



The Power of Possible

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**HELPING PEOPLE FACING OBSTACLES TO WORK  
OBTAIN GAINFUL EMPLOYMENT**

**GRANT E. COLLINS II**

PRESIDENT

[gcollins@fedcap.org](mailto:gcollins@fedcap.org)

**SECRETARIES' INNOVATION GROUP**

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# Addressing Economic Well Being

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- In 1935 the Federation of the Handicapped (Fedcap) was launched with the goal of improving the economic well-being for those with disabilities and barriers to work
- In 1971 Fedcap helped to establish a national set aside program for those with disabilities
- In 2014 Fedcap dismantled a statewide supported employment program and put 60 individuals with developmental disabilities into competitive employment
- In 2018 Fedcap begins its sixth year running New York City's Wellness, Comprehensive, Assessment, Rehabilitation, and Employment (WeCARE) program for public assistance recipients that believe they can not work



Fedcap co-founder Michael Bertero, right.



# Wellness, Comprehensive Assessment, Rehabilitation and Employment (WeCARE) in New York

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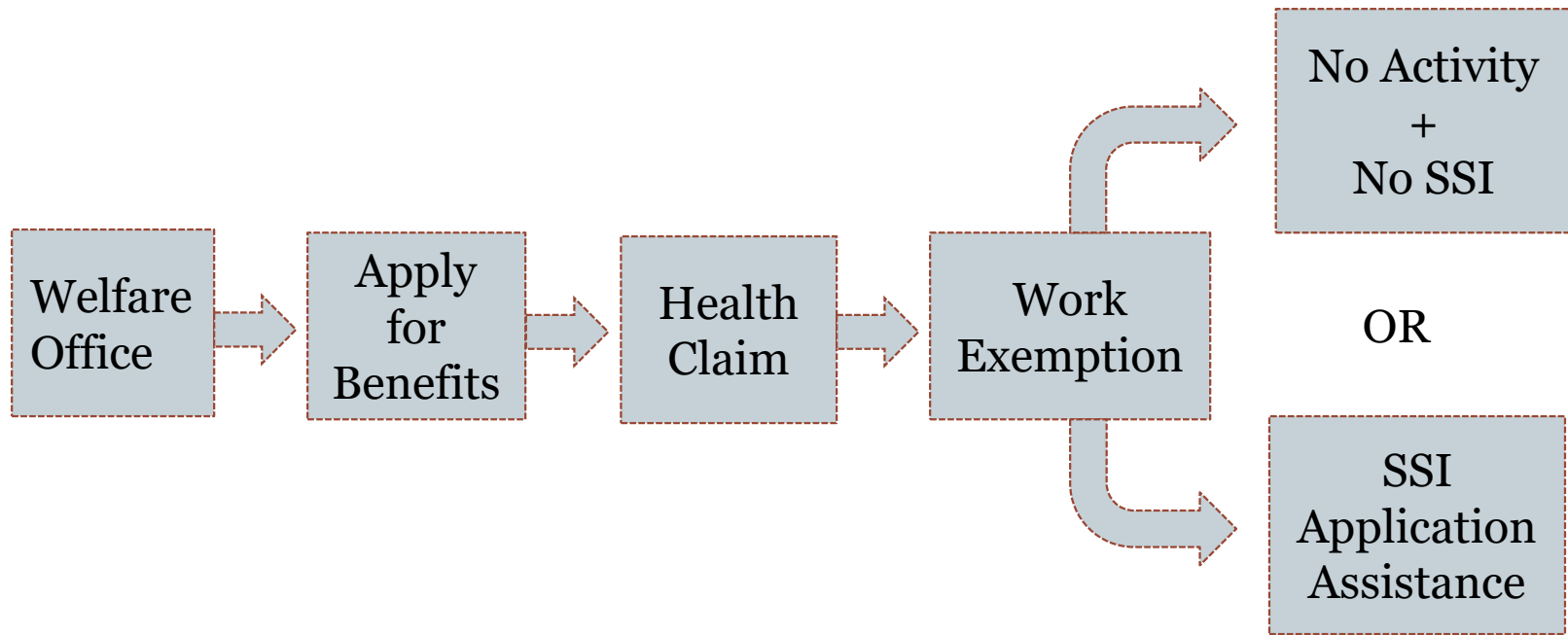
- Provides benefit recipients with barriers with equal opportunity to work
- Participation is mandatory and consistent with TANF (*Temporary Assistance for Needy Families*) participation requirements
- 100 percent of program participants do not believe they can work and should be on federal disability

# Who Is Claiming Incapacity?

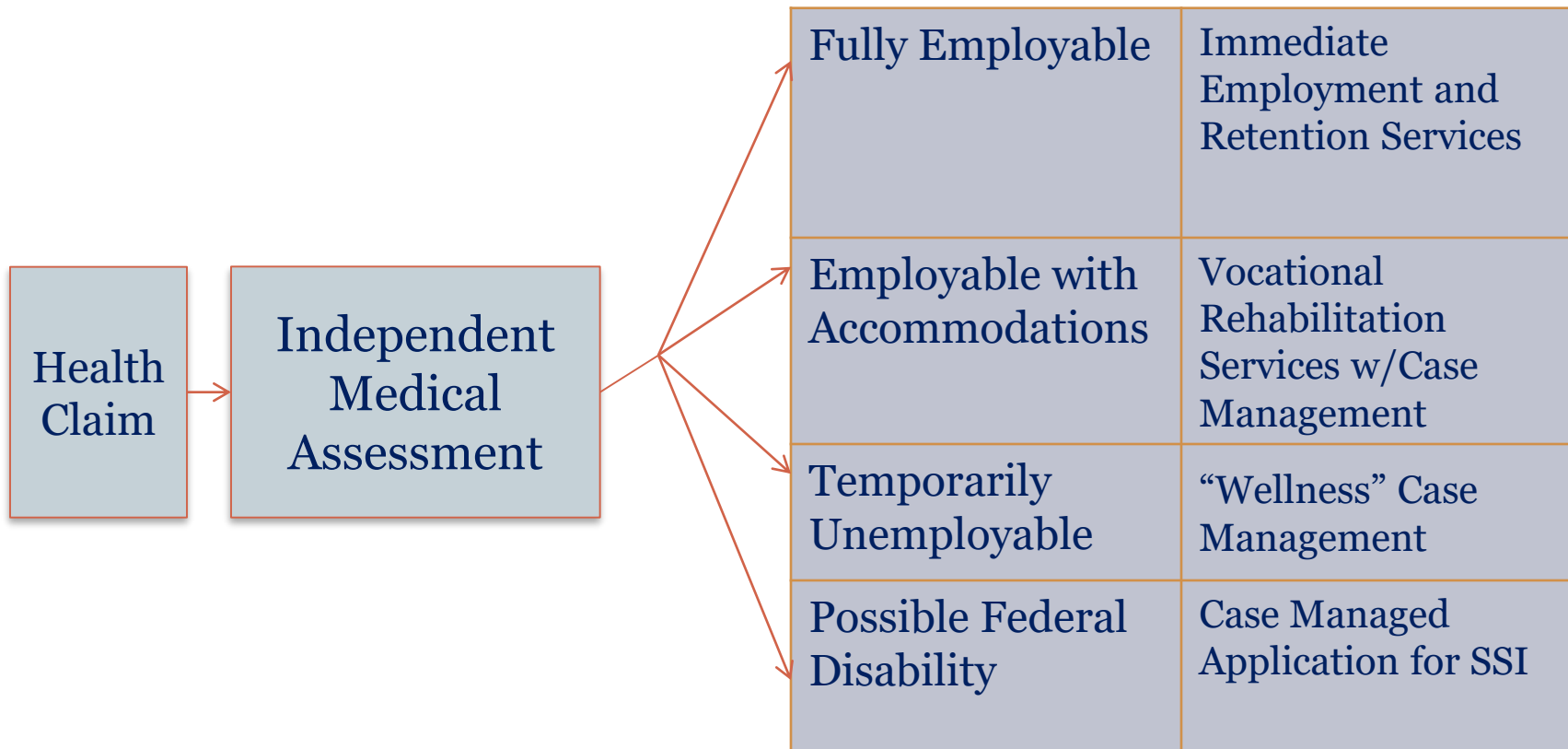
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- What is the profile of the WeCARE customer group?
  - Male: 43% Female: 57%
  - Average Age: 43 years
  - Single Parent: 41% Single Only: 59%
  - Average Reading and Numeracy Grade Level: < 7<sup>th</sup> grade
  - Disclosure of Incarceration: 24%+
  - Mental Health Diagnosis: 53%
  - History or Current Substance Use Disorder: 26%

# Without WeCARE Facing Obstacles to Employment= Exemption



# The WeCARE Model: How Facing Obstacles to Employment= Work



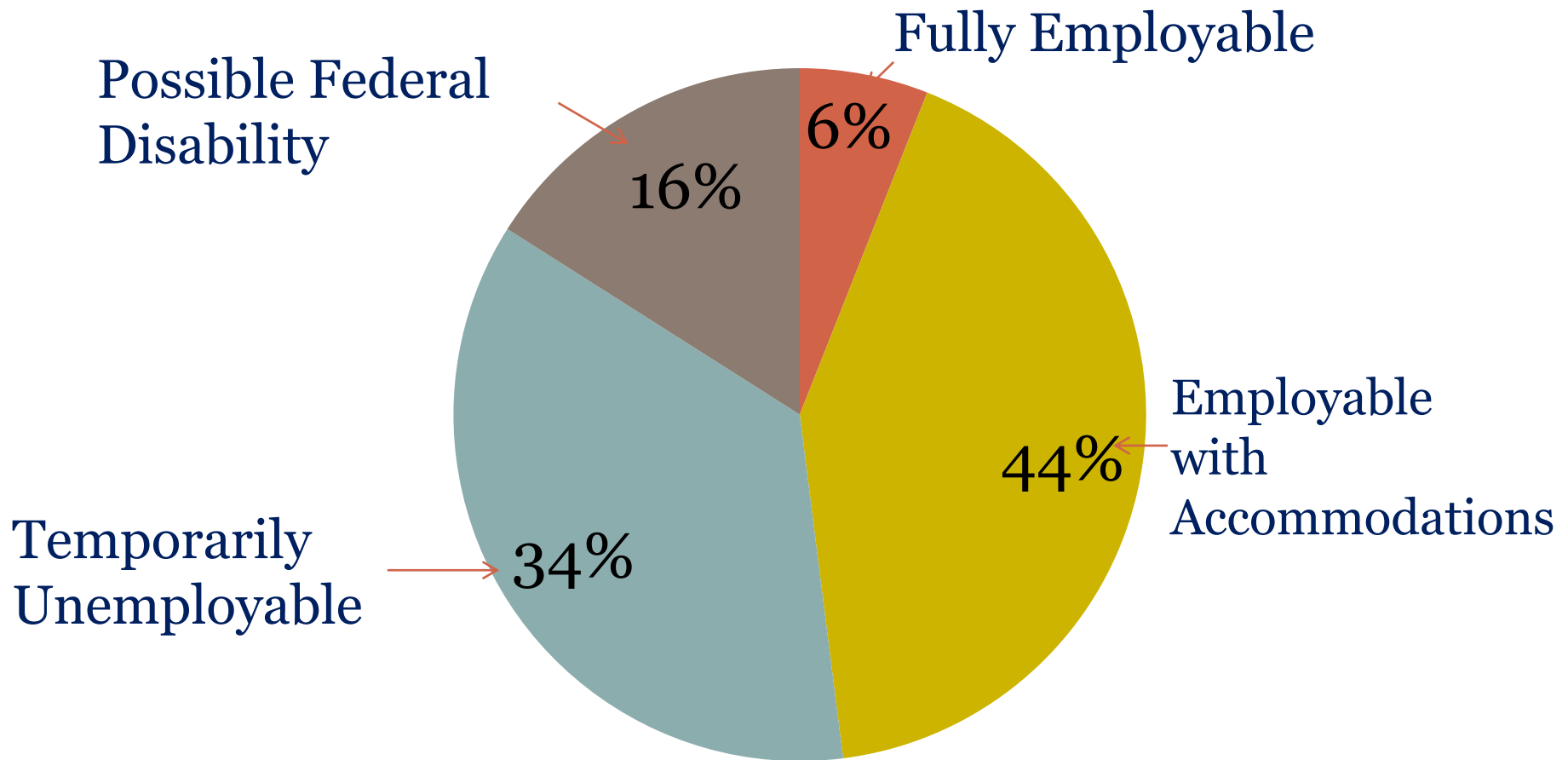
# Biopsychosocial Assessment (BPS)

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## Comprehensive clinical exam to determine functional capacity outcome (FCO)

- 35-page psychosocial designed to elicit what individual **can** do
- Assessments include x-rays, labs, and referrals to specialist if necessary
- Previous medical information included and essential to the process

# Findings After Independent Medical Assessment





# Fully Employable

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Participant has conditions but no functional limitations and is able to successfully engage with agency employment providers

# Possible Federal Disability

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Case managed application filed or supplemented at WeCARE with goal of 45 percent SSI award rate

# Wellness /Condition Management

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- Offered three options for primary care, leave that day with scheduled appointment
- Case management follow-up no less than every two weeks either in person or by phone
- Follow up appointments address the primary care treatment plan compliance
- Plans range from 30-90 days based on condition

# Prevalent Wellness Clinical Conditions

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- What are some of the clinical conditions?
  - Musculoskeletal (back, joint and soft tissue)
  - Metabolic (hypertension, diabetes, obesity)
  - Mental Health (depression, anxiety, mood/personality disorders)
  - Drug Dependency (CASAC screening and self-report)

# Wellness Plan Completion

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68 percent can work following wellness plan completion

# Employable with Accommodations

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- Work-focused initial case management interview
- Vocational evaluation same day or next morning
- Employment plan and work activities assigned within days of initial appointment
- Access to work readiness, community service/work experience, job matching, job developers, hiring events, and retention upon achieving “employer ready competencies”

# Employment with Accommodations

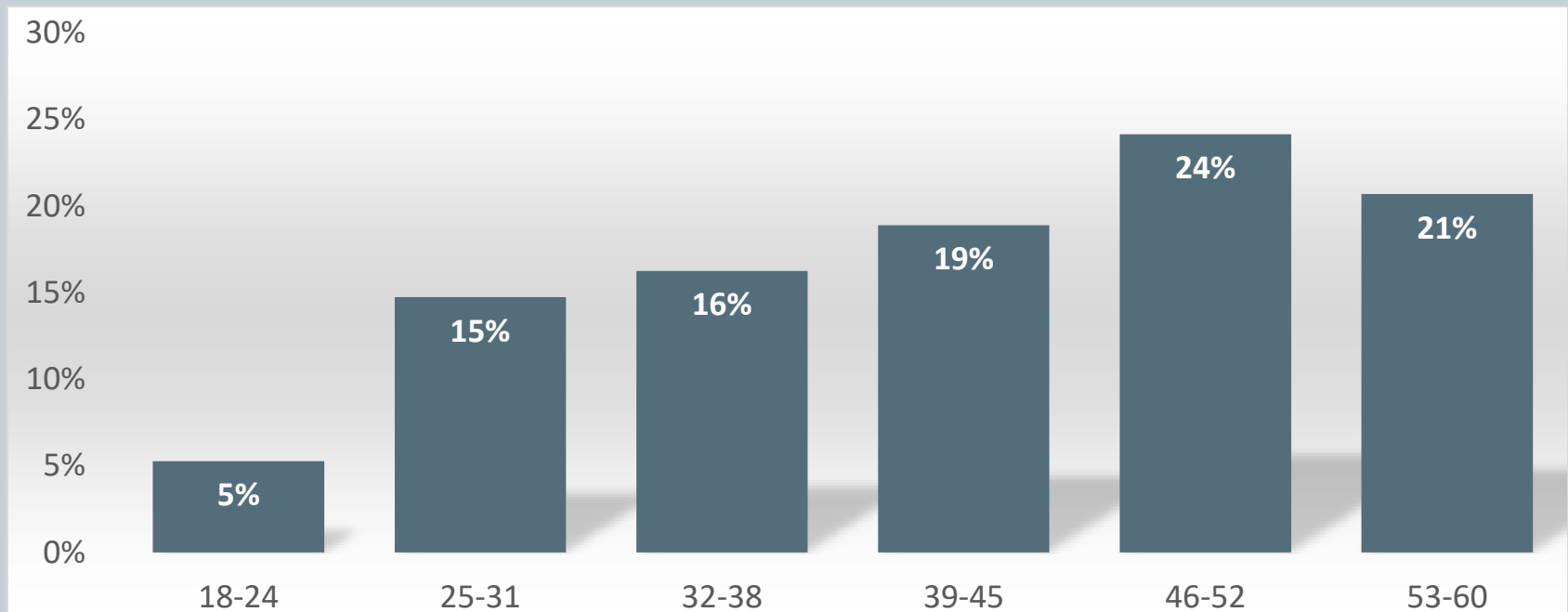
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- What are some of the key findings?
  - 54 percent of employed had Work Experience/Community Service in their path
  - 70 percent of employed had Work Readiness in their path
  - 54 percent of those working obtained employment by day 91
- How many got and kept their jobs?
  - 34 percent (or 15,074) of those referred to employment got jobs
  - 80 percent were still employed at 90 days and 72 percent at 180 days

# Who Are Getting and Keeping Jobs?

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## Age Profile of Job Entrants n=5,550

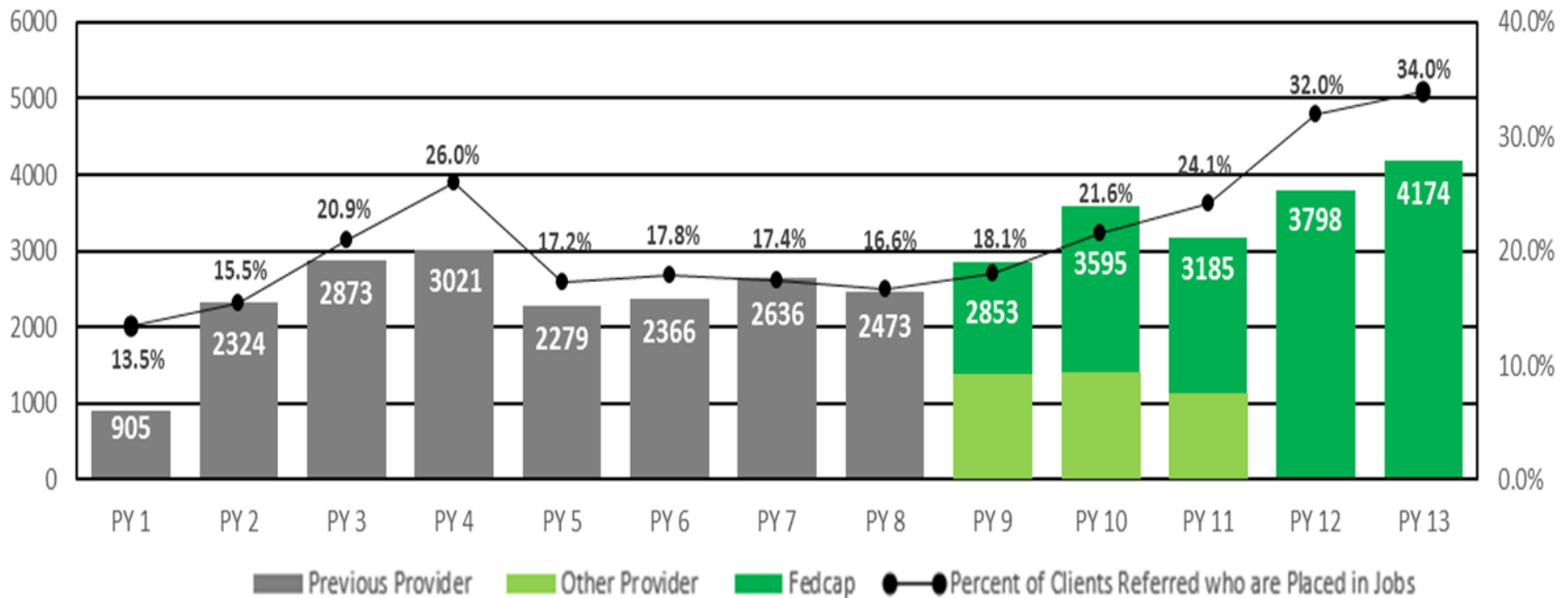




# Are More Working?

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Job Placement: Yearly Totals and Rates,  
February 2005 - January 2018



# What Have We Learned?

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- Can people facing obstacles work?
  - 24 percent of those with mental health conditions find employment
  - 32 percent with treatment in their path found employment
  - 68 percent of those with clinical conditions can work after wellness
  - 64 percent entering work do so between the ages of 39-60
- What might we do to improve outcomes?
  - Establish pathways to eliminate idleness and worklessness
  - Focus on what people can do
  - Make sure work completes treatment and wellness
  - Treat work like it is an entitlement for everyone

# Helping Those Facing Obstacles Obtain Employment

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- Is the model replicable?
  - Currently in place at 16 locations in Maine
  - Per person cost between \$1,200 to \$1,500 annually
  - All or some components can be put in place
  
- What other groups might be served?
  - Supplement Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) participants
  - Medicaid Work Requirement (1115 waivers)
  - Justice Involved, those repeatedly denied SSI
  - Any disengaged group needing a pathway to work

# Helping Those Facing Obstacles Obtain Employment

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- **Important Considerations for Effective Delivery**
  - Holistic assessment to understand full range of issues
  - Informed engagement with pace
  - Measured activation for those recovering from illness
  - Help with activation, linkages, and ensuring progress
  - Incentivize delivery of outcomes

# Helping Those Facing Obstacles Obtain Employment

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Questions?

# Helping Those Facing Obstacles Obtain Employment

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Grant E. Collins II  
President  
Fedcap Inc.

[gcollins@fedcap.org](mailto:gcollins@fedcap.org)

917 363 6041