Project

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The principal author accepts full responsibility for the text, table and figures presented here. No attribution of agreement with this content should be made to any other person or organization. ADARE project partners John Baj, Kevin Hollenbeck, Joey Smith, Christopher King, Peter Mueser, Andre Smith, and Dixie Sommers provided WIASRD data needed to complete this report. Institute colleagues Stacey Lee, John Janak and Sang Truong carried out all the data processing, table and figures preparation.

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<b><u>PAGE</u></b>
1.0 INTRODUCTION	1
2.0 DATA SOURCE AND PROCESSING	2
3.0 FINDINGS	5
3.1 WIA Adult and Dislocated Workers defined as LEP and non-LEP	5
3.2 WIA Core, Intensive, and Training services for customers defined as LEP or non-LEP	7
3.3 WIA Core, Intensive, and Training services for LEP and non-LEP Adult and Dislocated Workers by gender	9
3.4 WIA Core, Intensive, and Training services for LEP Adult and Dislocated Workers by education	11
3.5 Employment status in the quarter after WIA exit quarter for LEP and non-LEP Adult and Dislocated Workers by Core, Intensive, and Training service categories	13
3.6 Reported earnings in the quarter after WIA exit quarter for LEP and non-LEP WIA Adult and Dislocated Workers, by Core, Intensive, and Training service categories	15
3.7 Summary of findings	17
4.0 CONCLUDING OBSERVATIONS	19

## TABLE AND FIGURES

	<b><u>PAGE</u></b>
<i>Figure 1(a)</i> WIA Adult and Dislocated Worker exits in ADARE states, July 2002-June 2003	6
<i>Figure 1(b)</i> WIA Adult exits in ADARE states, July 2002-June 2003, by limited English proficiency	6
<i>Figure 1(c)</i> WIA Dislocated Worker exits in ADARE states, July 2002-June 2003, by limited English proficiency	6
<i>Table</i> WIA Adult and Dislocated Worker Core, Intensive, and Training Flows in ADARE states, July 2002-June 2003, by limited English proficiency	8
<i>Figure 2</i> WIA Adult exits in ADARE states, July 2002-June 2003, by limited English proficiency and gender	10
<i>Figure 3</i> WIA Dislocated Worker exits in ADARE states, July 2002-June 2003, by limited English proficiency and gender	10
<i>Figure 4</i> WIA Adult exits in ADARE states, July 2002-June 2003, by limited English proficiency and educational attainment	12
<i>Figure 5</i> WIA Dislocated Worker exits in ADARE states, July 2002-June 2003, by limited English proficiency and educational attainment	12
<i>Figure 6</i> Employment status in quarter after WIA exit quarter, WIA Adult exits in ADARE states, July 2002-June 2003, by limited English proficiency	14

<i>Figure 7</i>	Employment status in quarter after WIA exit quarter, WIA Dislocated Worker exits in ADARE states, July 2002-June 2003, by limited English proficiency	14
<i>Figure 8</i>	Median earnings in quarter after WIA exit quarter, WIA Adult exits in ADARE states, July 2002-June 2003, by limited English proficiency	16
<i>Figure 9</i>	Median earnings in quarter after WIA exit quarter, WIA Dislocated Worker exits in ADARE states, July 2002-June 2003, by <i>limited English proficiency</i>	16

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

New information is presented about the participation of *limited English proficiency* (LEP) customers in Workforce Investment Act (WIA) services, and indicators of their labor market status after exiting from the WIA services.

Attention focuses on WIA services delivered to One-Stop customers who are defined as LEP in the Workforce Investment Act Standardized Record (WIASRD) system. The WIA exit dates covered are July 2002-June 2003.

The states are California, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Maryland, Missouri, Ohio, Texas, and Washington.

Selected findings are presented by *gender* and *highest school grade completed*.

Five percent of the WIA Adults and five percent of the WIA Dislocated Workers are defined in the consolidated nine-state WIASRD file as LEP.

For the Adults, recorded LEP is associated with a lower percentage of registered customers receiving WIA staff-assisted core services only—10 percent compared with 19 percent for those defined as non-LEP. Seven points of the nine percentage-point difference appear in the intensive services category. Multiple directions of causality for this pattern are possible. One direction is from recognition of a greater need for help to the delivery of appropriate intensive and perhaps training services. A quite different action-distorting measurement artifact reverses the causal direction—from intended assignment to services back to recording of LEP status; a staff action motivated by awareness that the LEP designation triggers a legal responsibility to respond to the English language deficiency.

The percentage of registered WIA LEP Adults who received staff assisted core services only is evenly split between men and women, as is the percent of those receiving training services.

Three of the LEP Adult WIA service category-gender groups are of equal size (25 percent), accounting for three fourths of the LEP Adult sub-population—women who received intensive services, and men and women who received training services.

Within the LEP Adults population, more of those who received WIA training services had at least some postsecondary education than their counterparts who received only staff-assisted core or intensive services.

LEP Adults entered employment during the quarter following their WIA exit at different rates depending upon WIA services received, with the difference between the LEP and non-LEP groups becoming smaller as one moves from staff assisted core services only (62 percent LEP versus 72 percent non-LEP), through intensive services (58 percent LEP versus 64 percent non-LEP), to training services (64 percent LEP versus 67 percent non-LEP).

The LEP Adults selected to receive WIA training services narrowed the immediate earnings gap between themselves and their non-LEP Adult counterparts who also received WIA training services (\$4,073 median for LEP Adult trainees versus \$4,240 median for non-LEP Adult trainees), relative to a similar comparison for those who received only staff assisted core services (\$3,567 versus \$3,950) or intensive services without subsequent training services (\$3,387 versus \$3,863).

The LEP Dislocated Worker distribution across WIA core, intensive, and training service categories differs from the Adult distribution. An LEP Dislocated Worker has some work skills, indicated by a prior work history, but is thought to need English improvement to complement these skills. WIA Adults are more likely to need both language and other skills to become employable.

The gender mix of the LEP Dislocated Workers is 49 percent women and 51 percent men, but more women than men received intensive services without then moving on to receive training services (28 percent versus 20 percent), with an opposite imbalance in the gender mix of those who received training services (18 percent women versus 26 percent men).

More than half of the Dislocated Workers with no LEP challenge received WIA training services, and the concentration of those with more than a high school education among these trainees is more than four times higher than among LEP Dislocated Worker trainees (22 percent versus 5 percent).

Non-LEP Dislocated Worker trainees received 31 percent higher median earnings than LEP Dislocated Worker trainees (\$5,749 quarter median versus \$4,396 quarter median). The advantage is even larger, 53 percent, in a comparison of non-LEP and LEP Dislocated Workers who received intensive services but not training services (\$5,618 median versus \$3,674 median amount).

Two findings are particularly important from a policy decision-making perspective:

1. The low count of LEP individuals in the consolidated nine-state WIASRD file is cause for concern, further investigation, followed by action.
  - Proficiency is a linguistic measure requiring use of a language assessment instrument.
  - When LEP status has been acknowledged, Title VI of the Civil Rights Act places a service delivery responsibility on a One-Stop recipient of federal funds.
  - The author has received feedback from ADARE state partners and their local One-Stop associates that staff comfort with LEP customers, because both often live in communities where English is a distinct minority language, can and does translate into a failure to recognize the importance of LEP designation.
  - The three dot-points above combine to make it clear that **LEP designation is imprecise, infrequent, and fraught with resource commitment consequences if carried out properly with appropriate linguistic proficiency measurement and service delivery follow-through.**
2. Awareness of a prior work history, with yet to be defined qualitative characteristics, should be a decision-making signal to address LEP in a different way than when these prior work history features are not found. Again, this conclusion circles back to the relevance of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act, because acknowledgment of a need to invest in sequential services has resource absorption consequence.

Home language usage or ethnic membership do not necessarily relate to a student's linguistic competency in either English or another language. These sociological groupings are widely used by researchers in part because they are categorical. ... Proficiency is a *linguistic measure*, and requires the use of some language assessment instrument.<sup>1</sup>

In an increasingly diverse society, multilingual employees are desirable. Retailers are customer service-driven and need workers to speak the languages of their customer base. Limited English Proficiency (LEP) is a problem as workers may speak the language of customers, but lack basic English language and literacy skills to perform all job functions.<sup>2</sup>

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

This report presents preliminary information about the participation of individuals with *limited English proficiency* (LEP) in Workforce Investment Act (WIA) services, and indicators of the labor market status of these individuals after exiting from the WIA services. The report is the most recent in a series of reports completed by **Administrative Data Research and Evaluation (ADARE)** research partners.<sup>3</sup>

The breadth and depth of coverage here is limited to a description of WIA services delivered to One-Stop customers who have been defined as having an LEP challenge in the Workforce Investment Act Standardized Record (WIASRD) system. The concluding section focuses on two findings that have immediate policy decision-making implications.

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<sup>1</sup> Rosano Gingras and Rudy Careaga (Spring 1989). "Limited English Proficiency Students at Risk: Issues and Prevention Strategies," *New Focus*, National Clearinghouse for English Language Acquisition, George Washington University Graduate School of Education and Human Development: Washington, DC ([www.ncela.gwu.edu/pubs/classics/focus/10atrisk](http://www.ncela.gwu.edu/pubs/classics/focus/10atrisk)); funded by the U.S. Department of Education, Office of English Language Acquisition, Language Enhancement & Academic Achievement for Limited English Proficient Students.

<sup>2</sup> U.S. Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration, Business Relations Group (2004). *Workforce Issues: Retail* ([www.doleta.gov/BRG/IndProf/RetailWI.cfm](http://www.doleta.gov/BRG/IndProf/RetailWI.cfm)).

<sup>3</sup> See: <http://www.ubalt.edu/jfi/adare> for information about the ADARE project, previous reports released by the research partners, and a link to each partner's research affiliation.



The introductory paragraphs on the previous page highlight two facets of the LEP topic that should be understood before ADARE project research findings are introduced.

1. Proficiency is properly thought of as a continuum of linguistic competency. Categorical measurement—one is or is not proficient—is an expedient compromise.
2. English language proficiency is a necessary, but perhaps not sufficient linguistic competency to perform all job functions.

Two additional observations help place the ADARE project research findings in proper perspective.

1. Title VI of the Civil Rights Act “prohibits recipients of federal financial assistance from implementing policies and practices that discriminate, or have the effect of discriminating, against individuals on the basis of race, color, or national origin. This includes ensuring access to federally-funded programs to persons of a particular national origin who are limited English-proficient (LEP).”<sup>4</sup> Here, the importance of this legal interpretation is that a determination of LEP status triggers certain service delivery responsibilities.
2. Local One-Stop staff use of a language assessment instrument to make an LEP determination is not required. Instead, subjective judgments are made based on a staff person’s own culture, values and training, as well as local community circumstances.

Together, the four points made above are intended to alert readers to challenges that are encountered in trying to quantify the presence of LEP as a WIA customer attribute.

## 2.0 DATA SOURCE AND PROCESSING

Findings summarized in section 3 are based on WIA Standardized Record (WIASRD) files delivered by states to the Employment and Training Administration in December 2003 or January 2004. The WIA exit dates<sup>5</sup> covered are from July 2002 through June 2003.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Shawn Fremstad (1999). “HHS Office for Civil Rights Issues Letter of Findings *Re: N.Y. City’s Failure to Provide Adequate Language Assistance*,” *Immigrants’ Rights Update*, Vol. 13, No. 8, December 28, 1999 ([www.nilc.org/immspbs/la/langaccess002.htm](http://www.nilc.org/immspbs/la/langaccess002.htm)).

<sup>5</sup> WIASRD field 303, *date of WIA exit*, defines ‘hard’ and ‘soft’ exit criteria. No distinction between these two types of exit circumstances is made in the WIASRD.

<sup>6</sup> An additional year of WIASRD data, covering July 2003 through June 2004, will be available to the ADARE project researchers after October 15, 2004, which is the deadline for state delivery of updated WIASRD files to the Employment and Training Administration.

The states included in this report are California, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Maryland, Missouri, Ohio, Texas, and Washington. All Adult (Local) and Dislocated Worker (Local) exits are included.

WIASRD field 332 *date of first intensive service* and WIASRD field 333 *date of first training service* were used to make a mutually exclusive assignment of the Adult and Dislocated Worker sub-populations to staff-assisted core services, intensive services, or training services.<sup>7</sup>

WIASRD field 116 *limited English language proficiency* is a required reporting field for Adult and Dislocated Worker customers who receive intensive or intensive and training services. The WIASRD definition of *limited English language proficiency* is “an individual who has limited ability in speaking, reading, writing or understanding the English language and (a) whose native language is a language other than English or (b) who lives in a family or community environment where a language other than English is the dominant language.”<sup>8</sup> WIASRD field 116 *limited English language proficiency* is coded 1=yes or 2=no.

The LEP findings are presented by *gender* and *highest school grade completed*. WIASRD field 103 *gender* has missing values in some individual records, so the N’s used to calculate the sub-population percentages do not necessarily sum to the total number of WIA exits between July 2002 and June 2003.

WIASRD field 123, *highest school grade completed*, has six codes that have been consolidated here into three derived definitions for practical descriptive use:

- 00-11 (less than high school completion), 12 (high school graduate), and 88 (GED or other high school equivalency).
- 13-15 (some postsecondary).
- 16 (bachelor’s degree or equivalent) and 17 (beyond bachelor’s degree).

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<sup>7</sup> The assignment process was sequential—if a *date of first training service* was found the individual was assigned to training services; if not, the search turned to the presence of a *date of first intensive service*, which was the criterion for assignment to intensive services; and the remaining individuals with no *date of first intensive service* were assigned to staff-assisted core services. The definitions adopted by the author accept previous local One-Stop staff and state management information system staff decisions that determined the content of the WIASRD file for the reference year covered.

<sup>8</sup> This definition satisfies neither of the criteria described in the opening paragraph in page 1—home language usage or ethnic membership do not necessarily relate to linguistic competency, and use of a language assessment instrument is not required.

WIASRD field 601 *employed in quarter after exit quarter* is subject to possible misinterpretation. Three codes are allowed—1=yes; 2=no; and 3=individual has exited but employment information is not yet available.

The definition of ‘employed’ includes two components in the WIASRD instructions:

1. “The individual should be considered as employed if wage records for the quarter after exit show earnings greater than zero.”
2. “When supplemental sources are used, individuals should be counted as employed if, in the calendar quarter after exit, they did any work at all as paid employees (i.e., received at least some earnings), worked in their own business, profession, or worked on their own farm.”

The three codes and two definitions require careful interpretation of the WIASRD information for *employed in quarter after exit quarter*. WIASRD field 601 code 1 combined with definition 1 above is straightforward—the individual is employed and has positive reported earnings for the reference quarter. Code 1 combined with definition 2 above is more difficult to interpret because no earnings amount has been reported.

This report does not include the combination of WIASRD field 601 code 1 with no positive reported earnings amount in WIASRD field 616 in the count of individuals who are employed in the quarter after exit quarter. This deletes the second definition of ‘employed’ above—employment documented by supplemental sources without earnings information.

The denominator and numerator definitions for calculating the percentage of individuals who were employed in the quarter after exit quarter are:

Denominator—Individuals with WIASRD field 601 *employed in quarter after exit quarter* codes 1=Yes or 2=No, but not 3=Employment information is not yet available.

Numerator—Individuals with WIASRD field 601 *employed in quarter after exit quarter* code 1=Yes, and a positive dollar amount in WIASRD field 616 *total earnings from wage records for the quarter following the exit quarter*.

A consequence of the definition of the derived indicator *percent employed in quarter after exit quarter* is that “individuals who did any work at all as paid employees (i.e., received at least some earning), worked in their own business, profession, or worked on their own farm” documented by supplemental data sources are excluded.

These are the WIASRD data fields and derived definitions that were used to summarize the flow of LEP and non-LEP individuals through WIA core, intensive, and training services, and to calculate employment status and reported median earnings figures for the quarter following each person's WIA exit quarter. Highlighted findings follow in section 3.

### 3.0 FINDINGS

#### 3.1 WIA Adult and Dislocated Workers Defined as LEP or non-LEP

Figure 1(a), (b), and (c) on page 6 show the relative sizes of the Adult and Dislocated Worker LEP and non-LEP sub-populations.

The total nine-state population of WIA Adult and Dislocated Worker exits between July 2002 and June 2003 that are recorded in the WIASRD files processed for the ADARE project is 148,629.<sup>9</sup> This count includes 83,351 Adults (56 percent) and 65,278 Dislocated Workers (44 percent)—see *Figure 1(a)*.

The relative sizes of the nine-state WIA Adult (Local) and Dislocated Worker (Local) sub-populations defined as LEP or non-LEP are shown in *Figure 1(b)* and *Figure 1(c)* respectively.

- Five percent (N=4,041) of the Adult sub-population is defined in the consolidated nine-state WIASRD file as LEP.
- Five percent (N=3,276) of the Dislocated Worker sub-population is defined in the consolidated nine-state WIASRD file as LEP.

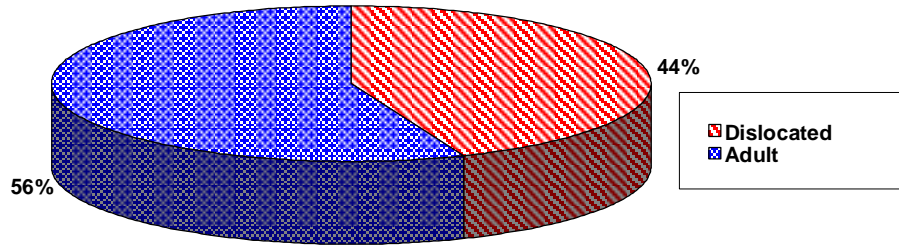
Keeping in mind that the consolidated nine-state WIASRD file includes California, Florida, and Texas, each with large Latino populations, as well as rapidly growing populations of other recent immigrant nationalities in California, Maryland, and Washington, these five percent LEP figures were initially surprising. So much so, that WIASRD file diagnostics were conducted by The Jacob France Institute, and then by some of the ADARE state partners to verify that the consolidated file was an accurate rollup of the original state WIASRD files maintained by the participating states. Having confirmed this, further inquiries were made within some of the ADARE states.

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<sup>9</sup> This total N=148,629 includes 1,356 individuals appearing in both the Adult and Dislocated Worker WIASRD sub-files for this reference year.

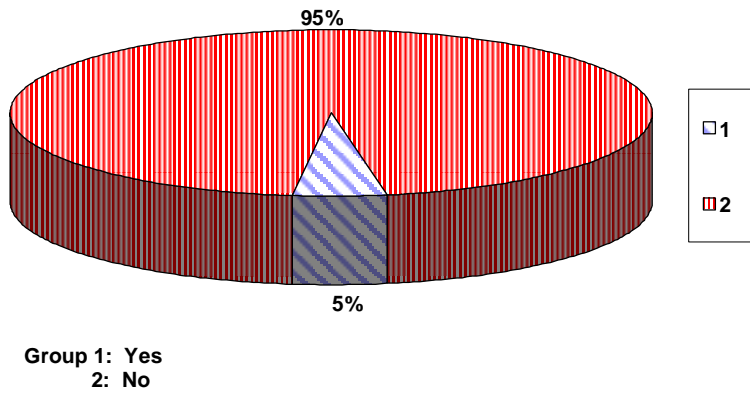
WIA ADULT AND DISLOCATED WORKER EXITS IN ADARE STATES, JULY 2002- JUNE 2003

FIGURE 1(a)



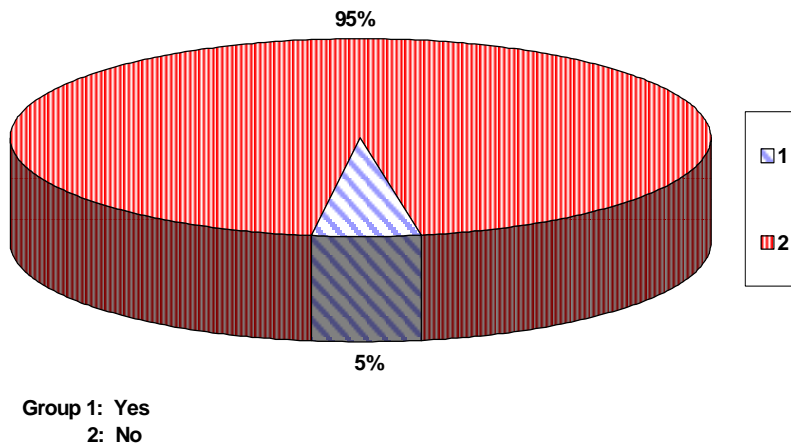
WIA ADULT EXITS IN ADARE STATES, JULY 2002 - JUNE 2003, BY LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENCY

FIGURE 1(b)



WIA DISLOCATED WORKER EXITS IN ADARE STATES, JULY 2002 - JUNE 2003, BY LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENCY

FIGURE 1(c)



SOURCE: The Jacob France Institute, University of Baltimore using ADARE States WIASRD data.

One explanation offered for the low count of LEP One-Stop customers is that common ease of communication between Spanish speaking staff members and customers, coupled with awareness of the pervasiveness of Spanish as the primary spoken language in many neighborhoods and places of employment (e.g., retail stores, construction, landscaping, hotels and restaurants), diminishes awareness of and the importance given to LEP as an employability challenge.

### **3.2 WIA Core, Intensive, and Training services for customers defined as LEP or non-LEP**

The table on page 8 shows the WIA Adult and Dislocated Worker core, intensive, and training sub-populations defined as LEP in the consolidated July 2002-June 2003 nine-state WIASRD file.

- For the WIA Adults, recorded LEP is associated with a lower percentage of registered customers receiving staff-assisted core services only—10 percent compared with 19 percent for those defined as not having this English language challenge. Seven points of the nine percentage point difference appear in the intensive services category, with the other two percentage points appearing in the training services classification.

Multiple directions of causality for this pattern are possible. One is from recognition of a greater need for help associated with the detection of an LEP challenge to the delivery of appropriate intensive and perhaps training services. But, a quite different and action distorting measurement artifact can be in the opposite direction, from intended assignment to intensive and perhaps training services back to recording of LEP status. The latter One-Stop staff action could be motivated by awareness that the LEP designation triggers a responsibility to respond to the English language deficiency. Section 4 of this report returns to these different interpretations of the WIASRD information.

- The WIA Dislocated Worker distribution of recorded LEP determination across the core, intensive, and training services classifications differs from the Adult distribution. The staff assisted core services only percentage is lower for Dislocated Workers than for Adults—8 percent versus 10 percent. Delivery of intensive services for LEP Dislocated Workers draws from both the core and training services alternatives, when compared to the non-LEP distribution. This is a different pattern than that found for the Adults. A likely explanation is that a Dislocated Worker with LEP has skills needed to be successful, indicated by a prior work history, but needs English language improvement to complement these skills. Those defined as Adults for WIA purposes are more likely to need both language and other skills to become employable.

**WIA ADULT AND DISLOCATED WORKER CORE, INTENSIVE, AND TRAINING  
FLOWS IN ADARE STATES, JULY 2002 - JUNE 2003, BY LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENCY**

**Adult**

Time	Total	Core	Core	Intensive	Intensive	Training	Training
Period	N		%		%		%
<b>July-June 2003</b>							
YES	4,041	390	10	1,628	40	2,023	50
NO	79,310	15,376	19	26,175	33	37,759	48
<b>Total:</b>	<b>83,351</b>	<b>15,766</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>27,803</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>39,782</b>	<b>48</b>

**Dislocated**

Time	Total	Core	Core	Intensive	Intensive	Training	Training
Period	N		%		%		%
<b>July-June 2003</b>							
YES	3,276	267	8	1,576	48	1,433	44
NO	62,002	7,930	13	20,434	33	33,638	54
<b>Total:</b>	<b>65,278</b>	<b>8,197</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>22,010</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>35,071</b>	<b>53</b>

**SOURCE:** The Jacob France Institute, University of Baltimore using ADARE States WIASRD data.

### 3.3 WIA Core, Intensive, and Training services for LEP and non-LEP Adults and Dislocated Workers by gender

The correct way to interpret *Figure 2* (Adults) and *Figure 3* (Dislocated Workers) is to begin with an understanding that the sum of the six LEP bar segments on each half of the figure is 100 percent. That is, in *Figure 2* for example, all<sup>10</sup> of the LEP Adults appear in the six mutually exclusive bar segments on the left side of the figure. Similarly, the six bar segments on the right side of this figure sum to 100 percent of the WIA Adults not given the LEP designation.

The bar segments in *Figure 2* and *Figure 3* are defined by WIA service group—staff assisted core, intensive, or training; by gender; and by recorded LEP determination.

#### **Figure 2** (page 10 top, WIA Adults)

- The gender mix of LEP Adults is 54 percent women and 46 percent men, while the gender mix of the Adults not recorded as challenged by LEP is 57 percent women and 43 percent men.
- The percentage of registered WIA LEP Adults who received staff assisted core services only is evenly split between men and women, as is the percent of those receiving training services.
- Three WIA service-gender groups are of equal size and account for three fourths of the LEP Adult sub-population—women who received intensive services, and men and women who received training services.
- Less symmetry is found in the right side of *Figure 2*—those who are not defined as LEP in the consolidated nine-state WIASRD file. Women dominate each of the three WIA service categories. Part of this pattern might be attributed to a statistical artifact, because women compose 14 percent more of the combined WIA service groups than men do (57 percent versus 43 percent). However, this difference could have been concentrated in only one or two of the three WIA service components. The pattern should be interpreted as the result of decisions made by the WIA customers and One-Stop staff members who served them.

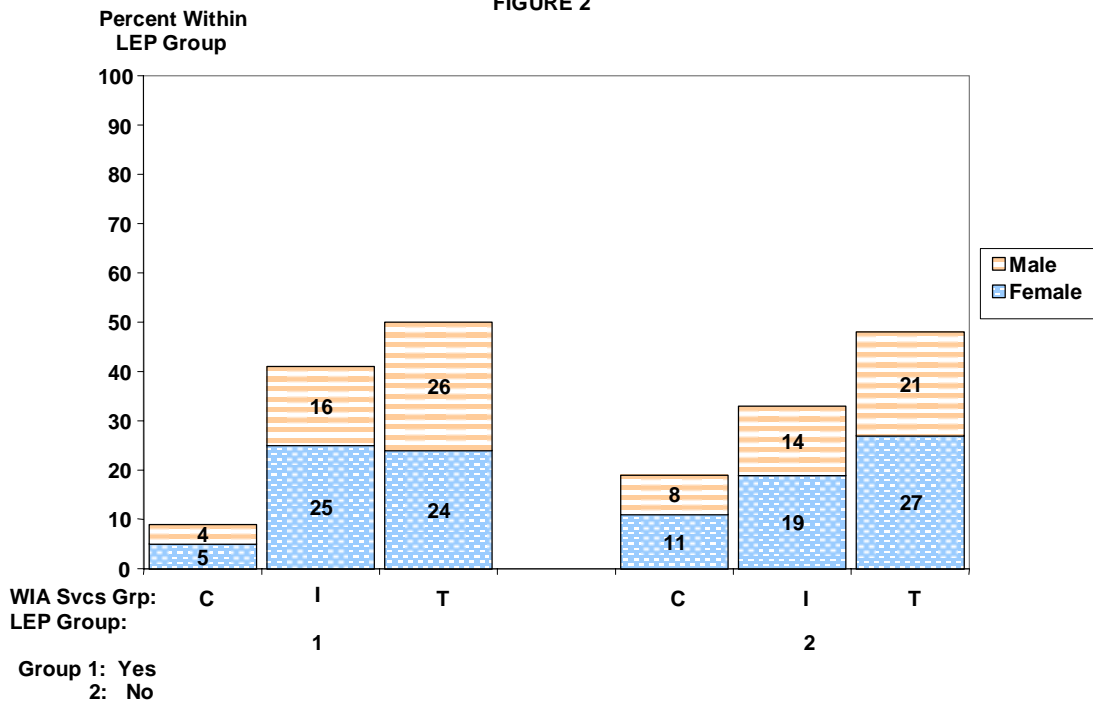
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<sup>10</sup> Here, 'all' means those with a valid *gender* code in WIASRD field 103, as previously noted in the text on page 3. This explains the one percentage point difference between the Adult core and intensive service LEP percentages in the table on page 8 and *Figure 2* on page 10.



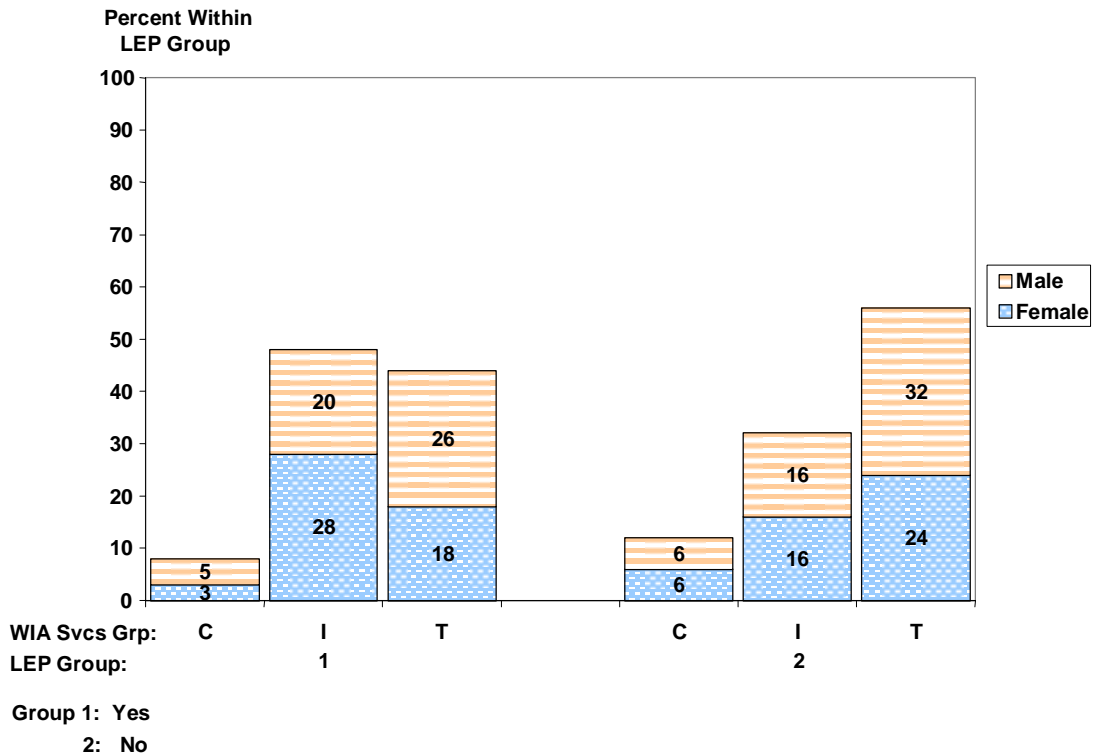
WIA ADULT EXITS IN ADARE STATES, JULY 2002 - JUNE 2003, BY LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENCY AND GENDER

FIGURE 2



WIA DISLOCATED WORKER EXITS IN ADARE STATES, JULY 2002 - JUNE 2003, BY LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENCY AND GENDER

FIGURE 3



SOURCE: The Jacob France Institute, University of Baltimore using ADARE States WIASRD data.

**Figure 3** (page 10 bottom, WIA Dislocated Workers)

- The left side, LEP group, distribution among WIA service categories indicates a higher concentration of LEP Dislocated Workers receiving intensive services, but not having moved on to receive training services, than was found for LEP Adults. Again, as was speculated earlier in this report, this can be an appropriate One-Stop staff action based on the likelihood that these Dislocated Workers already have basic skills needed to be employed—i.e., they have less need for training *per se*; requiring only improved English language proficiency to return to work.
- The gender mix of the LEP Dislocated Workers is 49 percent women and 51 percent men, but more women than men received intensive services without then moving on to receive training services (28 percent versus 20 percent), with an opposite imbalance in the gender mix of those who received training services (18 percent women versus 26 percent men).
- The right side, non-LEP group, differs in a now expected way—since these WIA Dislocated Workers are not defined as facing an LEP challenge they are expected to have moved into training services as a necessary step to qualify for reemployment. Here the overall Dislocated Worker gender mix is 46 percent women and 54 percent men. All of the difference appears in the training services category, where men represent one-third of the entire group and women represent one-fourth of the group.

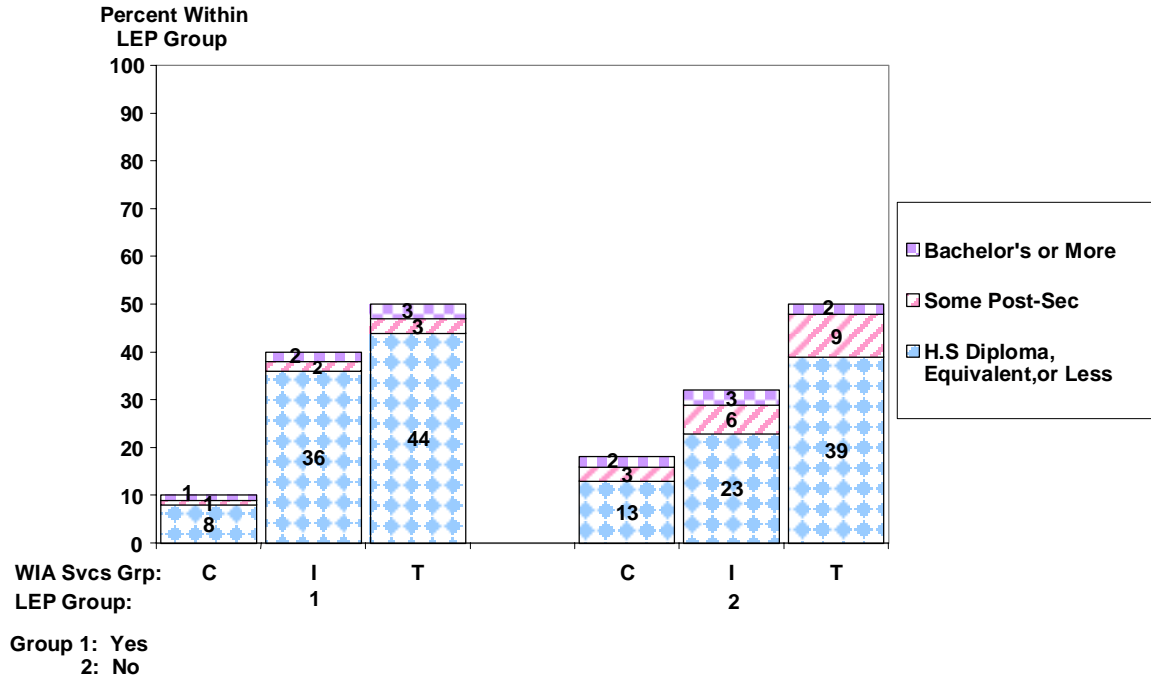
**3.4 WIA Core, Intensive, and Training services for LEP Adults and Dislocated Workers by education**

**Figure 4** (page 12 top, WIA Adults)

- A comparison of the left and right sides of *Figure 4* shows that LEP Adults have more than a high school diploma or its equivalent less often than their non-LEP counterparts.
- Within the LEP Adults population, more of those who received WIA training services had at least some postsecondary education than their counterparts who received only staff-assisted core or intensive services. This relationship is even more pronounced among the non-LEP Adult population, with at least twice as high a percentage having post-high school educational attainment for each of the WIA service categories in a direct comparison between the LEP and non-LEP Adult populations.

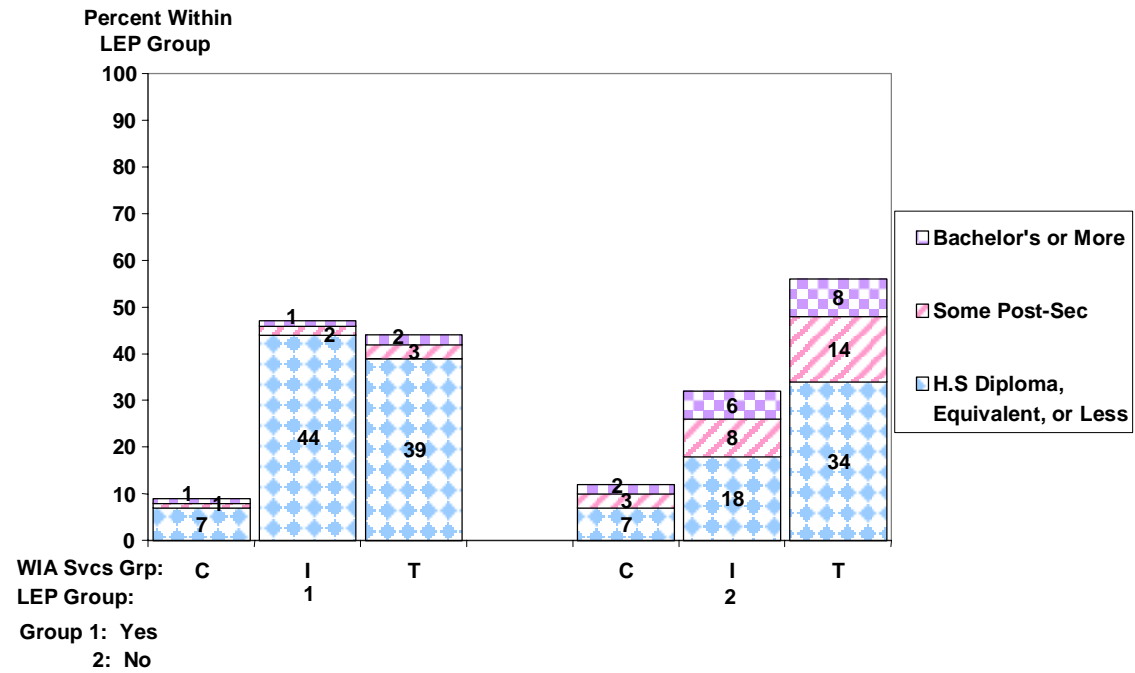
WIA ADULT EXITS IN ADARE STATES, JULY 2002 - JUNE 2003, BY LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENCY AND EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

FIGURE 4



WIA DISLOCATED WORKER EXITS IN ADARE STATES, JULY 2002 - JUNE 2003, BY LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENCY AND EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

FIGURE 5



SOURCE: The Jacob France Institute, University of Baltimore using ADARE States WIASRD data.

**Figure 5** (page 12 bottom, WIA Dislocated Workers)

- The complementary role of English language and other work skills is consistent with what is seen in a direct comparison of the right and left sides of *Figure 5* on page 12. More than half of the Dislocated Workers with no LEP challenge received WIA training services, and the concentration of those with more than a high school education among these trainees is more than four times higher than among LEP Dislocated Worker trainees (22 percent versus 5 percent).
- Dislocated Workers defined as LEP received intensive services without moving on to training services more often than their non-LEP counterparts (47 percent LEP versus 32 percent non-LEP).
- *Figure 5* does not reveal anything about the content of intensive and training services that were received by the LEP and non-LEP Dislocated Workers. For example, is prior educational attainment evaluated as a substitute for English language proficiency in making WIA service delivery decisions?

**3.5 Employment status in the quarter after WIA exit quarter for LEP and non-LEP WIA Adult and Dislocated Workers by core, intensive, and training service categories**

**Figure 6** (page 14 top, Adults)

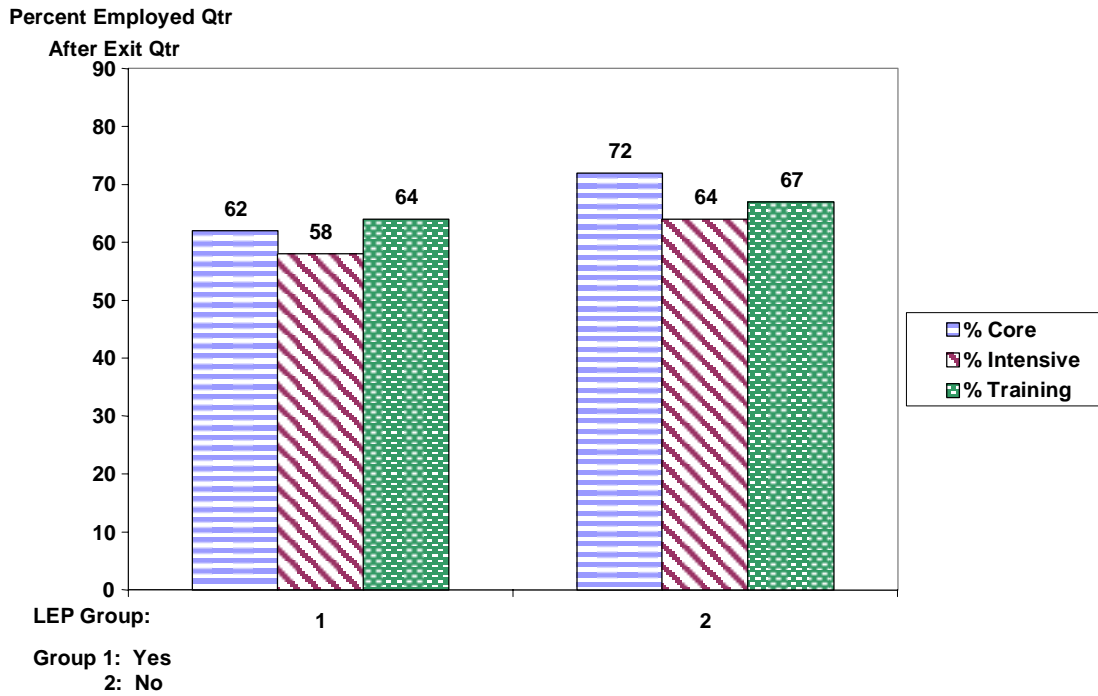
- The left side of *Figure 6* shows an employment status pattern that is consistent with the repeated speculation stated up to this point—that an LEP challenge lowers employability chances without complementary investment in training. However, the immediate employment status difference<sup>11</sup> is small in the quarter after WIA exit quarter—58 percent for LEP Adults who received intensive services but not training services versus 64 percent for LEP Adults who did receive training services.
- A direct comparison of the left and right sides of *Figure 6* again shows that LEP Adults had entered employment during the quarter following their WIA exit, with the difference between the LEP and non-LEP groups becoming smaller as one moves from staff assisted core services only (62 percent LEP versus 72 percent non-LEP), through intensive services (58 percent LEP versus 64 percent non-LEP), to training services (64 percent LEP versus 67 percent non-LEP).

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<sup>11</sup> There is anecdotal evidence that LEP individuals sometimes enter employment that is not covered by state unemployment insurance reporting requirements, and therefore does not appear in the state UI wage record files that were used to calculate employment rates in the quarter following the WIA exit quarter. The incidence of such non-covered employment might reasonably be expected to be higher among those who received only staff-assisted core or intensive services than among those who were selected to receive training services.

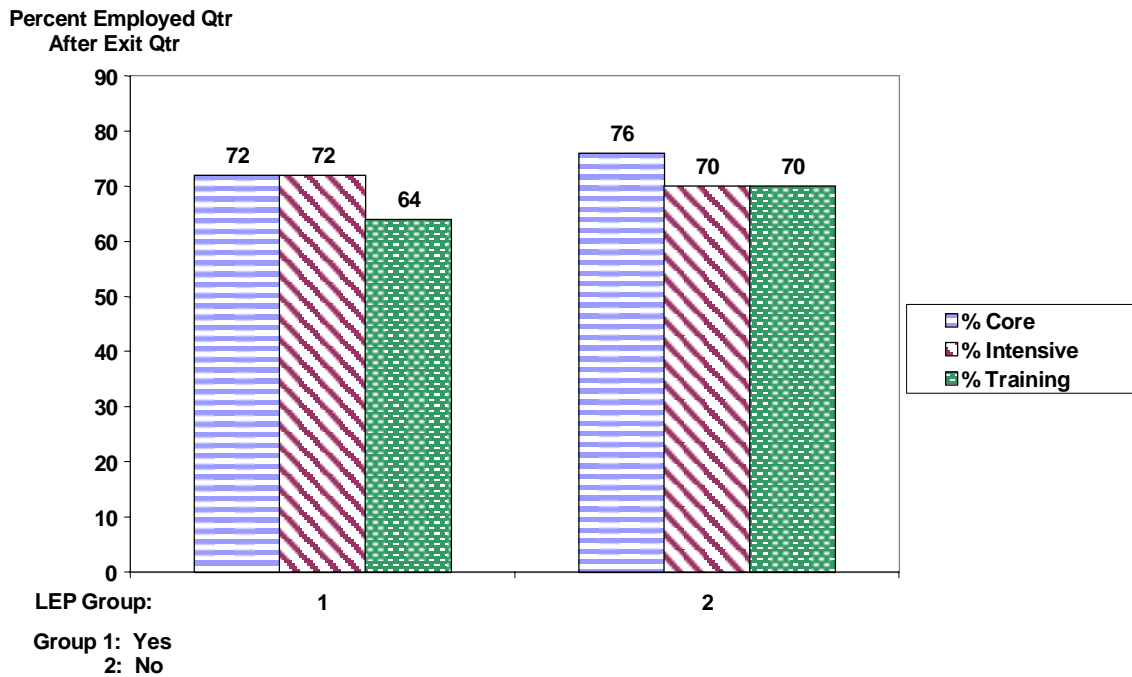
EMPLOYMENT STATUS IN QUARTER AFTER EXIT QUARTER,  
WIA ADULT EXITS IN ADARE STATES, JULY 2002 - JUNE 2003, BY LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENCY

FIGURE 6



EMPLOYMENT STATUS IN QUARTER AFTER EXIT QUARTER,  
WIA DISLOCATED WORKER EXITS IN ADARE STATES, JULY 2002 - JUNE 2003, BY LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENCY

FIGURE 7



SOURCE: The Jacob France Institute, University of Baltimore using ADARE States WIASRD data.

**Figure 7** (page 14 bottom, Dislocated Workers)

- LEP Dislocated Workers who received only staff assisted core or intensive services entered employment at the same rate as non-LEP Adults who received only staff assisted core services; 72 percent in each instance (see left side of *Figure 7* and right side of *Figure 6*). Again, previous work history appears to compensate to some extent for the LEP challenge. Caution is urged in acceptance of this speculation without further information, including comparative earnings figures that appear next in *Figure 8* and *Figure 9*.<sup>12</sup>
- Even with a prior work history and exposure to WIA training services, *Figure 7* shows a lower LEP Dislocated Workers employment rate than that for their non-LEP Dislocated Worker counterparts (64 percent versus 70 percent).

**3.6 Reported earnings in the quarter after WIA exit quarter for LEP and non-LEP WIA Adult and Dislocated Workers, by core, intensive, and training service categories**

**Figure 8** (page 16 top, Adults)

- The LEP Adults selected to receive<sup>13</sup> WIA training services narrowed the immediate earnings gap between themselves and their non-LEP Adult counterparts who also received WIA training services (\$4,073 median for LEP Adult trainees versus \$4,240 median for non-LEP Adult trainees), relative to a similar comparison for those who received only staff assisted core services (\$3,567 versus \$3,950) or intensive services without subsequent training services (\$3,387 versus \$3,863).

**Figure 9** (page 16 bottom, Dislocated Workers)

- This final figure drives home the point that prior work history combined with an absence of recorded LEP challenge translates into a substantial earnings advantage immediately after WIA program exit.

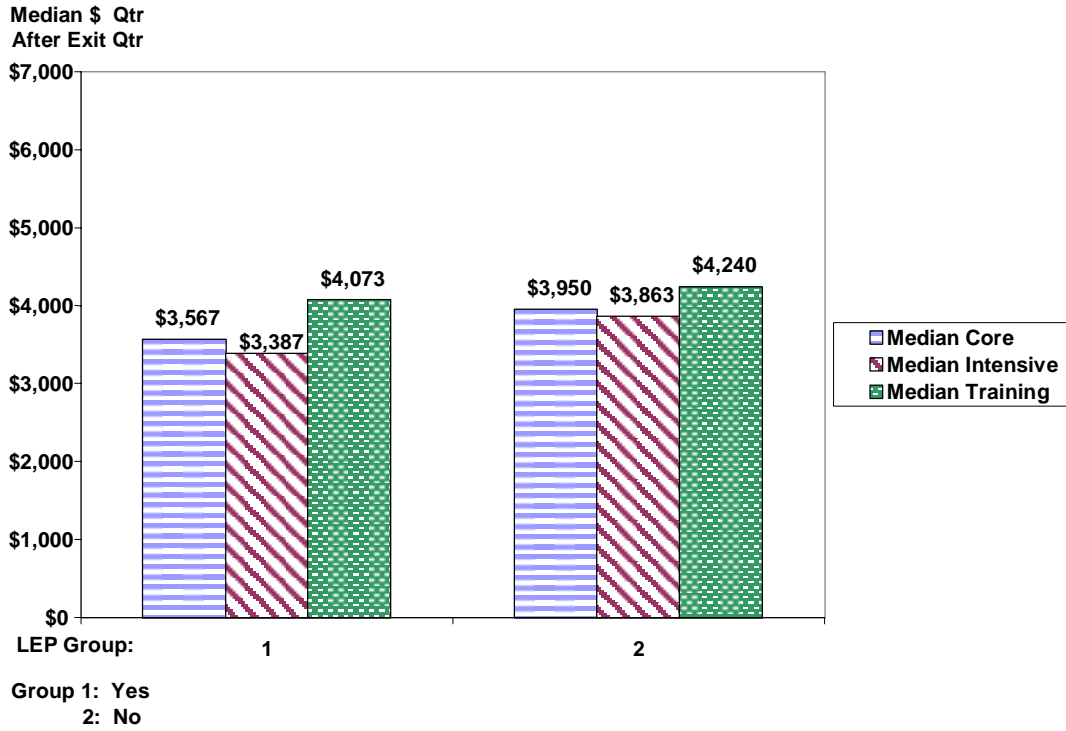
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<sup>12</sup> Documentation of employment status is defined by appearance in the state UI wage record file in the reference quarter immediately following a WIA customer's recorded exit quarter. In most states the threshold for reporting earnings is \$50 paid by the employer to this person. Nothing more appears in *Figure 6* and *Figure 7* about employment retention, or full- or part-time status while employed.

<sup>13</sup> The 'selected to receive' phrase is important here. The only influences on earnings that are considered in *Figure 8*, and *Figure 9*, are WIA service category and LEP challenge. Reference to a 'narrowed gap' between LEP and non-LEP trainees does not mean that delivery of WIA training services to the LEP Adults who received only staff assisted core services, or intensive services without subsequent training services, would experience a similar narrowing. Again, two kinds of simultaneous or sequential decision-making is involved—a One-Stop staff decision to recommend enrollment in training coupled with a customer's acceptance of this recommendation.

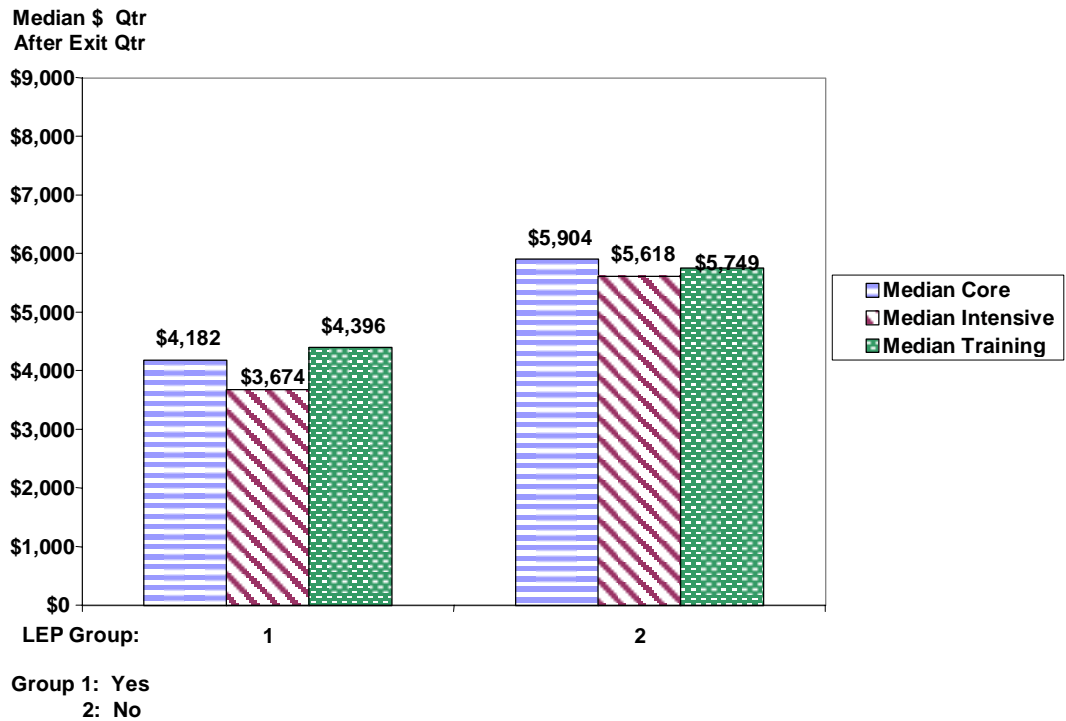
EARNINGS IN QUARTER AFTER EXIT QUARTER, WIA ADULTS EXITS IN ADARE STATES,  
JULY 2002 - JUNE 2003, BY LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENCY

FIGURE 8



EARNINGS IN QUARTER AFTER EXIT QUARTER, WIA DISLOCATED WORKER EXITS IN ADARE STATES, JULY 2002 - JUNE 2003, BY LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENCY

FIGURE 9



SOURCE: The Jacob France Institute, University of Baltimore using ADARE States WIASRD data.

- Looking first within *Figure 9*, the combination of Dislocated Worker and non-LEP designations is associated with higher median earnings for each of the three WIA service categories. For example, non-LEP Dislocated Worker trainees received 31 percent higher median earnings than LEP Dislocated Worker trainees (\$5,749 quarter<sup>14</sup> median versus \$4,396 quarter median). The advantage is even larger, 53 percent, in a comparison of non-LEP and LEP Dislocated Workers who received intensive services but not training services (\$5,618 median versus \$3,674 median amount).
- A comparison among the four 'blocks' of LED and non-LED Adult and Dislocated Worker median earnings amounts in *Figure 8* and *Figure 9* again reveals the apparent importance of prior work history<sup>15</sup>—each of the six comparisons of LEP and WIA service category pairings between these two figures shows a higher median quarterly earnings amount for Dislocated Workers compared to Adults.

### 3.7 Summary of findings

The findings reported in the previous pages describe the flow through WIA staff assisted core, intensive, and training services, and quarter after exit quarter employment status and median quarterly reported earnings amount, for 4,041 LEP WIA Adults and 3,276 LEP WIA Dislocated Workers. These flows of LEP designees have been compared with similar flows for 79,310 non-LEP designated WIA Adults and 62,002 non-LEP designated WIA Dislocated Workers.

In all cases, the individuals covered in this report had a recorded WIA program exit date between July 1, 2002 and June 30, 2003. The single source of information relied upon was the WIASRD file prepared by each of the nine ADARE project states.

No attempt has been made to weight or adjust the reported counts and percentages to reflect state-to-state differences in WIA participation and demographics.

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<sup>14</sup> It is important to consider the fact that the reference quarter is the quarter following WIA exit. Some of the former WIA customers would have entered employment during this reference quarter, so the reported earning amount is for less than a full 13 week quarter. If LEP challenge is seen as an employability problem it is reasonable to think that it would take an LEP person longer to find and accept a job. That is, it is plausible that the LEP individuals worked fewer weeks of the reference quarter than their non-LEP counterparts. This speculation can be investigated by looking at one additional quarter of post-WIA exit employment and earnings.

<sup>15</sup> Reference in this report to a 'work history difference' is based on an assumption that Dislocated Workers have a 'more favorable' work history than their Adult counterparts. Practical indicators of favorability that can be investigated include number of quarters of reported employment in a common pre-WIA reference period, number of reporting employers during this reference period, longest employer-specific affiliation during this reference period, and average quarterly earnings amount including only the quarters with some reported earnings during this reference period.



Forty-three percent of the U.S. workforce is included in the nine ADARE states. Regional representation is widespread, with only the New England region not included at this time. The descriptive information presented here is held to be representative of the LEP challenge faced throughout the WIA system.

Two findings are particularly important from a policy decision-making perspective:

3. The low count of LEP individuals in the consolidated nine-state WIASRD file is cause for concern and further investigation.
  - Recall the introductory paragraph's observation that proficiency is a *linguistic measure* requiring use of a language assessment instrument.
  - Also recall that Title VI of the Civil Rights Act places a service delivery responsibility on a One-Stop recipient of federal funds when LEP status has been acknowledged.
  - And recall that the author has received feedback from ADARE state partners and their local One-Stop associates that staff comfort with LEP customers, because both often live in communities where English is a distinct minority language, can and does translate into a failure to recognize the importance of LEP designation.
  - The three dot-points above combine to make it clear that **LEP designation is imprecise, infrequent, and fraught with resource commitment consequences if carried out properly with appropriate linguistic proficiency measurement and service delivery follow-through.**
4. Awareness of a prior work history, with yet to be defined qualitative characteristics, should be a decision-making signal to address LEP in a different way than when these prior work history features are not found. Again, this conclusion circles back to the relevance of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act, because acknowledgment of a need to invest in sequential services has resource absorption consequences.

## 4.0 CONCLUDING OBSERVATIONS

This is the third 2004 ADARE report on WIA targeted populations. The two previous reports covered older workers and individuals with a reported disability.<sup>16</sup>

Each of the three reports has highlighted a weak link between current administrative reporting practices and information that is needed for well-informed strategic policy decision-making about delivery of appropriate services to targeted One-Stop customers (and potential customers).

There is an urgent need to understand the interplay of federal administrative reporting requirements, diverse state and local priorities for workforce development intervention, laws such as Title VI of the Civil Rights Act, advocacy group presence and actions, and customer awareness and behavior.

The three reports completed to date relied on WIASRD files alone. Most of the ADARE state partners have had access to and used state and local administrative record files that contain more data fields than are found in the WIASRD.

In all nine ADARE states, extended research capability includes longitudinal files of state UI wage records that permit detailed inquiries about the interaction of prior work histories with WIA services and subsequent work histories.

Two of the state partners, Maryland and Missouri, are carrying out the ETA/OPER-funded *Anatomy of a One-Stop* project in three One-Stops. The *Anatomy* project will soon illustrate how intensive on-site observation and information collection can complement access to and use of administrative records.

Another important extension of ADARE research capacity remains largely untapped<sup>17</sup> at this time—outreach to those not now served, including targeted populations, businesses, partner organizations, and community colleges.

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<sup>16</sup> David W. Stevens (April 2004), *Older Worker Flows Through Core, Intensive, and Training Services, and Employment Status and Earnings First Quarter After Exit*, and David Stevens (May 2004), *Flow of Individuals with a Recorded Disability Through WIA Core, Intensive, and Training Services, and Employment Status and Earnings First Quarter After WIA Exit*. Each of the three reports will be available after November 9 at [www.ubalt.edu/jfi/adare](http://www.ubalt.edu/jfi/adare).

<sup>17</sup> The *Anatomy of a One-Stop* project design does include limited data collection from businesses that do not now avail themselves of One-Stop services.

The Census Bureau LED *Quarterly Workforce Indicator* series now offers unprecedented access to new and routinely updated information about local employment dynamics, including hiring events by age, gender, and industry.<sup>18</sup> The QWI series enables the ADARE researchers to place work histories and earnings profiles for WIA older workers, and those defined as having a disability or limited English proficiency, in the context of overall local hiring and retention profiles by age, gender and industry affiliation.

The ADARE state partners and longitudinal files of administrative records are available to update and refine the WIA targeted populations analysis contained in the 2004 trilogy of older worker, individuals with a disability, and limited English proficiency reports.

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<sup>18</sup> The ETA/OPER-funded *Market-responsive Education and Employment Training System* (MEETS) project is using the Census Bureau LED QWIs to design and deliver new information products to 10 local workforce areas in 5 pilot states (CA, CO, FL, IL, and MD).