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Evaluation of the Kent County Work Progressions Program

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Design Report

January 2000

by

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The purpose of this document is to present a detailed design of the proposed Upjohn Institute evaluation of the Work Progressions demonstration program in Kent County. The scope of work that is specified will occur during calendar year 2000, and will culminate with a final report that will be completed by December 31, 2000.

Objectives of Work Progressions

The goal of program evaluation is to assess whether a program has achieved its stated objectives, and if so, how effectively it has done so. In addition, an evaluation will determine whether the program resulted in unintended (positive or negative) consequences. It appears as though Work Progressions has two broad objectives—improving the likelihood of sustained client self-sufficiency and improving the service delivery system. These two goals might be stated explicitly as follows:

Objective 1: Work Progressions will result in improved outcomes for clients—the clients will be better planners; they will have higher levels of family income; they will find employment in jobs that are more likely to impart skills and knowledge through training and that lead to sustainable stable careers; and they will be more confident and exhibit more control over their lives.

Objective 2: The Work Progressions pilot will result in enhancements to the system of public job training and income maintenance programs—more meaningful collaborations between public, nonprofit, and private sector entities will be established; employer enthusiasm will be higher; client customers will be more satisfied; and it will be more cost effective.

Three studies will be conducted to determine whether Work Progressions achieves these objectives. A ***process evaluation*** will review the administrative processes and practices of Work Progressions to provide feedback on the successes and problems that are being experienced as it is being implemented. A ***client net impact study*** will attempt to determine how clients fare as a result of their participation in Work Progressions *relative to* how they might have fared in the current existing Work First/TANF systems. A ***system impact study*** will examine the potential for Work Progressions to improve public job training and income maintenance systems. Among other things, it will examine cost effectiveness, client and staff satisfaction, and employer satisfaction.

What is the Work Progressions "Treatment?"

The impetus for Work Progressions is the belief that the immediate work philosophy of Work First does not put enough emphasis on long-term planning nor is there enough collaboration in the community to ensure movement toward a truly adequate level of economic self-sufficiency. To overcome these shortcomings, Work Progressions is going to use an interdisciplinary case management team to work with clients and is going to work closely with its business advisory group. Specifically, it will offer clients enhanced services at three stages: during job search, at initial placement, and post-employment.

Among the first activities that Work Progressions clients will undertake will be career exploration and development of a plan for self-sufficiency. The Work Progressions team will work with clients to develop short and long term financial, vocational, mental/emotional, and family support goals. These goals will be part of a comprehensive plan for self-sufficiency. After working with clients to develop meaningful plans, the team will help clients find entry-level jobs that lead to planned, built-in career tracks.

After placement, the Work Progressions team will offer clients a panoply of support services. While providing many types of supports, the team will be "weaning" itself from clients, decreasing its involvement as clients move toward full self-sufficiency. The types of interventions that the team will be offering include:

- Personal skills development
- Job site mentors
- Support services including reviewing and revising clients' career development and plan
- Technical skills training at job
- "Safety Net" supportive services

In addition to these interventions intended to directly aid clients, Work Progressions will have an active Business Advisory Group that will bring business acumen, placement opportunities, private sector networks, and other advantages to the project.

Overview of the Evaluation Design

The participants in Work Progressions will be individuals receiving cash assistance through TANF who are not exempt from Work First. There will be many more individuals who are eligible for Work Progressions than the number of clients that the program can serve. Plans call for serving about 75 clients in Work Progressions in calendar year (CY) 2000. The participants will be selected from individuals who encounter the Work First system during the weeks that enrollment will be offered. Individuals will be randomly selected to participate. Individuals not selected will be offered the opportunity via a letter to serve as a control group for the evaluation.

As noted above, the evaluation will be comprised of three separate, but related, studies—process evaluation, client net impact study, and system impact study. The process evaluation will be conducted by collecting qualitative data through in person interviews or focus groups with key stakeholders. The client net impact study will use a classical experimental approach by randomly assigning clients to Work Progressions and to a control group of individuals who do not receive the services. The sources of data will include program administrative data and primary data collected through surveys. The system impact study will rely on administrative data to examine the cost effectiveness of Work Progressions (costs will be tracked for the participants and for the control group), but the analyses of most of the other topics to be examined will rely on qualitative data from focus groups or semi-structured interviews.

<u>Process Evaluation</u>

The purposes of the process evaluation are twofold:

- To assess Work Progressions' administrative and programmatic processes and provide continuing feedback on the strengths and problems that are being encountered as it is being implemented, and

- To identify the effects of the components of Work Progressions on participant outcomes

The primary data collection that is proposed will be done through semi-structured interviews or focus groups conducted during site visits. We call the interviews semi-structured because project staff will have a formal interview guide that will contain questions for each respondent group, but in addition, project staff will be free to pursue in more depth additional subjects of interest that may arise during the interview. The semi-structured interview approach allows the interviewer flexibility while collecting information, but all respondents are asked the same set of questions, allowing for cross-individual analysis. We will supplement the interview and focus group data with file reviews for a sample of clients.

The pilot's stakeholders who will be interviewed over the course of the process evaluation include the following:

- Program and agency administrators

- Members of the Work Progressions service team(s)
- Staff from affiliated agencies (to which clients may be referred)
- Participants
- Employers (and members of the Business Advisory Board)

The analysis of the process evaluation qualitative data will be straightforward. The information from the interviews, focus groups, files, and program documents will be examined, and issues where there is agreement and where there is disagreement will be summarized. Major problems encountered by stakeholders and how they were, or were not, dealt with will be emphasized.

After each site visit, we will prepare a memorandum that reviews what was accomplished, but more importantly, will point out any suggestions about what seems to be working and what seems to be causing problems for staff, employers, or clients. These site visit reports will be sent to the program staff, and will become the data that are used to develop a chapter in the final report.

Schedule. We propose to conduct site visits four times during the pilot. These four are as follows:

- mid-February
- beginning of April
- July
- October

The first visit, in mid-February, will essentially field test the semi-structured interviews with the start-up group of clients and with the staff. Furthermore, it will be conducted on a Monday, so that we can observe the Work First orientation and movement of clients into Work Progressions.

In early April, the enrollment process will be close to completion, and we will be able to interview clients who have been in Work Progressions for a substantial period of time. Clients will have received services from and interacted with the Work Progressions team for several weeks.

Presumably many of the clients will have been placed into jobs, and we should be able to interview employer and agency partners.

Our July visit will allow us to observe Work Progressions at full capacity. Enrollment will have been completed, and the staff will have its full caseload. We will interview staff and clients, plus we will examine files to see how client progress and problems are being documented. We will interview employers and collaborating agency staff to focus on the processes of collaboration.

The final visit in October will give us our last opportunity to evaluate the Work Progressions processes. Agency administrators will have formed an opinion by then about how Work Progressions has fit into the agency, and upon its effectiveness. Employers should have internalized the differences between Work Progressions and Work First, and should be able to provide informed opinions about client differences. Clients will have had the time and opportunities to progress in their employment, plus they will have faced and addressed a number of barriers to success.

The following table shows our plan for who we would like to interview during each site visit. A prototypical schedule for the day follows that table.

			Stakeholders			
Visit	Recently enrolled students	Clients who have been placed	Work Progressions Staff	ASCET/FIA/ Work First staff/admin.	Employers	Collab. Agency staff/admin.
mid-February	X		X			
April	X	X	X	X	X	X
July		X	X	X	X	
October		X	X	X	X	X

Prototypical Schedule

8:30	- 9:15	Interview Work Progressions staff (2 staff members)
9:15	- 10:00	Small group interview with clients (2 - 3 clients)
10:00	- 10:45	Small group interview with clients (2 - 3 clients)
11:00	- 12:00	Interview ASCET/FIA/Work First staff (1 or 2 staff members)
12:00	- 1:15	Lunch and travel
1:15	- 2:30	Interview employer and 1 or 2 placed clients
2:30	- 3:00	Break and travel
3:00	- 3:45	Interview collaborating agency staff (1 or 2 staff members)

Interview Forms. Our plan is to finalize the actual questions and format of the interview forms just prior to conducting the visit, so that we can make sure that we are asking about the most relevant issues. The following lists of questions give a general idea of the kinds of items that will be asked of the stakeholders.

Clients

1. Tell me about your initial meeting with Work Progressions case managers (NAMES). How was the program described to you? What was your reaction?

2. Tell me about the career development and self-sufficiency plan that you developed when you met with the Work Progressions workers. How did you develop the plan? Who was involved? In what way?

3. Is the plan useful? If so, how? On a scale of 1 to 10, where 1 is "the plan is just another piece of paperwork" to 10, which is "I think the plan will be a very useful document that I will refer to often", where would you rate your plan? Why do you say that?

4. Have the Work Progressions workers gotten involved with your employment at all? If so, how—found the job for you, helped you with the application and/or interview process, talked to your supervisor or plant manager/owner about hiring you or otherwise providing training, or some other way?

5. From your experience with public support agencies, how would you compare your experiences with Work Progressions—much better, about the same, worse? Why do you say that?

6. What kinds of problems/issues have you run into with Work Progressions? What are the most objectionable things about it?

7. What kinds of problems/issues have you run into with your employment? How did you address these issues?

8. What aspect(s) of Work Progressions has worked well for you? What are the best things about it?

Work Progressions Staff

1. Why did you get involved in Work Progressions? Is it meeting your expectations for your own personal/professional development?

2. How much training did you have at the beginning of the demonstration? Was it enough? Did you get involved in the planning of WP? If so, what was your role?

3. What role do you play in WP? Are you full-time in WP or do you have other program responsibilities?

4. Tell me about what happens to clients after they are referred to the WP program. Are most clients co-operative?

5. What barriers do clients have to achieving more success? How do you help them to overcome them?

6. Do you have interactions with workers at other agencies? If so, please tell me about them. Do you have interactions with employers? Again, please tell me about them. What share of employers do you think want to help clients to achieve self-sufficiency?

7. What strategies would be successful in increasing the involvement of employers?

8. If the agency had double the resources, could it serve twice as many clients in WP? Why do you say that?

9. What sorts of problems is Work Progressions running into? Are there any changes that you would make if you were running the program? What would they be?

10. What aspects of WP are you most proud of? Why?

Agency administrators (e.g., Directors of Goodwill, FIA, ASCET)

1. What is your opinion about Work Progressions? Will it work? Why or why not?

2. How much interaction do you have with it? How often? With whom?

3. Do State administrators know about Work Progressions? What sort of feedback/support do you get from them? How about other agencies in the state?

4. Is Work Progressions accepted by other staff in the agency? How were the staff chosen?

5. Does the agency have extra financial costs imposed on it because of Work Progressions? What sort of budgetary impact does it have?

6. If you had double the resources, could you double the number of clients that you serve in Work Progressions? Why or why not? (What is the barrier to significant expansion?)

Employers

1. What involvement do you have with Work Progressions? How did you become involved? Does your employer actively support your involvement?

2. What is your experience in hiring welfare clients? Do they require more supervision than the average worker? Do they require more training? Are they likely to progress in a career? Do they have higher turnover? What sorts of problems have you encountered?

3. Have you hired individuals through the Work Progressions program? If so, has your experienced with them as workers differed from other welfare clients?

4. Do you think that your involvement with Work Progressions or with hiring welfare clients depends on the state of the economy/labor market? Why do you say that?

5. What things are Work Progressions doing well/right? What things could be improved? Why do you say that?

Collaborating Agency staff

1. What involvement do you have with Work Progressions? How did you become involved?

2. Are the staff in this agency generally knowledgeable about Work Progressions? If so, is it generally accepted by the staff in the agency?

3. What things are Work Progressions doing well/right? What things could be improved? Why do you say that?

Requirements of Work Progressions program staff. Conducting the process study will require some cooperation from Work Progressions staff. In particular, we will need some assistance in the logistics of our visits: identifying respondents, scheduling interviews or focus groups, and securing a place to hold the interviews. Inviting the participation of clients and staff may also require staff from Work Progressions.

Client Net Impact Study

The purpose of the net impact study is to determine the impact of Work Progressions on clients. It is referred to as a net impact study because it will attempt to determine client outcomes that result from participation in Work Progressions *relative to what would have happened if there had been no such program.* We use the term counterfactual to refer to the state of the world that we would like to have for comparison purposes in order to measure the impact of the Work Progressions demonstration, and in this case the counterfactual is having no Work Progressions program. Of course, this counterfactual will not exist (since Work Progressions will be operational for the treatment clients.) Consequently, we will use a group of Work First clients, who are otherwise very similar to the clients who receive services through Work Progressions, as our comparison group. If the individuals in the comparison group are similar to the Work Progressions participants, then we will assume that any differences that we observe in outcomes can be attributed to Work Progressions.

The best way to construct a comparison group is through random assignment. That is, individuals who are eligible to become participants in Work Progressions will be assigned a random number (without their knowledge). If the random number takes on certain values, then the individual will be assigned to Work Progressions. All other clients will participate in Work First, which is the alternative that would be followed by Work Progressions participants in the absence of the demonstration. The Work First clients will be given an opportunity to volunteer to be a member of the control group of the evaluation.

Enrollment procedures. For purposes of this design, we have assumed that approximately 50 clients attend the joint FIA/Work First orientation each week (these clients would be new applicants, reapplicants, and clients who are going through redeterminations). We further assume that 80 percent of these clients are eligible for cash payments and are mandatory referrals to Work First. Work First has a mandatory orientation at the Wyoming Community Education Center on Monday morning, and so we have assumed that 40 individuals have been assigned to attend this orientation.

Not all of the individuals referred to the Monday morning session will show up. We assume that 60 percent of the referrals will actually attend the Work First orientation. That is, 24 individuals will show up on Monday morning. Work Progressions will ***randomly*** select 6 of these individuals for participation. The algorithm that should be used is as follows:

- Divide 6 by the number of individuals who attend (sign the attendance register) the orientation session. Round this number to two digits and call the result the selection probability.

  For example, if 24 individuals attend the orientation session, then the selection probability is 0.25. If 27 individuals attend the orientation session, then the selection probability is 0.22. If 18 individuals attend, then the selection probability is 0.33.

- Multiply the selection probability by 100 to get a number between 01 and 99. Call this number the selection cutoff. So if there were 24 attendees at the orientation, the selection cutoff would be 25; if there were 27 attendees, the selection cutoff would be 22; and if there were 18, the cutoff would be 33.

- Select the first 6 individuals for whom the last two digits of their social security number is less than the selection cutoff. If there are fewer than 6 clients who meet this criterion, then select all of the clients whose last two digits are less than the cutoff, and take the clients whose last digits are closest to the cutoff until 6 clients are selected.

Example 1

Client 1	xxx-xx-2467
Client 2	xxx-xx-6418
Client 3	xxx-xx-0644
Client 4	xxx-xx-7282
Client 5	xxx-xx-1385
Client 6	xxx-xx-8444
Client 7	xxx-xx-9027
Client 8	xxx-xx-3557
Client 9	xxx-xx-8215
Client 10	xxx-xx-1141
Client 11	xxx-xx-6789
Client 12	xxx-xx-3029
Client 13	xxx-xx-5259
Client 14	xxx-xx-6992
Client 15	xxx-xx-1887
Client 16	xxx-xx-4099
Client 17	xxx-xx-6612
Client 18	xxx-xx-7238
Client 19	xxx-xx-8039
Client 20	xxx-xx-5570
Client 21	xxx-xx-6128
Client 22	xxx-xx-8841
Client 23	xxx-xx-6640
Client 24	xxx-xx-8872
Client 25	xxx-xx-1879
Client 26	xxx-xx-2299
Client 27	xxx-xx-3418

27 clients ==> selection probability = 0.22
selection cutoff = 22
clients selected = (2, 9, 17, 27, 7, 21)

Example 2

Client 1	xxx-xx-3578
Client 2	xxx-xx-7092
Client 3	xxx-xx-9901
Client 4	xxx-xx-2256
Client 5	xxx-xx-0333
Client 6	xxx-xx-5172
Client 7	xxx-xx-9421
Client 8	xxx-xx-7834
Client 9	xxx-xx-0038
Client 10	xxx-xx-5782
Client 11	xxx-xx-4193
Client 12	xxx-xx-1128
Client 13	xxx-xx-1039
Client 14	xxx-xx-7723
Client 15	xxx-xx-7946
Client 16	xxx-xx-3102
Client 17	xxx-xx-5588
Client 18	xxx-xx-2160
Client 19	xxx-xx-4482
Client 20	xxx-xx-5916
Client 21	xxx-xx-9159
Client 22	xxx-xx-0229
Client 23	xxx-xx-8266
Client 24	xxx-xx-9118

24 clients ==> selection prob. = 0.25
selection cutoff = 25
clients selected = (3, 7, 14, 16, 20, 24)

The other (approximately) 18 clients will proceed to Work First case managers. These individuals will be invited to be control cases for the net impact evaluation, by being invited to participate in a study of client satisfaction with the Work First system (Figure 1). We have assumed that half of them will participate since they will be offered some incentive to do so.

Figure 1

Invitation to Control Group

Work First Letterhead

Dear Work First Client,

WE WOULD LIKE TO KNOW WHAT YOU THINK!

We are conducting a study of the effectiveness of the Work First program and client satisfaction with our services. We would like to invite you to be a participant in our study. This means that you would be asked to provide some additional information in surveys and in group interviews over the course of this year (until December, 2000). You will be compensated for the time that it takes you to provide the information with gift certificates from Meijer's.

We have hired an outside firm to conduct this study – the Upjohn Institute from Kalamazoo. The kinds of questions that the Upjohn staff will be asking you include information about your education and employment background, your opinions about how well Work First meets your needs, and about the type of training or activities that you engage in as a Work First client.

Your participation in this study is voluntary, and whether or not you participate does not influence your standing with the Work First or cash assistance programs.

If you would like to participate in the study, please sign the attached agreement, complete the data, and mail it to the Upjohn Institute by using the self-addressed, stamped envelope.

Thank you!

Sincerely,

Work First

Start-up period, enrollment period, and post-enrollment period. The year will be divided into three periods: a start-up period, an enrollment period, and a post-enrollment period. The start-up period will be the last two weeks in January. During this period, Work Progressions will enroll two cohorts of 6 clients and will initiate services with them. Further, we will test our procedures for soliciting control group members. We will collect data from both the treatment and control group members, but because many changes to the program will take place once it gets started, we may decide not to use that data in our analyses.

The enrollment period will commence January 31 and will run for 13 weeks until the planned case level of approximately 75 cases is reached. Assuming that an average of 6 clients enter Work Progressions and 9 Work First clients agree to be control group members, at the end of the enrollment period there will be 90 Work Progressions participants (12 from the start-up period and 78 from the enrollment period), and there will be 135 Work First clients who will be the control group (18 from the start-up period and 117 from the enrollment period).

Data requirements. The data that are required to conduct the net impact analyses fall into three categories: outcome variables, measures of participation, and background variables. The outcome variables are the economic, attitudinal, family, and future-orientation characteristics that result from participation in Work Progressions (for treatment cases) or Work First (for control cases). It is differences in these variables between the Work Progressions clients and the Work First clients that will comprise the net impact of Work Progressions. The measures of participation will be data that describe the intensity and quantity of services that individuals receive through Work Progressions. In some analyses, we will examine differences between individuals who are assigned to Work Progressions and (control group) Work First clients, but in other analyses, we will want to distinguish between Work Progressions clients who were not very co-operative and simply participated in a minimal way and clients who readily took advantage of the Work Progressions program enhancements. Thus it will be important to keep track of actual attendance, activities, and other measures of Work Progressions participation.

Finally, it will be important to collect some background data about individuals to be able to adjust the statistical analyses to control for differences between Work Progressions and Work First clients that occur despite the random assignment. The sample sizes for both the treatment and control group are going to be relatively small, so it is possible that there will be fairly dramatic differences between the groups that result simply by chance.

For example, suppose that the educational attainment of the individuals in the control sample is higher than for the Work Progressions clients. For example, suppose the mean years of formal education completed for the control sample is 13.4 years and that 50 percent of the clients have attended some formal schooling after high school. On the other hand, suppose the means years of formal education completed for the Work Progressions sample is 12.4 years and that 20 percent of the clients have attended formal postsecondary schooling. Outcomes for the control group members would be expected to be higher just on the basis of their educational backgrounds, and therefore unadjusted differences in outcomes between the Work Progressions participants and the Work First clients will underestimate the true effect of the intervention. Statistical adjustments for differences in background characteristics will overcome this problem.

Outcome variables. The outcomes that will be examined lay in five domains. **Economic outcomes** will include the following:

- wages and benefits

- hours
- weeks worked
- job turnover - voluntary vs. involuntary
- work progression - education/training, promotions

Psycho-social outcomes include the following:

- locus of control
- attitude toward system (satisfaction)
- legal system encounters

Family behavior outcomes include the following:

- family/household composition
  --pregnancy
  --number of children
  --number of adults
  --marriage, dissolution of relationships
- mobility
- school behavior of dependents

Health outcomes will be monitored by self-reported physical condition and illnesses. Finally, clients' **future orientation** will be measured by assessing the plausibility of their career plans.

The outcome variables will be collected through administrative data on employment and wages and through a survey that will be conducted in September, 2000.

Background Information Form. The Work Progressions clients and the Work First clients who volunteer to be in the control group (i.e., to participate in the effectiveness survey), will be asked to complete a Background Information Form (Figure 2) at the time of their initial meeting with the interdisciplinary case management team/case manager. This form will include an agreement to co-operate that the clients will be asked to sign as well as questions intended to collect important background information for the analyses.

Background Information Form

Date: ________________

I agree to provide information to staff from the Upjohn Institute of Kalamazoo, Michigan, as part of their study of the effectiveness of the Work First [Progressions] program during the year 2000. I will complete surveys that are sent to me, or conducted over the telephone, and I will cooperate in focus group or small group interviews if invited. I further agree to allow staff from the Upjohn Institute to access my case files. I understand that the information will be completely **confidential** and that data will never be presented in a way that will identify me individually.

I understand that my participation in the study and provision of data will not affect my status with Work First [Progressions]. I will still have the Rights and Responsibilities that have been presented to me during orientation sessions.

Signed: ______________________________

Printed: ______________________________

- -

1. Date of birth: _ _ / _ _ / 19 _ _

2. Ages and gender of dependent children:

   1. _______ M F 3. _______ M F 5. _______ M F
   2. _______ M F 4. _______ M F Other: ______________

3. Highest level of education completed:

   ______ 8^{th} grade or less ______ GED ______ bachelor's degree
   ______ 9^{th} - 11^{th} grade ______ attended community college ______ master's degree or higher
   ______ 12^{th} grade (h.s. diploma) ______ associate's degree ______ attended a 4-year college or university

4. (Information about employment for up to 5 most recent jobs. Start with most recent or current job first, and work backwards.)

a) Company name	b) Company's main products or services	c) Month of starting employment	d) Month of leaving employment (SW, if still working there)	e) Job duties
1.				
2.				
3.				
4.				
5.				

f) hourly wage – currently or when last worked (include tips)	g) average hours worked per week	h) Describe any training that you received on this job
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		

5. How long have you lived in the Grand Rapids area? Since: 19 _ _

Analysis plans. To determine the client net impacts of Work Progressions, we will compare group means for all of the outcome variables. Comparison of group means between the treatment group and the control group will simply use "t-tests" in order to determine statistical significance. The null hypothesis for the "t-tests" will be equality of means, and rejection of the null hypothesis will imply that there is an impact of Work Progressions for that outcome. We will make statistical comparisons between the groups for unadjusted means and for regression-adjusted means. The latter uses the background variables to adjust for differences in the two groups that may occur by chance.

System Impact Analysis

The purpose of the system impact study is to examine the extent to which Work Progressions changes, and hopefully improves, the public job training and income maintenance systems in the county. It will examine cost effectiveness, client, staff, and employer satisfaction. Two types of data will be used in the analyses. Administrative data on costs will be used to examine cost effectiveness, and data from the semi-structured interviews and focus groups will be used to analyze client, staff, and employer satisfaction. Also, we will gauge the extent to which collaboration between agencies and with employers has been enhanced.

The cost effectiveness piece of this study is the most challenging. The framework that we will use is to compare the costs of Work Progressions versus the counterfactual program, which is Work First. To be able to compare the two, costs will be calculated on a "normalized" basis, which means that they will be computed on a "per client served" or "per placement" basis. The program that has the lower cost per client served or lower cost per placement will be considered the more cost effective program.

Cost items will include staff costs for Work Progressions and for Work First control cases. These data will come from time reports, and should include line and administrative staff. In addition, there will be program costs such as materials, telephone/utility costs, transportation, and so forth that will be tracked. Finally, we will attempt to measure the quantity of volunteer time that is devoted to the two programs, and to estimate the value of that volunteer time.

Two important distinctions will have to be kept in mind when we conduct and interpret the cost effectiveness data. First, Work Progressions is attempting to provide enhanced services to clients. So the denominator in the cost effectiveness ratio may be conceptually different between Work Progressions clients and Work First clients. In other words, the average cost of Work First will be the average cost of services per client, whereas the average cost of Work Progressions will be the average cost of ***enhanced*** services per client. It is probably to be expected that the Work Progressions costs will be greater simply because they will be providing more services and more intensive services.

Second, Work Progressions is a new initiative, and so it may experience start-up costs that wouldn't show up as costs for Work First. For example, staff may meet more frequently in order to develop client procedures in Work Progressions. There may be costs that are borne because of the program evaluation. Again it is to be expected that Work Progressions costs would be higher since Work First has been around for several years. Ideally, we will adjust for the start-up costs by omitting them in the cost effectiveness calculation. Of course, this assumes that we will be able to easily identify and calculate start-up costs.

The customer, staff, and employer satisfaction studies will be done by collecting information from these stakeholders during the process analysis. Similarly, opinions about the effectiveness of collaboration will be gathered during these data collections.

Final Report

The evaluation will produce two types of written reports for the program administrators. First, we will be sending brief progress reports to the sponsors of the evaluation on a quarterly basis with invoices and we will be sending summaries of what we observed during site visits to the program administrators after each visit. However, the focus of the study will be on a comprehensive document to be delivered near the end of 2000 that will present the findings from the process analyses, client net impact study, and the system impact study.

The final report will document the implementation of Work Progressions focusing particularly on how procedures differ from and extend the current program's operation. It will then describe the methodology used in the process study and present the conclusions and observations that come out of that study. It will next describe the client net impact study, and its quantitative results. Then the system impact study will be described, focusing mainly on the cost effectiveness portion of that study. Finally, the report will have a chapter of conclusions that draw from the qualitative and quantitative data. This chapter will present a "bottom line" evaluation of the success of Work Progressions. The final report will have an executive summary that will be written for a nontechnical audience. The final report will be completed by December 31, 2000.