



# OREGON WORKFORCE INVESTMENT:

## *Results & Trends*

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### **Work History Trumps All Factors Affecting Performance**

One of the basic objectives of research is to look for relationships. This study compares three groups of individuals who received services from Oregon’s workforce system, determining whether their work history impacted their future work success.

The three groups are defined by how much they worked the year before they received workforce services. The first group worked all four calendar quarters (all-work); the second group worked one, two or three quarters (some-work); and the third did not work at all (no-work).

One clear trend is the strong relationship between work history and employment. Groups with the most work experience consistently outperformed those with some or no experience. Even some work history is considerably better than none.

### **Population Characteristics**

The three populations had some similarities. In each, there were about 10 percent more males than females and more than half had at least a high-school education.

The three populations also had some differences, primarily relating to age and education. Those with more work history tended to be older and more educated (Table 1).

Table 1

Work History Group	Age15-21	Age 46-55	High School or More
All-work	15%	24%	24%
Some-work	30%	16%	20%
No-work	47%	9%	11%

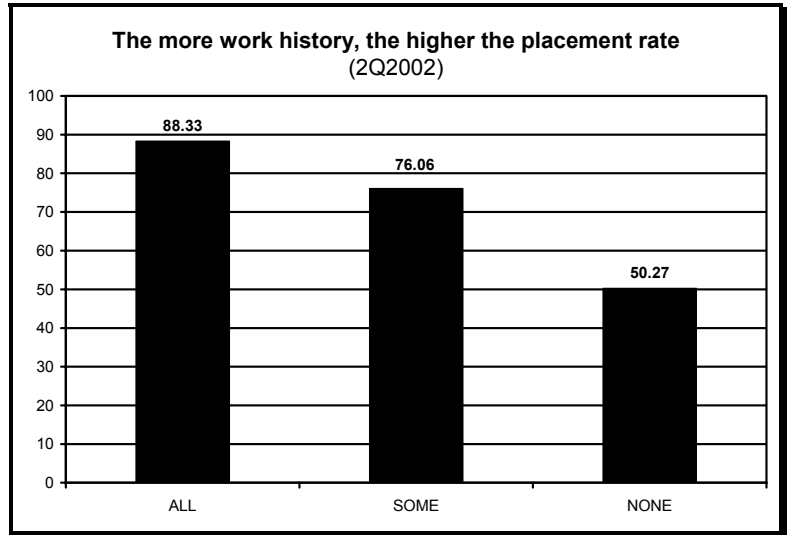
### **Placement Measurement and Work History**

The placement rate – those employed divided by those who have completed workforce services – does not distinguish between employment before, during or after services. Some of those in the all-work or some-work categories may have remained employed even while they were receiving workforce services. Those in the no-work category always had to move from a position of not having a job to finding a job during or after their period of service.

The more recent work experience people have, the higher their likelihood of having a job after receiving services – regardless of age, education or location (Graph 1).

Recent work experience may offset employment declines associated with age. For example, from ages 22 to 25 through ages 56 to 65, the placement measure declined 11 percent for the all-work group compared with 23 percent for the no-work group.

Differences in the placement measure were dramatic **between** each work-history group but minor **within** each work-history group despite each group’s diversity of ages, education levels and locations. This suggests the strong influence work history has on the placement rates.



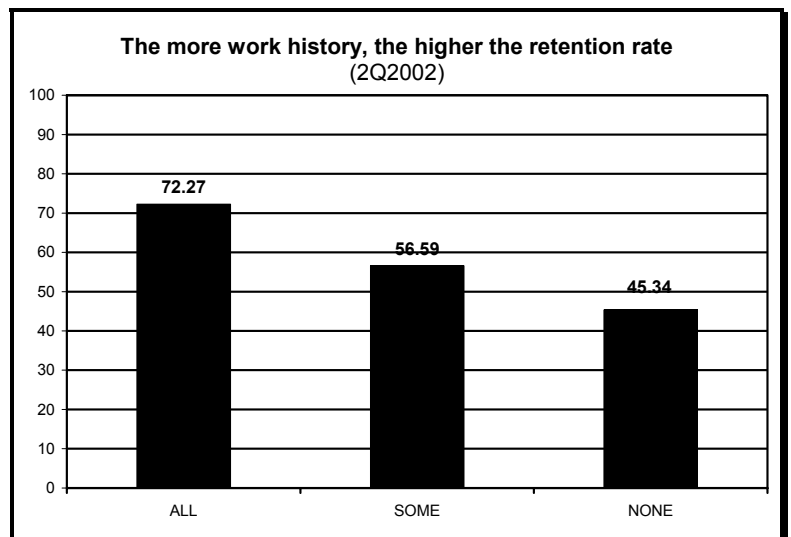
Graph 1

### Retention Measurement and Work History

The retention rate shows the same positive relationship between work history and performance as the placement rate. The more work experience people have, the more likely they are to keep a job (Graph 2).

Retention rates improve as age increases, regardless of work history, until age 55.

Increasing education enhances retention for those with some or no work history. However, it isn’t until individuals with no work history achieve a four-year college education that their retention rates exceed 50 percent.



Graph 2

In addition to advantages of work experience, employment in certain types of industries contributes to high retention. For example, utilities, education, public administration and health care are all high-wage, high-retention industries. These industries employ most of the all-work history group.

## Wage Gain Measurement and Work History

Although the all-work history group had the highest starting wages, they did not have the highest wage gain (Graphs 3 and 4).

Wage gain increased for the no-work history group through age 45. This measurement compares beginning wages with those earned a year later. The change from little or no to some employment shows the greatest gain. Those employed continuously are less apt to experience an over-the-year wage change.

Those with a college degree had the highest wage gain for the all-work history group.

## Past Predicts Future

Work history significantly determines performance. Current or previous employment is the strongest credential for finding work in the future.

## Definitions

Placement: any employment at the time of exit.

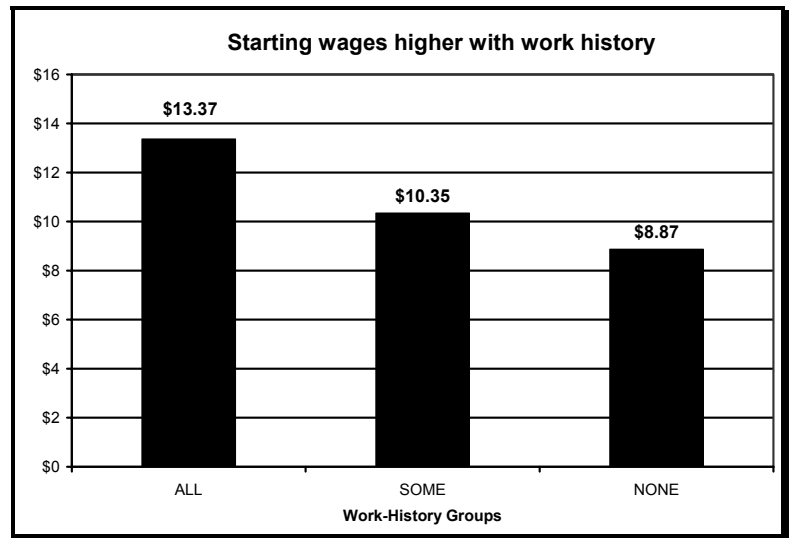
Retention: employment retained for four continuous quarters.

Wage gain: the difference between fifth- and first-quarter wages.

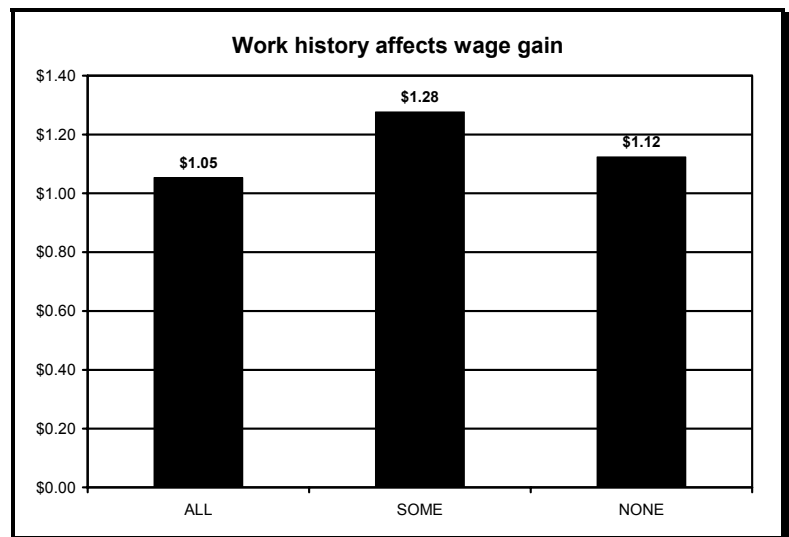
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Graph 3



Graph 4

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