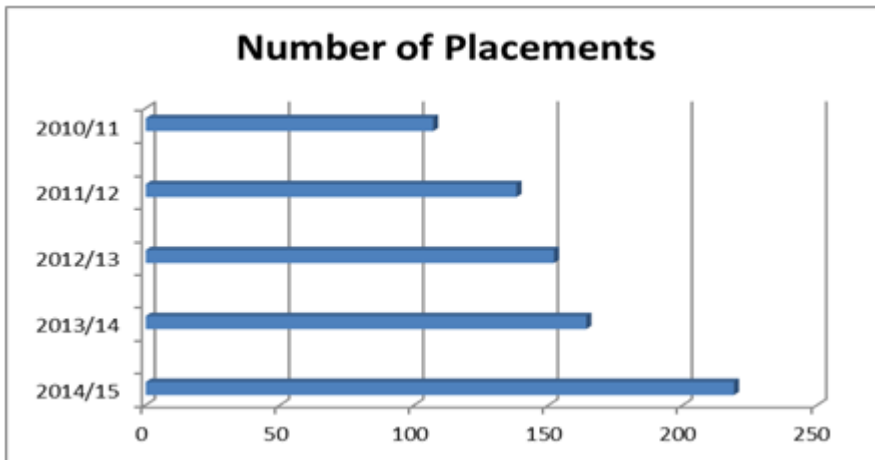


# The Arc of New Jersey/Project HIRE

## Frank DeLuca, Director

### Fiscal 2014/2015 OUTCOME MANAGEMENT REPORT

**Project HIRE**, The Arc of New Jersey's supported employment program, celebrated its 30th year of operations in fiscal 2015. This past year, the program provided services to more than 600 participants in 16 New Jersey counties, and since 1985 has placed thousands of people with disabilities into independent community jobs. The program experienced its most productive period in the past several years in terms of placements, with 219.



Project HIRE supports New Jersey's designation as an "Employment First" state and takes the position that competitive employment should be the first and preferred post-education option for everyone, including people with disabilities. Project HIRE has been pro-active to help ensure that people with disabilities become and remain an important part of New Jersey's workforce through competitive, independent employment.

Project HIRE also experienced milestones in the School-to-Work program, where this past year, the program served almost 100 students in 14 New Jersey school districts with 8,079 service hours. Our school service component is headed up by a coordinator with the responsibility to oversee the staffing, scheduling, and development of the program, including our life skills classroom instruction which was expanded to two additional districts this year.

Fiscal Year:	<u>2014/15</u>	<u>2013/14</u>	<u>2012/13</u>	<u>2011/12</u>
School Service Hours:	<b>8,079</b>	6,133	4,937	5,155

The Arc of New Jersey/Project HIRE has been working to meet criteria necessary to be designated as a Medicaid service provider, and we were rewarded in mid-2015 by gaining the designation. We are now looking forward to working with DDD Support Coordinators throughout the state by providing eligible Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD) clients with supported employment services funded by Medicaid.

There were many other program highlights in fiscal 2015, including the following:

#### July

Project HIRE initiated a number of personnel and service area changes in July. We named a new Region 2 Field Coordinator and Middlesex County Job Developer and added to our job coaching staff in other counties. We also created a new Coordinator for Quality Assurance position. Project HIRE's Quality Improvement Plan was submitted to CARF, our accreditation organization, summarizing the actions to be taken for program enhancement as recommended in their recent peer review.

#### August

Project HIRE had the first of a series of visits from representatives of the Division of Developmental Disabilities to review files and activity logs of Project HIRE participants as part of DDD's quality assurance program for Medicaid eligibility. The School-to-Work component of the program completed service agreements for Extended School Year students, and with 10 participating we had our most successful ESY term yet.

#### September

Our overview of new technology to better accommodate the demands of future Medicaid billing resulted in presentations from four different software companies promoting their products. Project HIRE's director continues to work closely with key staff members of The Arc of New Jersey's technical, financial, and human resource departments to ensure that any final decision on new technology would be fully interactive with their important agency functions. September also marked the beginning of the new school year with 8 districts already committed to service agreements.

#### October

Each year, the Longhorn Steakhouse Corporation hosts luncheons for Project HIRE participants as part of their Disability Awareness program. The activities for 2014 kicked off in October as Longhorn Restaurants in Flemington restaurant welcomed students and adults from Project HIRE for complimentary

lunch and a presentation about careers in the restaurant industry. Parent meetings were held in several of our School to Work districts at their Back to School events as a means to introduce Project HIRE and the program their children will be participating in. Our Quality Assurance Coordinator participated in a Webinar with more than 100 people on the subject of Community Based Vocational Assessments.

#### December

At an important meeting of CeArc's Vocational Services Directors in North Brunswick, information critical to new DDD standards for eligibility, funding, rates, and programming were shared in discussions led by The Arc of New Jersey's Executive Director. The Arc's representation on the Middlesex County Area Transportation Advisory Council and the Middlesex Regional Education Services Advisory Board continued when Project HIRE's director, ending his term on the committees, recommended the seats be filled by representatives of The Arc of New Jersey, and the recommendations were accepted.

#### January

Project HIRE staff participated in a DDD facilitated Supported Employment workshop on documentation, billable service hours, and DDD eligibility. The event, held at DDD's Regional office in Plainfield and attended by more than 75 people from various SE programs, was conducted by The Arc of New Jersey's Director of Training and Consultation, with the focus being on new state regulations for eligibility, performance outcomes, and reporting. These topics were also part of an overall agenda of the Transition Coordinators Network meeting held at Middlesex County College and attended by school personnel from around the state.

#### February

A marketing campaign committee for The Arc of New Jersey was started, and one of its primary campaigns was to create a new program brochure for Project HIRE containing up-to-date statistics, contact information, photos and narratives, and promotion of the program as a Medicaid service provider. The Marketing Committee also worked to improve accessibility to Project HIRE information to the general public by redesigning the website and links to the project through social media.

#### March

The Middlesex County Education Services Association held its annual Topics in Transition workshop. Project HIRE was represented by the Director, and workshops were presented by staff of The Arc of New Jersey. Project HIRE also presented at Transition Fairs held by the Brick Township School District, the Atlantic County Special Services, and the Phoenix Center in Nutley, NJ. Program staff was in attendance at the annual New Jersey Association for Persons

Supporting Employment First (APSE) conference in March. The conference presented workshops designed for staff professional development as well as highlighting people and events throughout the year that impacted supported employment.

#### April

The Division of Developmental Disabilities sponsored an important training on DDD eligibility and Medicaid provider services as DDD moves toward a universal Fee-for-Service funding system. Project HIRE also presented at Union City Public School's "Autism Awareness Day" program. Project HIRE's director also spoke to Ridgewood High School's "STRIVE" program participants on "Employment and Adult Services".

#### May

Project HIRE's Director presented at a meeting of the Middlesex Regional Education Services advisory board, and a student from the Sparta district who participated in Project HIRE's Transition Program during the school year was awarded the "Rebecca MacDonald Award" at the Transition Coordinators Network's final meeting this school year. The student, who was accompanied by her Project HIRE job coach, was recognized for outstanding progress in transition entering adult services.

#### June

The Program Director attended a meeting of a newly formed Work Task Force in Secaucus, NJ composed of Secaucus citizens, including the Mayor. The Director also met with parents of graduating students with disabilities from the Hoboken School District to give an overview of adult services. Seven Project HIRE staff participated in the three day APSE National Conference in Philadelphia, which was attended by more than 1,000 people from the USA and other countries. Project HIRE closed the books on another successful school year, and began the next round of its School-to-Work program with agreements to provide Extended School Year services to 8 students during July and August.

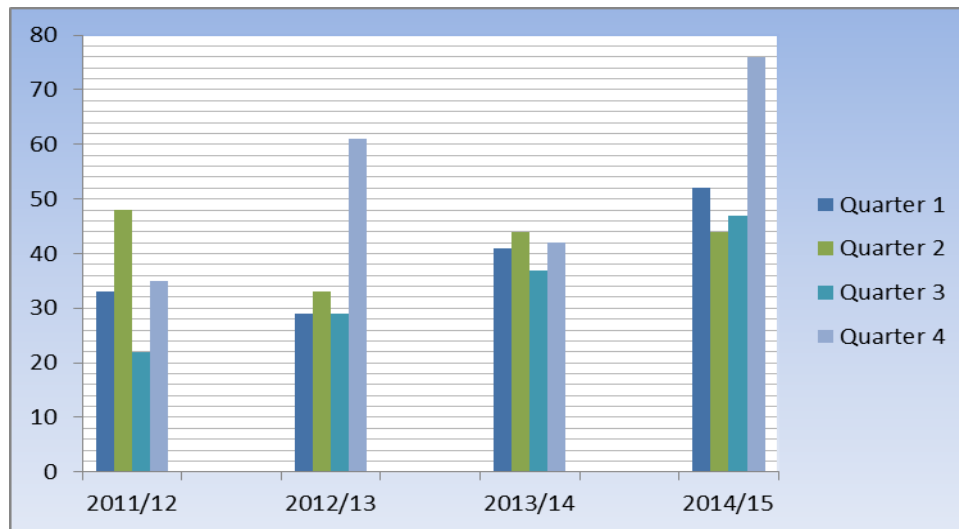
# Project HIRE

## Outcome Evaluation Results

### July 2013 to June 2014

**Objective 1:** *To place a minimum of 40 people per quarter into competitive employment*

Fiscal Year	<u>2014/15</u>	<u>2013/14</u>	<u>2012/13</u>
1st Qtr (Jul 1-Sept 30)	52	41	29
2nd Qtr (Oct 1-Dec 31)	44	44	33
3rd Qtr (Jan 1-Mar 31)	47	37	29
4th Qtr (Apr 1-Jun 30)	76	42	61



The program met its goal of placing 40 or more people into competitive employment each quarter. 219 placements were made in fiscal 2015, the highest since 2009.

**Objective 2:** *For at least 75% of individuals to remain employed 6 months or more*

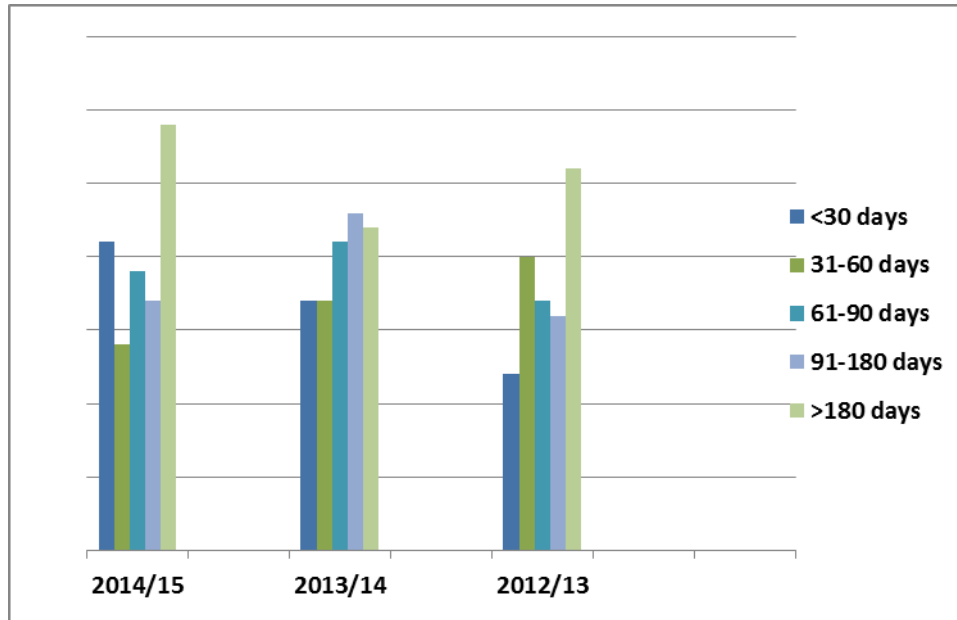
#### Percent of Participants Remaining in Job:

For placements made in: 2014      2013      2012

#### **Percentage remaining employed:**

1 month after placement	83.8	86.4	96.9
3 months*	70.7	90.0 (2 mos)	90.7 (2 mos)
<b>6 months</b>	<b>61.7</b>	<b>68.2</b>	<b>73.4</b>
12 months+	53.0	70.8	69.0

Beginning with this report, retention was calculated for a 3 month period, as opposed to 2 months in previous OMR's. This partially contributes to the drop in percentages from previous studies.



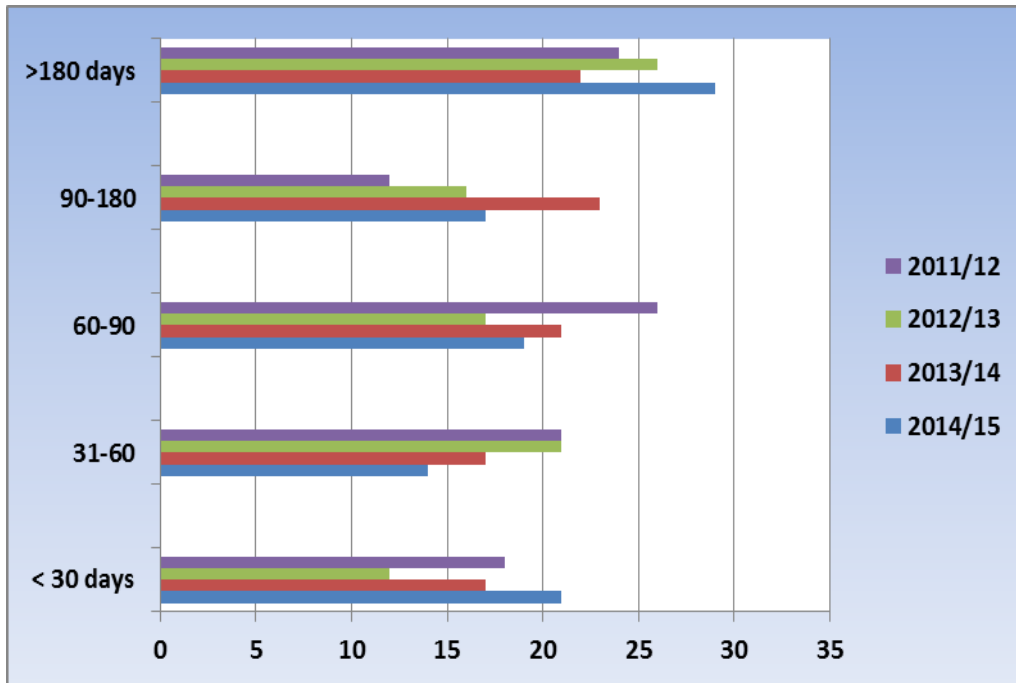
Job retention rates in the 6 month timeframe continued to fall short of our 75% target. Follow-along services remain available for a substantial majority of participants, and the effectiveness of our long term support is continually examined to ensure the service helps clients to maintain employment stability.

**Objective 3:** To place all participants within 60 days of referral.\*

For placements in:	<u>2014 /15</u>	<u>2013/14</u>	<u>2012/13</u>
<b>Placed less than 30 days from referral (Percent)</b>	21	17	12
<b>31-60 days</b>	14	17	20
61-90 days	19	21	17
91-180 days	17	23	16
More than 180 days	29	22	26

\*does not include re-placements or school placements

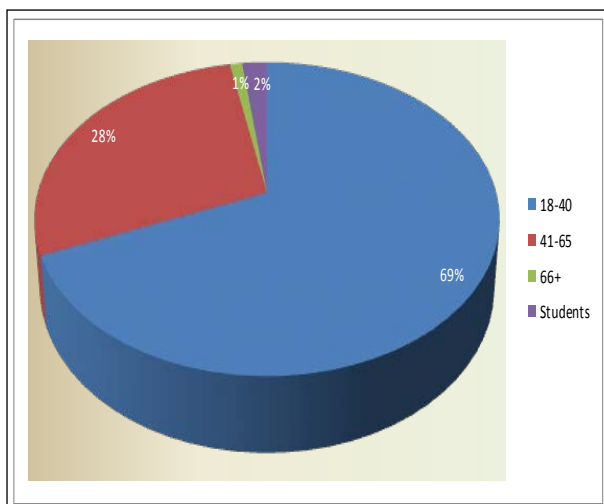
35% of our placements were made within 60 days of referral in fiscal 2015, improving on last year's performance by 1%. The percent of people taking more than 180 days to place, however, increased; a trend that hopefully will reverse in coming years.

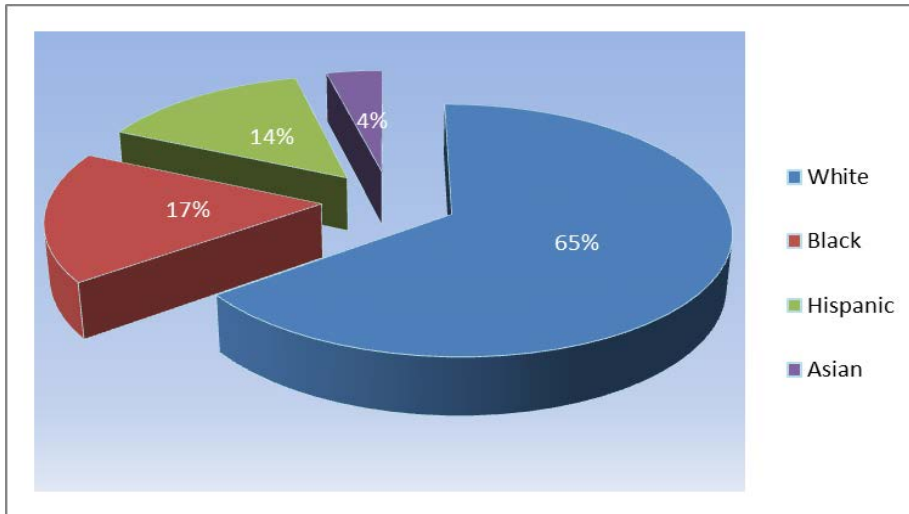


The goal of placing a high percentage of referrals within 60 days is important, as long as quality of service in terms of good job matching and long-term stability does not diminish. Project HIRE seeks to provide timely and quality-driven attention to all participants, and will set objectives in this category that are realistic and in consideration of quality and long-term employment retention.

**Objective 4:** *Ensure appropriate staffing diversity, training, and other resources to meet the needs of individuals served in consideration of demographics.*

The demographics of the population served are closely studied to determine and utilize resources that assist an increasingly diverse referral pool. To meet the needs of participants, we employ bi-lingual job coaches, provide information in bi-lingual format, and maintain a library of materials on serving a diverse population.

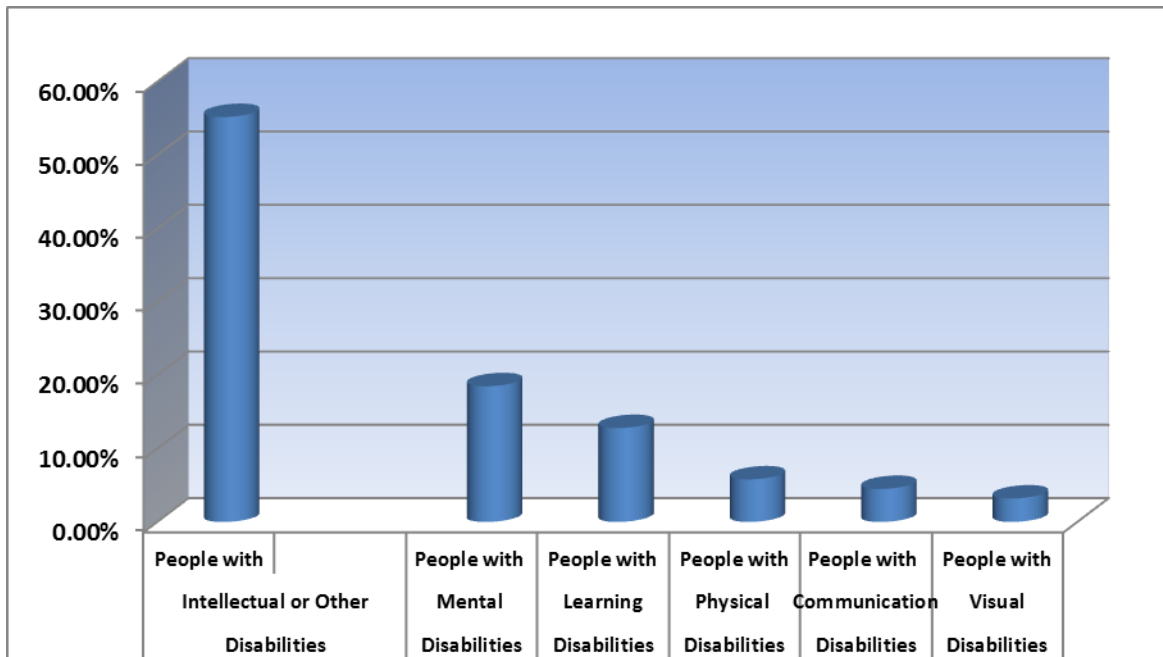




*Charts: Population Served - Ethnicity and Age  
Population Gender: Male, 62% Female 38%*

To assist people with different disabilities, staff also receive training and attend in-service sessions addressing service delivery for people with brain injury, mental illness, dual diagnoses, etc. and Project HIRE regularly explores alternate training opportunities for its staff in these areas.

**Population Served by Disability (expressed as a percent)**

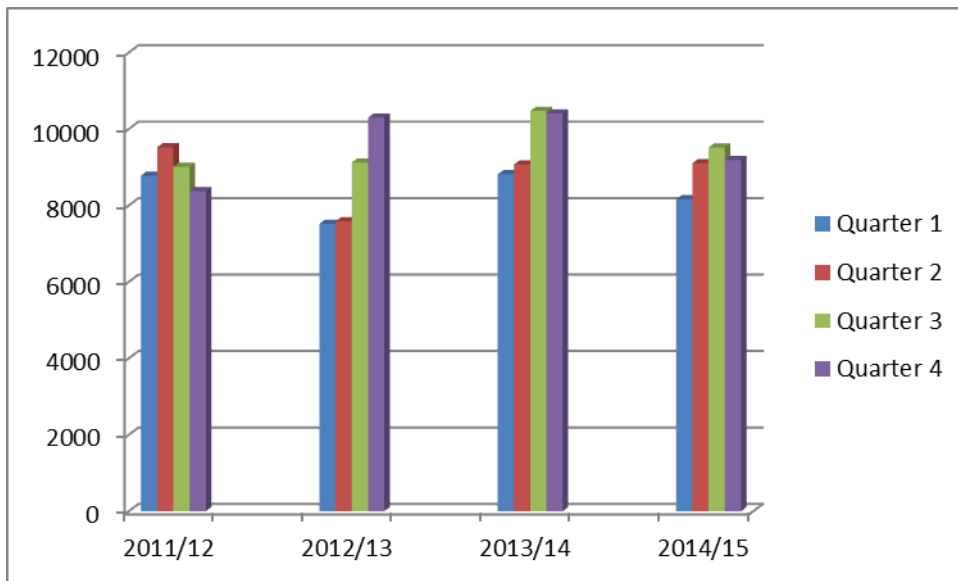




**Objective 5:** To bill a minimum of 9,600 hours per quarter, or 38,400 hours per year.

Billable Hours:	<u>2014/2015</u>	<u>2013/14</u>	<u>2012/13</u>
1 <sup>st</sup> Quarter	8,162	8,817	7,517
2 <sup>nd</sup> Quarter	9,105	9,072	7,588
3 <sup>rd</sup> Quarter	9,514	10,470	9,125
4 <sup>th</sup> Quarter	9,189	10,406	10,297
<b>Total:</b>	<b>35,970</b>	<b><u>38,765</u></b>	<b><u>34,527</u></b>

Although Project HIRE did not meet its objective, we made the expected number of placements with the billable hours produced. Billable hours are studied and analyzed at frequent intervals during the course of the year. As an important indicator of the program's fiscal condition, our requirements are carefully weighed against expenses for both short and long term planning and, if needed, adjusted accordingly.



**Objective 6:** Maintain staff stability with a retention rate of at least 70 percent over a 2 year period.

Project HIRE prides itself on having a professional, well trained and dedicated staff. Twenty three of our 34 staff members (permanent part/full time) have been with us for more than the 2 year timeframe (67.6%). Noteworthy is the fact that nine of our staff members have been with the program for more than ten years.

**Objectives for Next Year:**

1. Place a minimum of 40 people per quarter (160 participants) in competitive employment

*Strategy;* Through our continuing high-quality of service to funding sources and our program promotion, the number of referrals will increase to ensure placement rate.

2. Maintain a retention rate of 6 month or more for at least 75% of placed individuals.

*Strategy:* Ensure quality job matching that conforms to individual service plans, and then ensure a quality follow-along service that strengthens job stability.

3. Place 80% of newly referred individuals into community employment within 60 days of referral.

*Strategy:* Reduce requirement from last year so that quality job matching has a greater emphasis and helps to assure longer-term success

4. Ensure staffing skills meet the needs of population served as indicted by participant demographics and maintain staff retention rate of 70% or higher.

*Strategy:* Carefully examine staffing with respect to prior experience, caseloads, hours worked, travel requirements, and program benefits and expenses to retain a motivated and qualified staff.

5. Provide 9,300 service hours per quarter.

*Strategy:* A reduction from last year's goal that is more in line with current staffing and budget and a staff requirement to perform at minimum levels of service hours will contribute to meeting this objective