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6-22-2016

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Recommended Citation

Landers, Glenn; Fuller, Kristi; Khalat, Mohammad; and Rushing, Michelle, "Work after Transitioning to Community Living: What are the Barriers?" (2016). *GHPC Materials*. 34.
https://scholarworks.gsu.edu/ghpc_materials/34

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WORK AFTER TRANSITIONING TO COMMUNITY LIVING: WHAT ARE THE BARRIERS?

Glenn Landers, Kristi Fuller, Mohammad Khalaf, Michelle Rushing, and Chandrika Derricho

RESEARCH OBJECTIVE

To understand the facilitators and barriers of individuals re-entering the (paid or volunteer) workforce after transitioning from an institution to a community setting via the Money Follows the Person (MFP) Rebalancing Demonstration Grant.

STUDY DESIGN

Retrospective analysis of survey data administered to MFP participants approximately one and two years after leaving an institution and returning to a community setting. Additional analysis of qualitative data related to reasons for not returning to the workforce.

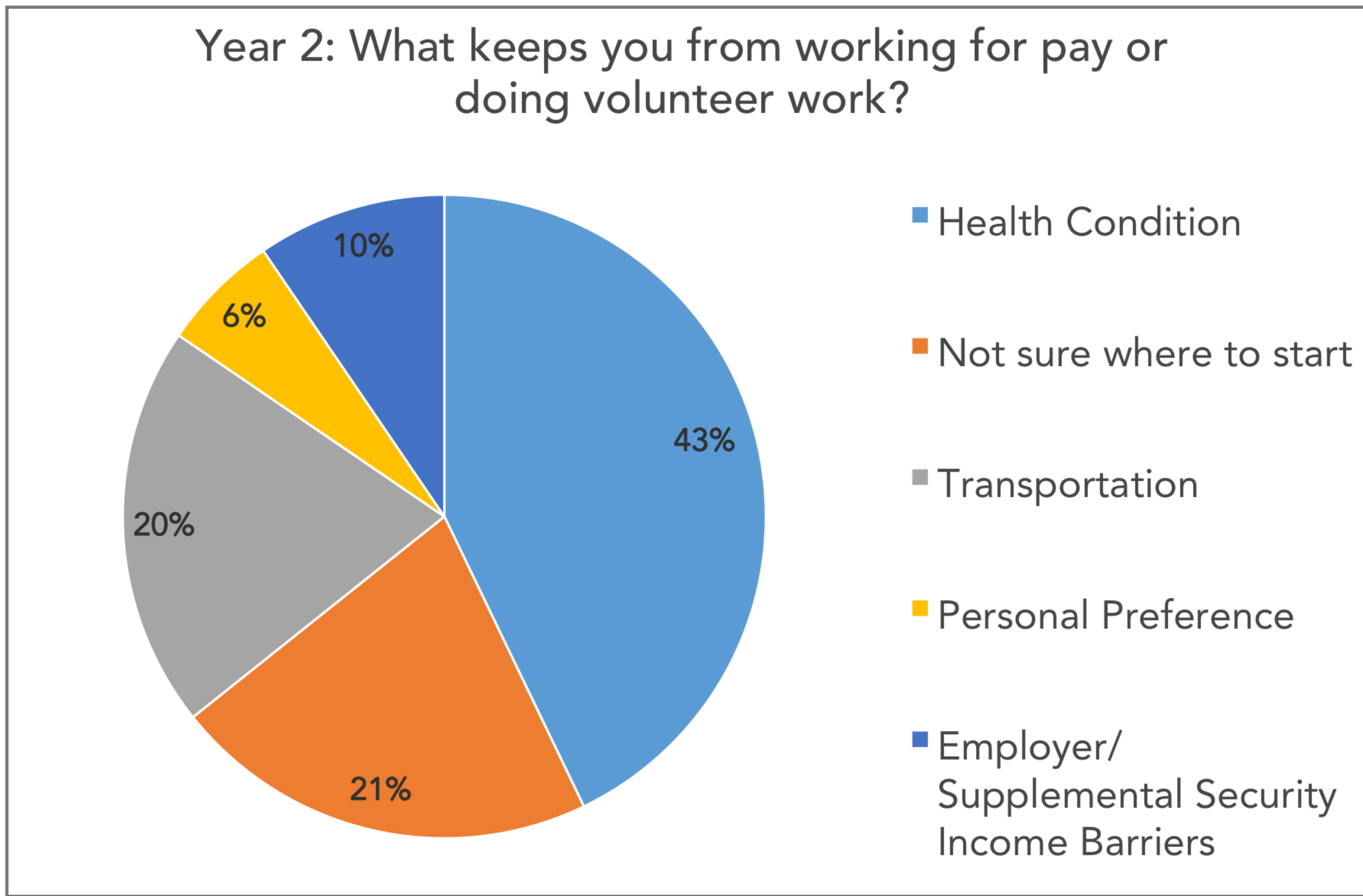
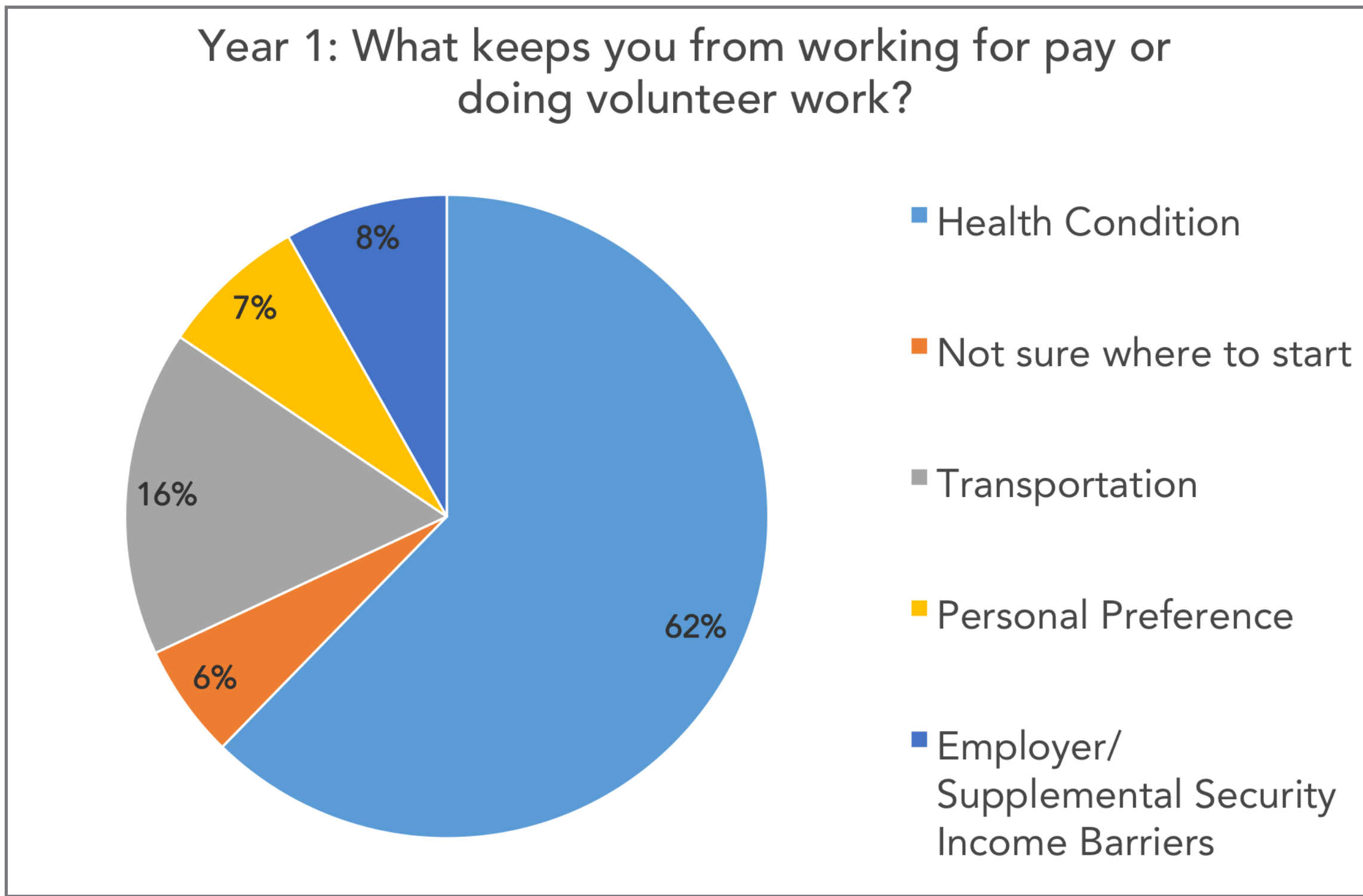
POPULATION STUDIED

Participants in Georgia's MFP program: 564 individuals at year one and 424 individuals at year two. Participants represented three distinct groups: older adults (14% of the sample at year one and 12% of the sample at year 2) and those with physical (34% year one/29% year two) or developmental disabilities (51% year one/59% year two).

PRINCIPAL FINDINGS

Of those surveyed, 2.5% were working at year one, and 4.0% were working at year two. Of those not working, 27% said they would like to work at year one and 24% at year two. Ten percent were volunteering at year one, and 11% were volunteering at year two. Of those not volunteering, 20% said they would like to volunteer at year one, and 21% said they would like to volunteer at year two.

When asked what kept them from working or volunteering, 62% at year one and 43% at year two said their health condition, 17% at year one and 20% at year two said transportation, and 6% at year one and 21% at year two said they did not know where to start. Barriers related to employer accommodation and supplemental security income were expressed by about 9% of respondents at both year one and year two.



CONCLUSION

Of those who transitioned from institutions to a community setting through the MFP Demonstration Grant in Georgia, few are working or volunteering one year after their transition, but more are working or volunteering two years later. More importantly, about one-quarter of those surveyed said they would like to work at both points in time, and about one-fifth would like to volunteer.

The main barriers to working or volunteering after transitioning from an institution to a community setting appear to be personal health conditions, transportation availability, not knowing how to begin the process, and concerns about employer accommodation and supplemental security income. Most of these concerns have the potential to be addressed through policy.

IMPLICATIONS FOR POLICY OR PRACTICE

Since 2005, the MFP Rebalancing Demonstration Grant has assisted about 51,000 people in 43 states to transition from an institution to a community setting. Key to the principles of empowerment and self-direction is the ability to engage in substantial work if one chooses to do so. While the MFP program has enabled thousands of individuals to improve their quality of life by supporting choice and control in their everyday lives, there are still opportunities for improvement in transportation, workplace accommodation, and return to work policies. Additionally, through programmatic improvements, states can better assist those who have returned to the community in charting a path to gainful employment.



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