

City of Portland
Health and Human Services Department
Social Services Division

Support Services Program
Year End Report
FY 2013

Employment Services
Social Security Disability Benefits Assistance Program
Representative Payee Services

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The Support Services Program consists of three components: Employment Services, Representative Payee and Disability Services. These programs assist our consumers in the transition from public assistance and homelessness to self sufficiency.

Employment Services

The Division's Employment Services Program provides assistance with the location of full time and part time employment. Services provided include pre-employment workshops, employment counseling, resume writing, job placement, and job retention/follow-up services.

- **Homeless Employment Project**

The purpose of this project is to provide employment training and support to homeless persons experiencing multiple barriers to employment such as limited skills and education, poor work history, and health, mental health, and/or substance abuse issues. This program is funded by Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Homeless Assistance Grant funds and is currently in its fourteenth (14th) year of operation.

At the time of intake, project participants must be considered homeless per the U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development federal definition; likely living on the streets or in emergency shelters. Services provided include support groups; skills training related to locating, applying for, and maintaining employment; assistance in accessing training programs; job development and retention services. The goal is to help homeless people gain and maintain stable employment, which will allow them to secure permanent housing and reduce the risk of future homelessness.

Employment Services provided assessments to 97 individuals this year. Employment placements for the year resulted in 54 full-time placements and 21 part-time placements (for a total of 75 placements; an increase of 12 over FY12), with 16 individuals being offered benefit packages as part of attaining employment (Attachment #1). In FY 2012 a total of 91 individuals were provided employment assessments and 63 individuals located full time or part time employment.

The Employment Workshop series topics include appearance and dress, communication skills, interviewing skills, positive attitude and job retention. Workshop trainers present a custom training curriculum designed to help increase self- esteem and overcome barriers to attaining and retaining gainful employment. These workshops serve as a gateway to other job readiness activities including individual assessments, one-on-one employment counseling, identifying and eliminating barriers, skills identification, and job searching strategies.

Employment Counselors provide outreach services on-site at the City's Family Shelter and Preble Street's Women's Shelter during afternoons and evenings on a regular basis in an effort to increase

recruitment. In addition, the employment workshop curriculum was revised this year to include hands-on computer instruction for creating resumes and navigating through the online job market.

- **Job Training**

The Job Training Program (JTP) is another HUD funded program and is also in its fourteenth (14th) year of operation. The JTP mission is to provide homeless individuals with a challenging training experience, which will lead to employment. We look at strengths, past work history, and employment goals and interests to help in our selection of an appropriate work site. This project provides job training stipends to homeless adults experiencing multiple barriers to employment such as limited skills and education, poor work history, and health, mental health and/or substance abuse issues. At the time of Intake, project participants are living in the streets or in homeless shelters. Stipends are used as an incentive for homeless who are transitioning back into the workforce to participate in work experience placements which can lead to permanent, unsubsidized employment.

Job Training funds are used to create stipends to help homeless people transition into employment. Stipends are paid directly to participants, at a rate of about \$3 per hour for 24 hours per week, for up to eight (8) weeks. Placements may lead to permanent employment with that particular employer; they are intended to provide an opportunity for people who have worked sporadically or not at all to gain experience and skills that will support permanent employment. Clients are given a weekly evaluation by the site-supervisor including skills learned. Clients may use these as tools to assist in securing future employment once the JTP is completed.

This year, 15 individuals participated in this program and 13 participants secured employment (attachment #1), with 11 of the participants being offered a benefits package. In FY 2012 a total of 11 participants secured employment with 9 receiving benefits packages.

Job Training Program offers consumers a training experience in the following fields: Food Service Worker, Institutional Cook, Laundry Worker, General Maintenance Worker, Housekeeping Services, Custodial Worker, and Clerical. These sites are located within the City of Portland's Health & Human Services Department.

Social Security Disability Benefits Assistance Program

The Disability Services Program assists General Assistance recipients in the Social Security benefits application process. When employment is not a reasonable goal due to disability, consumers are referred to the Disability Services Program to receive assistance filing for Social Security Disability benefits (SSI/SSDI). Staff assists consumers throughout the complex application process from the initial assessment through an appeal, if required.

The Disability Services staff provides the following services to consumers:

- *Assessment for SSI, SSDI, and MaineCare*
- *Completion of all disability reports for Social Security applications*
- *Completion of MaineCare applications*
- *Receiving necessary forms regarding claims at Social Services offices*
- *Completion of forms required by Disability Determination Services*
- *Maintaining contact with Social Security Disability Determination Services to update claim statuses*
- *Referral to services such as rehabilitation, medical and housing programs*
- *Assistance filing appeals when Social Security claims are denied as necessary*
- *Arranging appointments with attorneys for appeals assistance and for representation at Administrative Law Judge hearings*

This fiscal year, Disability Services completed 42 disability assessments. A total of 29 new claims were filed. This year, 17 individuals were granted benefits; 6 of these individuals were awarded benefits on their initial application, 10 others were awarded benefits during the Hearing, while 1 were awarded benefits at Reconsideration. (Attachment #2)

Last fiscal year, Disability Services began utilizing a more thorough review and pre-screening process for clients. The new pre-screening process resulted in a decrease in the total number of clients seen overall, however it has increased the success rate of awards for clients as well as clients applying on their own for disability benefits. Significant emphasis was placed on educating both client and providers within the community regarding the disability application process.

Representative Payee Program

While most individuals receive their Social Security and Supplemental Security benefits directly, some are mandated by the Social Security Administration to have a Representative Payee to provide assistance in managing their funds. When an individual applies for Social Security Supplemental Income (SSI) a determination may be made that the individual needs a representative payee to manage the money that is received. Also, the need for a representative payee can occur post-entitlement, after an individual has been receiving SSI. For example, a parent serves as a payee for an adult child, and the elderly parent is deceased, or is no longer able for health reasons to continue to serve as payee. Representative payees can be family members or friends of the recipient or agencies that serve as representative payees. The agency can collect a fee to help cover the cost. The fee is \$39 per person (\$76 for certain individuals deemed to have a drug addiction/alcohol problem) or no more than 10% of the benefit, as mandated by the Social Security Administration, is charged to each client on a monthly basis.

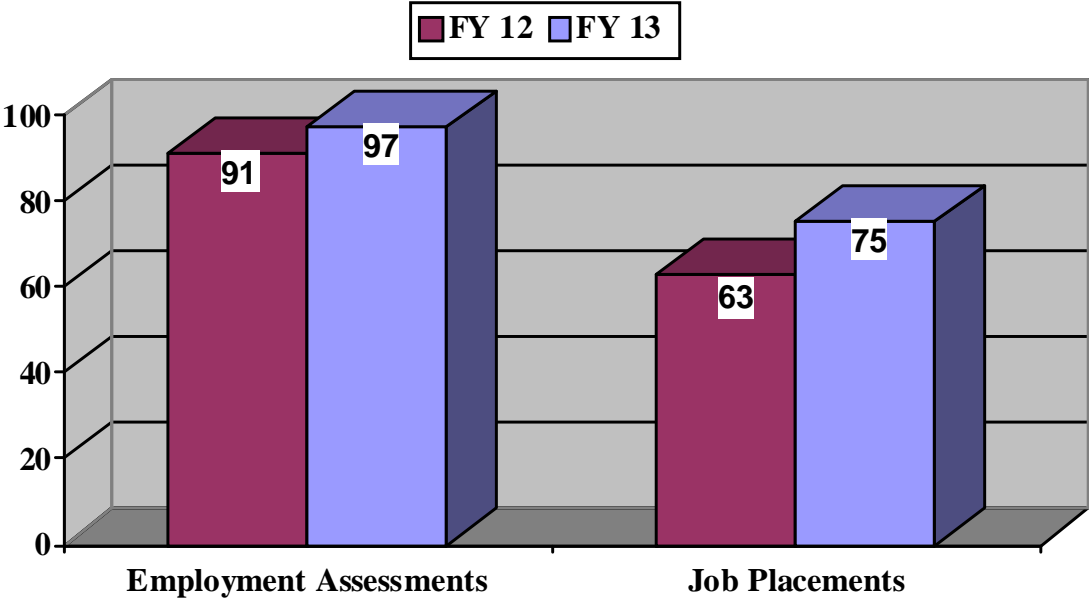
The Representative Payee Program provides assistance with:

- Monthly money managing/ payments to landlords, vendors, utilities*
- Budgeting skills education*
- Information and referral services*
- Long term fiscal planning*
- Reports/forms for SSA and Disability Determination Services*
- Housing recertification forms*

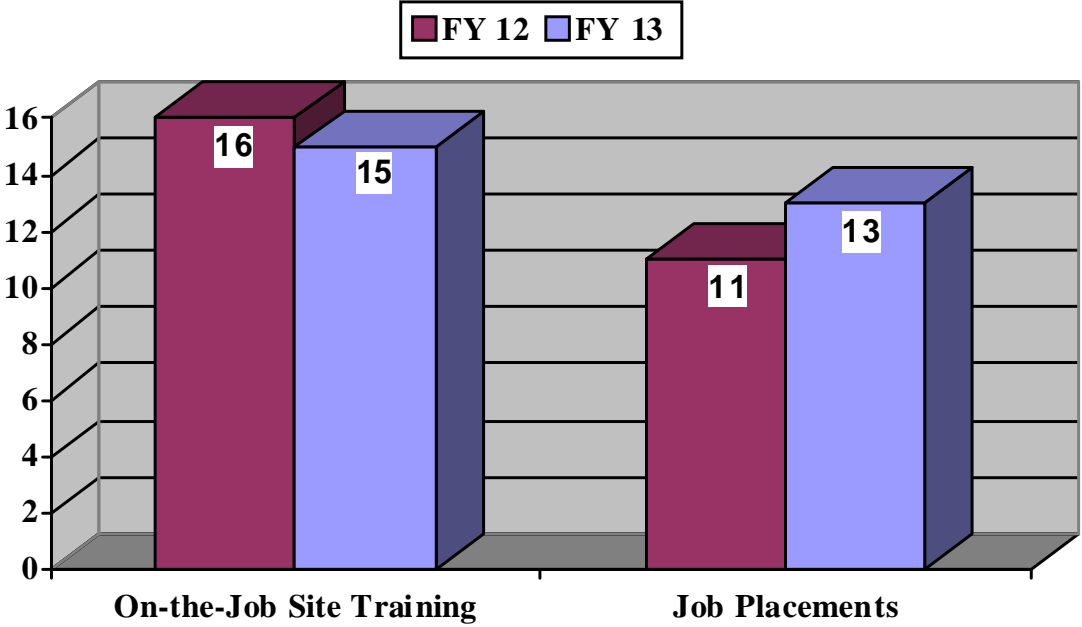
Consumers are typically referred to the Representative Payee Program directly from the Social Security Administrative offices, area social service provider agencies, hospitals, family members and attorneys. Consumers must be mandated by the Social Security Administration Office to have a representative payee as a condition of eligibility. Staff works very closely with local provider agencies to coordinate support services on behalf of the consumers who often have difficulty making these important community connections.

This year the Representative Payee Program served 376 unduplicated individuals with financial management and casework services. The average number of open cases each month was 295 which is consistent with last year (Attachment #3). The vast majority of our consumers gain and maintain stable housing as a result of being connected to our program and also become well connected with other community resources. This remains a highly respected community program meeting the important goals of stable housing, advocacy and financial management.

Homeless Employment Program*
Number of Individuals

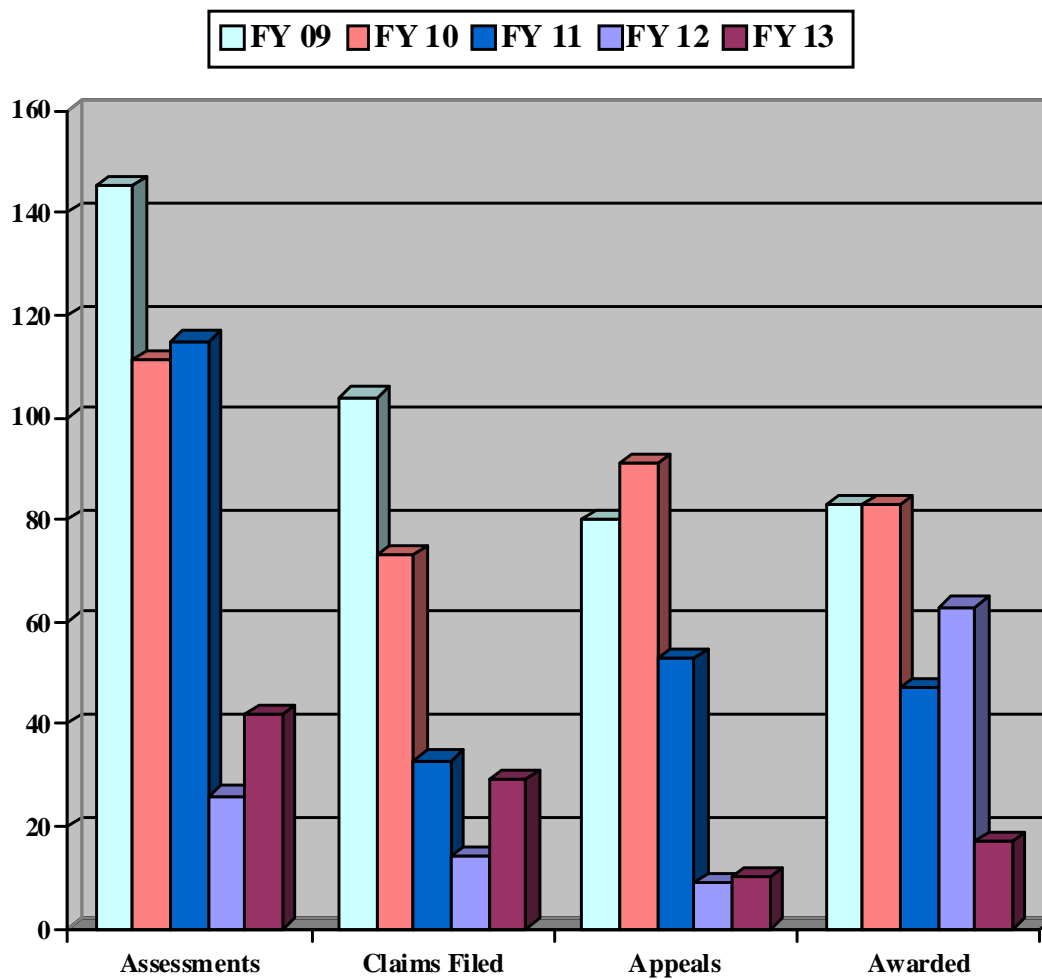


Job Training Program*



* Programs are funded by Federal Housing and Urban Development Homeless Assistance Program.

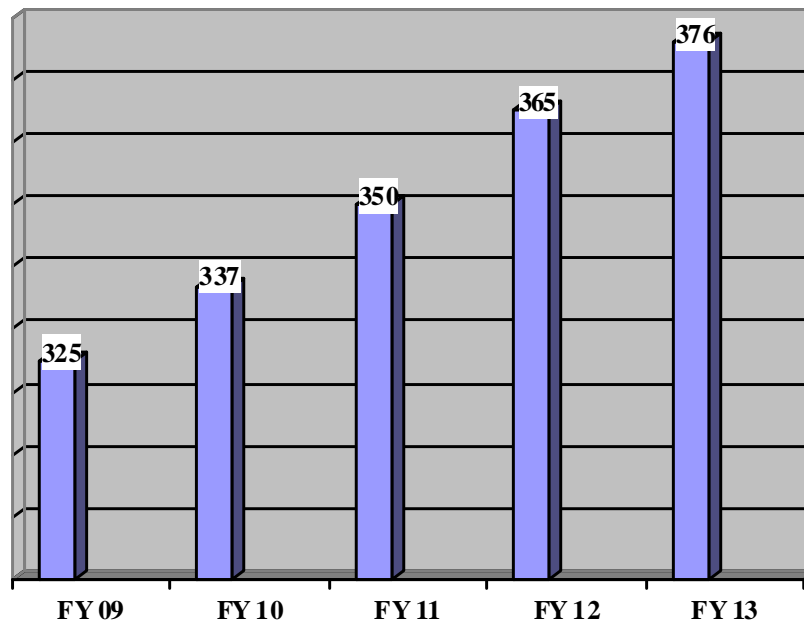
DISABILITY SERVICES PROGRAM SOCIAL SECURITY DISABILITY BENEFITS



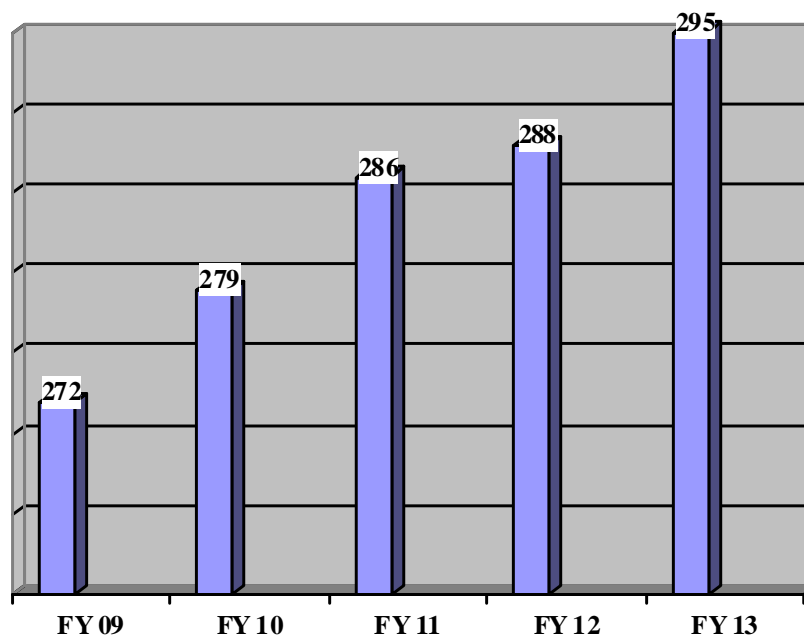
	FY 09	FY10	FY11	FY 12	FY 13
Total Number of SSI/DI Assessments	145	111	115	26	42
Total Number of Claims Filed	104	73	33	14	29
Total Number Assisted with Appeals	80	91	53	9	10
Total Number Awarded Disability	83	83	47	63	17

REPRESENTATIVE PAYEE PROGRAM

Unduplicated Clients Served



Average Number of Cases Per Month



The Representative Payee Program began in 1993 with the SSI Outreach Demonstration Project. This was a federally funded grant ending in June of 1995. The Program continued through the Social Services Division and is funded through a combination of municipal tax dollars and client fee for services. A fee of \$38 (\$75 for certain individuals deemed to have a drug addiction/alcohol problem), or no more than 10% of the benefit, as mandated by the Social Security Administration, is charged to each client on a monthly basis.