

**County of Los Angeles  
Chief Executive Office  
Service Integration Branch**



**A Quantitative Process Analysis of Los Angeles County's  
General Relief Program**

**Research and Evaluation Services**

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## Preface

This study is one of three reports the CEO's Research and Evaluation Services unit is submitting to the Board of Supervisors in connection with the joint efforts DPSS and the CEO are currently making to restructure Los Angeles County's General Relief program. The authors have conducted quantitative analyses of administrative records for close to 5,200 GR recipients who (i) were on GR for at least one month during the first quarter of 2008; (ii) did not have any record of GR receipt at any point between January 2002 and December 2008; and (iii) did not switch status from Welfare-to-Work participant to non-Welfare-to-Work participant (or vice versa) over the course of the study period. As such, the sample used in this report can be considered a cohort of first-time GR recipients who entered the program during the first quarter of 2008. The study shows that a substantial proportion of terminations experienced by recipients not participating in GROW, the GR program's Welfare-to-Work component, appear to result from these individuals transitioning to other income support programs, including SSI and CalWORKs. The authors also show that GROW participants spent 6.5 months on GR during the study period compared to 9.5 months for their non-GROW counterparts, and that the most common length of GR tenure among the observed GROW participants was only two months over the study period, which was slightly lower than the three months that was the most common length of tenure for the non-GROW group. Moreover, more than two-fifths of GROW participants and 32 percent of the non-GROW group whose benefits were terminated due to non-compliance again received GR benefits subsequent to the termination, and more than four-fifths left the GR rolls in eight months or less, before mandatory time limits set in at nine months. The other two evaluative reports RES is submitting to the Board are a qualitative study of the GR program's functionality based on focus group interviews with GR staff, administrators, and recipients, and a supplemental paper comparing the rules and regulations governing Los Angeles County's GR program with those governing GR-type programs in five other California counties. As of this writing, close to 110,000 adults in Los Angeles County are on GR, a number that is up roughly 75 percent since 2007. The stark fiscal consequences of this caseload growth will compel policymakers to strike a balance between, on the one hand, the necessity for reducing dependency on the program, and, on the other, compassion for the needy indigent adults who rely on the GR for their survival. As DPSS and the CEO work to make GR more effective in its promotion of self-sufficiency, efficient in the delivery of services, and humane in the care provided to some of the County's most vulnerable inhabitants, all three RES reports will be used together to help guide the restructuring process.

Manuel Moreno, Ph.D.,  
Director of Research

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This report could not have been written without the assistance and support of many people. Phil Ansell at DPSS is the executive sponsor of the report. He provided intellectual leadership and policy expertise, and he supplied valuable comments on an earlier version of the report that helped improve the finished product. More importantly, his unflagging belief in the importance of evidence-based policy formation is an inspiration to us and continues to add immeasurably to the quality of RES' work. Judith Lillard and LaShonda Diggs at DPSS also provided feedback and were very generous with their extensive knowledge of the GR program. Michael Bono and Brenda Williams at DPSS ensured that the resources needed to conduct this study were available. At the CEO, Kathy House, Lesley Blacher and Carrier Miller helped create a supportive environment without which this study could not have been conducted. Finally we would like to extend our thanks to our colleagues at RES: Manuel Moreno gave us the opportunity to do this work and shepherded the project from start to finish. Halil Toros helped us troubleshoot data issues and provided valuable assistance in the interpretation of statistical results. Duc Doan helped prepare the data and provided critical programming support. Nancy Salem and Max Stevens read earlier drafts of the report, provided comments, and did organizational work on our behalf that helped us complete the report in a timely manner. To all of these people, and to anyone else who we've forgotten to mention, we extend our thanks.

## Table of Contents

Preface .....	i
Acknowledgements .....	ii
Table of Contents .....	iii
Executive Summary .....	1
Section One: Introduction and Study Aims .....	9
Background .....	9
Study Aims .....	10
Data .....	12
Sample .....	13
Section Two: GR Terminations, Tenure and Exits from GR, and GROW Sanctions ...	17
Terminations from GR for Non-Compliance.....	17
GR Tenure.....	21
Sustained Exits from GR .....	23
Section Summary .....	24
Section Three: GROW- Sanctions and Progression Through the Program .....	35
Sanctions for GROW Participants .....	36
Participation by GROW Recipients in the Various GROW Components .....	38
Examining Progression through GR and GROW.....	38
Section Summary .....	40
Section Four: Employment and Earnings .....	48
Factors Associated with Employment and Earnings .....	48
Trends in Earnings and Employment.....	50
Section Summary .....	51
Section Five: Terminations Due to GROW Sanctions, Returns to GR after Exit, and Time Limits .....	57
Returns to GR After Terminations for Non-Compliance and GROW Sanctions....	57
Returns to GR after Exit .....	59
Time Limits .....	60
Section Summary .....	61
Section Six: Implications for Policy and Research.....	69

Terminations for Non-Compliance .....	69
Duration of GR Receipt .....	70
GROW Sanctions .....	70
GROW Component Participation.....	71
Employment Outcomes .....	71
Data Quality.....	73
Conclusion.....	73

Appendix A: NOA Codes Indicating Non-Compliance with GR Program

Requirements.....	74
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**Tables and Figures**

Table 1.4.1 Demographic Characteristics of Study Cohort, by GROW and Disability Status.....	16
Table 2.1.1 Frequency and Reason for Any Type of Termination of GR Benefits and Reversal of Termination, by GROW Participants Status.....	26
Table 2.1.2 Frequency and Reason for Termination of GR Benefits Due to Non-Compliance and Reversal of Termination Due to Non-Compliance, by GROW Participation Status.....	27
Table 2.1.3 Predictors of Termination of GR Benefits Due to Non-Compliance.....	28
Table 2.2.1 GR Tenure (Total and by Episode) During Study Period.....	29
Table 2.3.1 Predictors of Making Sustained Exit from GR.....	30
Figure 2.1.1 Frequency of Any Type of Termination of GR Benefits And Reversal of Termination, by GROW Participation Status.....	31
Figure 2.1.2 Frequency of Termination of GR Benefits Due to Non-Compliance And Reversal of Termination Due to Non-Compliance, by GROW Participation Status.....	32
Figure 2.2.1 Survival Curve Illustrating Length of 1 <sup>st</sup> GR Episode.....	33
Figure 2.3.1 Proportion of GR Participants Making a Sustained Exit from GR.....	34
Table 3.1.1 Predicators of Sanctions.....	42
Table 3.2.1 GROW Component/Activity Participation for GROW Participants .....	43
Table 3.3.1 Estimating Differences in Average Length of Time from GR Approval to GROW Component Start Date .....	44

Figure 3.1.1 Frequency of Sanctions among GROW Participants.....	45
Figure 3.2.1 Rates of Participation in GROW Program Components and Activities .....	46
Figure 3.3.1 Median Length of Time in Days from GR Approval Date to GROW Component Start Date .....	47
Table 4.1.1 Relationship between GROW Components and Employment.....	52
Table 4.1.2 Factors Associated with Length of Time from GR Approval to Hire Date ..	53
Table 4.1.3 Factors Associated with Earnings Subsequent to GR Entry .....	54
Figure 4.2.1 Trends in Earnings Prior and Subsequent to Initial GR Entry .....	55
Figure 4.2.2 Trends in Employment Prior and Subsequent to Initial GR Entry .....	56
Table 5.1.1 Predictors of Return to GR after GROW Sanctions .....	63
Table 5.2.1 Likelihood of return to GR after Exit.....	64
Table 5.3.1 Cumulative Months of GR Receipt Following GR Entry .....	65
Figure 5.1.1 Frequency of Return to GR After Termination Due to Non-Compliance...	66
Figure 5.1.2 Frequency of Returns to GR after GROW Sanction .....	67
Figure 5.2.1 Survival Curve Illustrating Length of Time Between 1 <sup>st</sup> Exit from GR and Subsequent Return to GR .....	68

## **Executive Summary**

The Los Angeles County General Relief (GR) program is a cash assistance program that provides a monthly grant of \$221 for indigent adults who are ineligible for other federal or state assistance programs. In recent years, GR caseload size has risen along with unemployment levels, from around 60,000 in January 2008 to over 90,000 in January 2010 and over 108,000 by January 2011. Correspondingly, County outlays for the GR program have grown as well from \$132.9 million in FY 2006-07 to \$221.8 million in FY 2009-10.

This process analysis of the General Relief (GR) program in Los Angeles County focuses on general patterns of benefits receipt and, in particular, the impact that the General Relief Opportunities for Work (GROW) program has on these patterns. GR recipients who are considered employable are required to participate in GROW, while unemployable GR recipients are also exempt from GROW participation as well as from GR program rules that limit receipt of GR to nine out of every 12 months.

The study is framed by 17 specific research questions, which were initially proposed in an Analysis Plan for this study. The questions include:

### ***GR Termination, Tenure and Sustained Exits from GR (Section 2):***

***Question 1:*** What proportion of GR participants (both GROW and non-GROW participants) have GR benefits terminated for non-compliance with GR program requirements?

***Question 2:*** What factors are associated with an increased likelihood that a GR participant will have benefits terminated for non-compliance with GR program requirements?

***Question 3:*** Are GROW participants more likely to have benefits terminated due to non-compliance with GR requirements than GR participants who do not participate in GROW due to being designated unemployable, administratively unemployable, or needing special assistance?

### ***GROW: Sanctions and Progression through the Program (Section 3):***

***Question 4:*** What proportions of employable GR participants receive 0, 30, and 60-day sanctions for non-compliance with GR/GROW program requirements?

***Question 5:*** What factors are associated with an increased likelihood that an employable GR participant will receive a sanction for non-compliance?

***Question 6:*** What is average length of time from GR approval date (defined as 1<sup>st</sup> day of 1<sup>st</sup> month of GR receipt) to GROW program component start date?

***Question 7:*** Does average length of time from GR approval date (defined as 1<sup>st</sup> day of 1<sup>st</sup> month of GR receipt) to GROW program component start date differ by component type?

#### **Employment and Earnings (Section 4):**

**Question 8:** *What program level factors are associated with an increased likelihood of obtaining employment?*

**Question 9:** *For those participating in the GROW program and who obtain employment, what individual level factors are related to length of time from GR approval date to hire date?*

**Question 10:** *What program level factors are associated with the wage/income level of GR participants?*

#### **Termination due to GROW Sanctions, Returns to GR After Exit, and Time Limits (Section 5)**

**Question 11:** *What proportion of GR participants (both GROW and non-GROW participants) who receive sanctions for non-compliance with GR/GROW program requirements return to GR after having benefits terminated?*

**Question 12:** *Does the proportion of GR participants who return to GR after having benefits terminated due to non-compliance with program requirements vary according to employability status (i.e. employable, unemployable, administratively unemployable, or needing special assistance)?*

**Question 13:** *What proportion of GROW participants who received sanctions for non-compliance with GROW program requirements returned to GR after having benefits terminated?*

**Question 14:** *Does the proportion of GROW participants who return to GR after having benefits terminated due to non-compliance with GROW program requirements vary according to duration of penalty (i.e. 30 or 60-day sanction)?*

**Question 15:** *What individual level factors are associated with an increased likelihood that GROW participants will return to GR after receiving a GROW sanction for non-compliance?*

**Question 16:** *What proportion of employable GR participants who reach GR program time limits return to GR after having benefits terminated?*

**Question 17:** *What individual level factors are associated with an increased likelihood that an employable GR participant will return to GR after having benefits terminated due to reaching program time limits?*

The report concludes with a section on Implications for Policy and Research that synthesizes the results from the preceding sections, and offers implications for GR program policy.

The study uses de-identified administrative records from the GR and GROW programs. The Los Angeles County Chief Executive Office (CEO) provided a number of datasets relevant for the analyses presented here to project investigators. Project investigators also received approval for this study from the Institutional Review Board at the University of the Sciences in Philadelphia.

The baseline dataset used in the analyses presented here contains demographic information (date of birth, place of birth, ethnicity, gender, veteran status, disability status, marital status) for GR recipients who received GR for at least one month during the first quarter of 2008. This dataset also contains information about GR tenure and indicates whether a GR participant received GR for each month from January 2002 until May 2010. Additional datasets cover a more limited timeframe and include more detailed records of the interaction of GR recipients with the GR and GROW programs, including information about sanctions, terminations, and dates of completion of GROW program activities. Finally, data from the California Employment Development Department (EDD) provided information about the quarterly earnings for GR recipients from the first quarter of 2002 until the first quarter of 2010.

The CEO provided records for 65,824 GR recipients who received GR for at least one month during the first quarter of 2008. From this universe of participant records, the project investigators retained the records of 8,953 participants who received GR for at least one month during January, February and March 2008, and who also did not have any record of GR receipt at any point between January 2002 and December 2007. In other words, these 8,953 records were of all people who were first-time GR recipients (i.e., incidence cohort) during the first quarter of 2008. The sample was further limited to include only the 5,165 cohort members who did not switch status from GROW participant to non-GROW participant (or vice versa) over the course of the study period. Therefore, this study focuses on the 58 percent of this incidence cohort who were clearly either enrolled in GROW (i.e., GROW participants) or who were not enrolled in GROW (i.e., non-GROW participants) during the entire time of their GR tenure. Two important points need to be pointed out here. First, the characteristics of an incidence cohort (as is examined here) are likely to differ from a prevalence sample, in which all persons receiving GR benefits over a given time period (regardless of whether they had been receiving benefits prior to that time period). Second, retaining only the records for persons who were clearly enrolled in GROW or not enrolled in GROW for the duration of their GR tenure is necessary to more clearly tie GROW participation with outcomes, but also raises issues about the representativeness of these groups of the entire incidence cohort. These points will be covered in more detail in Section 1, where the data and methods used for this study are described, and in Section 4, where the limitations inherent to using these data and analyses are discussed.

Key findings for each section are summarized below.

## **Section 2 – *GR Termination, Tenure and Sustained Exits from GR***

In answering the first three research questions presented in the first section, this section presents the following key findings:

- in response to Question 1, there was no substantial difference among GROW and non-GROW recipients in the proportions in each group who experienced termination of GR benefits for reasons related to non-compliance with program guidelines. Roughly one quarter of both non-

GROW and non-GROW participants had their benefits terminated for this reason.

- in response to Question 2, two factors not related to GR receipt, female gender and the presence of a disability, were associated with a lower likelihood of termination of GR benefits due to non-compliance.
- in response to Question 3, GROW participants were less likely to experience termination of benefits due to non-compliance.

Additional key findings indicate that:

- a majority of non-GROW participants (68 percent) experienced any type of termination of GR benefits, while only four in 10 GROW participants (41 percent) experienced a termination. However, the low rate of termination observed for GROW participants may have been an artifact of the data, as there was no information in the data on GROW participants who had benefits terminated due to reaching GR program time limits.
- a substantial proportion of terminations experienced by non-GROW participants appear to result from these individuals transitioning to other income support programs, including SSI and CalWORKs.
- in looking at the specific reasons for non-compliance related terminations, many were related to the failure to submit required reporting and verification forms in a timely manner.

Taken together, while many GR recipients seem to face difficulty in keeping up with the administrative requirements related to maintaining program eligibility, there is no sign that there was any additional administrative burden associated with GROW that impaired the ability of recipients to maintain their GR eligibility.

This section also went beyond these research questions to assess two additional topics. The first of these topics is GR tenure. Compared to their non-GROW counterparts, GROW participants averaged fewer months on GR but more GR episodes. This suggests that, on average, patterns of GR benefits utilization are substantially different between these two groups. This would be consistent with, but does not prove, the assertion that much of the difference in these GR utilization patterns are due to programmatic restrictions for GROW participants where they are only able to receive GR for nine months out of any 12 month period.

The second additional topic assessed here focused on 32 percent of GROW recipients and 28 percent of non-GROW recipients who had sustained exits from GR after receiving benefits for three months or less. Looking at this more in-depth, this section found that disabled GR recipients, older GR recipients and those who had GR benefits terminated due to non-compliance with program regulations are less likely to make quick, sustained exits from the GR program. On the other hand, persons with higher pre-GR earnings were more likely to make rapid and sustained exits from GR, indicating that persons with more robust employment experience may make largely short-term or

transitional use of GR benefits, possibly to serve as a bridge between spells of longer-term employment.

### **Section 3 – *GROW: Sanctions and Progression through the Program***

This section examined sanctions related to GROW participation and progression through GROW as measured by participation in GROW components. In doing so, this section addressed four of the research questions posed in the Introduction section.

In response to Question 4, the results show that 83 percent of GROW participants received an initial sanction; 25 percent (30 percent of those receiving an initial sanction) received a subsequent sanction with a 30-day benefits suspension; and 10 percent (41 percent of those receiving a 30-day sanction) received a third sanction, this time with a 60-day benefits suspension (see Figure 3.1.1). This shows that initial sanctions related to GROW participation were widespread, and a substantial minority of those receiving this first sanction then proceeded to receive subsequent sanctions that interfered with benefits receipt. The impact of these sanctions on continued GR participation will be examined in a subsequent section.

In response to Question 5, factors associated with an increased risk of receiving sanctions included younger age, male gender, lower earnings, homelessness, and high school graduation.

Questions 6 and 7 turn the focus to participation in GROW components. Overall, it took approximately six weeks to progress from component to component (Question 6), a time period which presumably included participation in the component and time transitioning between components. There was also variability in time from GR approval to participation in the first GROW component across the range of GROW components (Question 7). The extent to which this time lag is appropriate cannot be determined from this data. However, some of the voluntary programs which GROW participants can volunteer for would be expected to have had shorter, even negative (some GROW components could start before GR approval) time periods to engagement.

In additional findings, relatively high rates of sanctions were accompanied by relatively low rates of recorded participation in certain GROW components and activities. Overall, roughly 90 percent of persons designated as GROW participants had a record of participating in some GROW component or activity. However, the component “Job Skills Preparation,” which is supposed to have near universal participation, only had 55 percent participation. This leads to obvious concerns about access to these components and programs by GROW participants, but can also be at least partly due to data limitations. Indeed, the completeness of these data, and the possibility that more persons participated in and completed GROW programming but were not recorded as doing so, may also be an issue and should be examined.

Finally, the findings here do indicate further access issues among those who were recorded as participating in GROW. The first appears in the analyses of component

and activity completion in Table 3.2.1, which show that large proportions of persons who started each component never completed it. For example, 55 percent of GROW participants started Job Skills Preparation, but only 13 percent completed this component. The second apparent access issue is in the length of time it takes in accessing some of the GROW components and activities. While as expected, the Rapid Employment and Early Job Search components appear to have commenced relatively quickly after GROW enrollment, other frequently accessed components such as Intensive Case Management and Job Skills Preparation seem to have taken upwards of two months to access from the point of GROW enrollment, which would impact program continuity and effectiveness. Again, the completeness of the data needs to be confirmed before taking any initiatives in response to these findings.

#### **Section 4 – *Employment and Earnings***

This section examines some relationships between GROW and subsequent employment. Employment, when measured by indicators collected in conjunction with GROW data, produced little in the way of useful results and also led to unresolved questions on the reliability of the employment indicator. Thus Questions 8 and 9 cannot be conclusively answered.

Looking at employment outcomes, in the form of average quarterly earnings (for persons receiving earnings) and percent receiving any earnings in a quarter, proved somewhat more informative. Comparing the GROW and non-GROW groups, the GROW recipients were significantly and substantially more likely to gain employment following the start of their GR receipt. The extent to which this is due to GROW participation (as opposed to the employability of the recipients) is unclear, but there is a distinct difference between the two groups.

Compared to non-GROW participants, GROW participants showed better employment outcomes subsequent to GR receipt, both as measured in earnings and proportion working. The trend among GROW participants in terms of the proportion employed seems to recover quickly after the quarter where everyone became certified for GR, but after the initial rise the percentage again falls.

#### **Section 5 – *Termination due to GROW Sanctions, Returns to GR After Exit, and Time Limits***

This section addressed three specific topics related to exits from GR and subsequent returns, and covered the final seven questions presented in the introductory chapter.

The first section examined returns to GR following terminations either for reasons related to non-compliance or to GROW-related sanctions.

- To answer Question 11, 43 percent of GROW participants and 32 percent of the non-GROW group whose benefits were terminated due to non-compliance again received GR benefits subsequent to the

termination. The practical significance of these findings is difficult to assess. On one hand, substantial minorities of both groups still were eligible for GR benefits, and reclaimed these benefits, after they were terminated. It is unclear, however, how many of those who did not return were eligible for GR benefits but did not return to apply for GR benefits after being previously terminated.

- In response to Question 12, while rates of termination for non-compliance were not substantially different between employable (i.e., GROW-eligible) GR recipients and others, rates of subsequent GR receipt among those terminated for non-compliance reasons were substantially higher for GROW participants.
- For Question 13, 61 percent of GROW recipients who experienced a 30-day GROW sanction subsequently returned to the GR rolls, and 48 percent who experienced a 60-day GROW sanction returned. Again, beyond ascertaining the relatively high proportions of those who were sanctioned and continued to have substantial financial aid, it is difficult to derive more conclusive assumptions from this finding.
- Concerning Question 14, the rate of return after 60-day sanctions was markedly lower than 30-day sanctions.
- No noteworthy findings are available for Question 14 on individual factors related to differential likelihoods of returning to GR receipt following 30-day and 60-day sanctions.

The second section examined GROW participants and the likelihood of their returning to receive GR benefits after leaving the GR rolls for any reason. GROW participants are more than twice as likely as non-GROW participants to have experienced a second episode of GR receipt.

In the third section, there was no evidence that a substantial number of GROW participants were programmatically terminated from receiving GR benefits after nine months.

- For Question 16, the vast majority of GROW participants, 84 percent, leave the GR rolls in eight months or less, before mandatory time limits set in at nine months. There was also no evidence of any numerical “bump” in the rates of GROW participants leaving the GR rolls after nine months of GR receipt in the first year.
- Question 17 could not be answered due to data limitations.

Section 6 focuses on implications for policy and research that emerge from this report. It focuses on the issues of terminations from GR related to non-compliance; patterns of GR receipt over the study period; GROW sanctions and their consequences; GROW component participation; and employment outcomes. The section concludes by reiterating limitations related to data quality.

Taken together, this report provides findings on some key issues related to the GROW program, benefits terminations and sanctions, GR utilization patterns, and employment after GR receipt. In doing this, the report raises questions for further research as it examines key areas such as the relationship of GROW to subsequent employment, and the extent to which sanctions and non-compliance terminations lead to more extended exits from the GR rolls. In the absence of further research, these findings will provide the basis for more informed decisions related to policy around GR.

## **Section One: Introduction and Study Aims**

### **1.1 Background**

The Los Angeles County General Relief (GR) program is a cash assistance program that provides a monthly grant of \$221 for indigent adults who are ineligible for other federal or state assistance programs. In recent years, GR caseload size has risen along with unemployment levels, from around 60,000 in January 2008 to over 90,000 in January 2010 and over 108,000 by January 2011. Correspondingly, County outlays for the GR program have grown as well from \$132.9 million in FY 2006-07 to \$221.8 million in FY 2009-10.

GR recipients are primarily males (60-70%) and the majority are between the ages of 25 and 59, although young adults aged 18 to 24 account for a significant number of GR recipients. In addition, GR recipients often face a number of barriers that prevent them from achieving self-sufficiency. Roughly 60% have experienced homelessness at some point during their GR tenure, and more than a quarter make use, in their lifetime, of services in two or more County Departments (e.g. Department of Health Services, Department of Mental Health, Sheriff's Department) in addition to their receipt of GR through DPSS. GR recipients who are considered employable are required to participate in the General Relief Opportunities for Work (GROW) Program. Unemployable GR recipients are also exempt from GR program rules that limit receipt of GR to nine out of every 12 months.

Efforts to restructure the GR program into a form of assistance that better meets the often complex needs of GR recipients have been unfolding for more than a decade. These efforts have involved the introduction of new programs and pilot projects, including the Mandatory Substance Abuse Recovery Program and the GR Housing Subsidy and Case Management Pilot. In early 2010, at request of the County Board of Supervisors, a GR restructuring workgroup comprised of representatives from County Departments and community groups submitted a set of recommendations for a comprehensive restructuring of the GR program. Among other recommendations, the GR restructuring workgroup called for a large expansion of the GR Housing Subsidy and Case Management Pilot and ramped up efforts to help disabled GR recipients through the application process for Supplemental Security Income (SSI) benefits. The restructuring workgroup also recommended substantial modifications to the GR program, including the development of an evaluation to track the outcomes of GR recipients.

This study aims to conduct a quantitative process evaluation of the GR program, examining a number of elements of the GR program, and exploring trends in the earnings of GR recipients both prior and subsequent to their involvement with the GR program. As such, this study represents a continuation of efforts to create a GR program that better assists GR recipients in achieving self-sufficiency and makes more efficient use of County resources.

## 1.2 Study Aims

The overarching objective of this study is to examine the involvement of GR recipients with the GR and GROW programs. This includes an assessment of the duration and patterns of GR receipt, as well as a focus on exits from the GR program (including terminations) and returns to GR after having exited. In addition, this study attempts to examine the progression of employable GR recipients through GROW program components. This includes an examination of GR terminations due to GROW participants receiving sanctions for non-compliance with GROW program requirements.

This study also investigates the earnings of GR recipients. Factors associated with the earnings level of GR recipients subsequent to their entry into the GR program are modeled and trends in the earnings of GR recipients prior and subsequent to their entry into GR are examined.

The study investigates these study aims by focusing on 17 specific research questions, which are addressed in the subsequent four sections of this report (Sections 2-5). These research questions were initially proposed in the Analysis Plan for this proposal that was presented previously. For some of these questions the answers will be limited by the quality of the data available for this study, limitations which could not be foreseen at the time the Analysis Plan was presented. In these instances, the limitations will be explained and any results available to inform any portion of the question will be presented. The final section (Section 6) of this report examines the implications for policy and research based on these results. The sections, and corresponding research questions, include:

***Section 2 – GR Termination, Tenure and Sustained Exits from GR.*** This section examines several facets of GR receipt and GROW participation, and addresses the first three research questions. The focus of this section initially is on terminations among GR recipients. It then sets these terminations into the larger contexts of GR tenure dynamics (episodes and length of episode), and sustained exits from GR (i.e. those who experience one, relatively brief episode of GR receipt).

***Question 1:*** *What proportion of GR participants (both GROW and non-GROW participants) have GR benefits terminated for non-compliance with GR program requirements?*

***Question 2:*** *What factors are associated with an increased likelihood that a GR participant will have benefits terminated for non-compliance with GR program requirements?*

***Question 3:*** *Are GROW participants more likely to have benefits terminated due to non-compliance with GR requirements than GR participants who do not participate in GROW due to being designated unemployable, administratively unemployable, or needing special assistance?*

**Section 3 – GROW: Sanctions and Progression through the Program.** This section takes an in-depth look at the components associated with GROW, and the sanctions incurred when the program is not adhered to by GROW participants. Specifically this section examines in detail the frequency that GROW-related sanctions occurred and the characteristics associated with the likelihood of receiving sanctions (Questions 4 and 5). This section then assesses the extent to which the length of time between entry into the GR program and commencement of involvement with GROW program components varies according to the type of GROW component (Questions 6 and 7).

***Question 4:*** *What proportions of employable GR participants receive 0, 30, and 60-day sanctions for non-compliance with GR/GROW program requirements?*

***Question 5:*** *What factors are associated with an increased likelihood that an employable GR participant will receive a sanction for non-compliance?*

***Question 6:*** *What is average length of time from GR approval date (defined as 1<sup>st</sup> day of 1<sup>st</sup> month of GR receipt) to GROW program component start date?*

***Question 7:*** *Does average length of time from GR approval date (defined as 1<sup>st</sup> day of 1<sup>st</sup> month of GR receipt) to GROW program component start date differ by component type?*

**Section 4 – Employment and Earnings.** This component assesses factors that are associated with an increased likelihood of a GROW participant obtaining employment directly as a result of their involvement with the GROW program, as well as factors associated with the earnings level of all GR recipients subsequent to their entry into the GR program. Moreover, this component describes trends in the earnings and employment status of GR recipients prior and subsequent to their entry into GR.

***Question 8:*** *What program level factors are associated with an increased likelihood of obtaining employment?*

***Question 9:*** *For those participating in the GROW program and who obtain employment, what individual level factors are related to length of time from GR approval date to hire date?*

***Question 10:*** *What program level factors are associated with the wage/income level of GR participants?*

**Section 5 – Termination due to GROW Sanctions, Returns to GR After Exit, and Time Limits.** This section examines returns to GR after exiting GR, first focusing specifically on returns to GR by GROW participants who have had their GR benefits terminated due to noncompliance with GROW program requirements, and then for returns following any exit from GR. An additional focus is on time limits for GR recipients who are also GROW participants.

**Question 11:** *What proportion of GR participants (both GROW and non-GROW participants) who receive sanctions for non-compliance with GR/GROW program requirements return to GR after having benefits terminated?*

**Question 12:** *Does the proportion of GR participants who return to GR after having benefits terminated due to non-compliance with program requirements vary according to employability status (i.e. employable, unemployable, administratively unemployable, or needing special assistance)?*

**Question 13:** *What proportion of GROW participants who received sanctions for non-compliance with GROW program requirements returned to GR after having benefits terminated?*

**Question 14:** *Does the proportion of GROW participants who return to GR after having benefits terminated due to non-compliance with GROW program requirements vary according to duration of penalty (i.e. 30 or 60-day sanction)?*

**Question 15:** *What individual level factors are associated with an increased likelihood that GROW participants will return to GR after receiving a GROW sanction for non-compliance?*

**Question 16:** *What proportion of employable GR participants who reach GR program time limits return to GR after having benefits terminated?*

**Question 17:** *What individual level factors are associated with an increased likelihood that an employable GR participant will return to GR after having benefits terminated due to reaching program time limits?*

**Section 6 – Implications for Policy and Research.** This final component synthesizes the results from the preceding sections, offers implications for GR program policy and suggesting potential future directions of inquiry that may be useful for gaining a better understanding of the impact of GROW and for fashioning a more efficient and effective GR program.

### **1.3 Data**

This study uses de-identified administrative records from the GR and GROW programs. The CEO provided a number of datasets relevant for the analyses presented here to project investigators. Project investigators also received approval for this study from the Institutional Review Board at the University of the Sciences in Philadelphia.

The baseline dataset used in the analyses presented here contains demographic information (date of birth, place of birth, ethnicity, sex, veteran status, disability status, marital status) for GR recipients who received GR for at least one month during the first quarter of 2008. This dataset also contains information about GR tenure and indicates whether a GR participant received GR for each month from January 2002 until May

2010. Additional datasets cover a more limited timeframe and include more detailed records of the interaction of GR recipients with the GR and GROW programs, including information about sanctions, terminations, and dates of completion of GROW program activities. Finally, data from the California Employment Development Department (EDD) provided information about the quarterly earnings for GR recipients from the first quarter of 2002 until the first quarter of 2010.

Project investigators used the various datasets provided by the CEO to construct one integrated dataset for the purpose of analysis. Given the number of datasets provided to investigators, and occasional redundancies in information provided by different datasets, project investigators made a number of decisions about how to construct and operationalize variables that were included in the final dataset. Detailed descriptions of how key variables were operationalized are provided where appropriate throughout this report.

#### **1.4 Sample**

The CEO provided records for 65,824 GR recipients who received GR for at least one month during the first quarter of 2008. From this universe of participant records, the project investigators retained the records of those 8,953 participants who received GR for at least one month during January, February and March 2008, and who also did not have any record of GR receipt at any point between January 2002 and December 2007. As such, the sample used in this study was a cohort of first-time GR recipients (i.e., incidence cohort) who entered GR during the first quarter of 2008. Limiting the sample of GR recipients to such an incidence cohort has two main advantages. First, it provided a study group that is less biased towards long-term recipients when compared to a prevalence cohort (i.e., a cohort including all recipients over this time period, regardless of whether they had received GR benefits previously). Second, using an incidence cohort also ensured the ability to follow this cohort prospectively from the point at which they started receiving benefits, and ensured that everyone in this cohort commenced receiving GR benefits at a time concurrent with the GROW program operating.

It is worth reiterating that an incidence cohort is not necessarily representative of the entire population of GR recipients at a given time. The incidence population retained for this study is better able to include persons who were receiving GR benefits for brief periods of time, a large proportion of the entire GR population that is underrepresented when looking at cross-sections of the GR population. Conversely, such a cross-sectional population, which is similar to the prevalence population that was just mentioned, would have greater proportions of persons who were receiving GR for longer periods, and would thus be likely to differ with this cohort population in key characteristics, including being of older age, having greater levels of disability, and less persons who were employable.

The sample was further limited to include only 5,165 of the total 8,953 incidence cohort members who did not switch status from GROW participant to non-GROW participant

(or vice versa) over the course of the study period. Therefore this study focused on the 58 percent of this incidence cohort who were clearly either enrolled in GROW (i.e., GROW participants) or who were not enrolled in GROW (i.e., non-GROW participants) during the entire time of their GR tenure. The reason why the study was limited to records of only those who were clearly GROW participants or non-GROW participants was that key parts of this study focused on outcomes related to GROW, and outcomes for persons determined not to be GROW-eligible were also assessed, when appropriate, for comparison. To avoid compromising the distinctiveness of these two groups, only those with clear records of either GROW participation through their whole GR tenure or no record of any GROW participation during this time were retained. While this means of record selection ensured clear demarcations between the two groups of GR participants, it also raised some issues that will be discussed with other limitations in the final section of this study.

Persons in the cohort were classified as GROW participants if they met either of the following two sets of criteria. First, individuals were considered to be GROW participants if they were deemed to be employable at their time of initial entry into GR, maintained their employable designation during each month in which they received GR (i.e. did not change employability status) and had a record of having completed GROW orientation during the study period. Second, persons were also considered to be GROW participants if they entered GR with a designation of administratively unemployable or temporarily unemployable, subsequently became employable in a later month of GR receipt, and remained employable in each subsequent month in which they received GR (i.e. did not become unemployable again), and had a record of having completed GROW orientation during the study period. Persons in the cohort were classified as non-GROW participants if, at the time of entry into GR, they were classified as temporarily unemployable, permanently unemployable, administratively unemployable or needing special assistance, did not subsequently become employable, and did not have a record of having completed a GROW orientation. In addition, persons who were designated as employable at entry and were subsequently designated as temporarily unemployable, permanently unemployable, administratively unemployable or needing special assistance before completing a GROW program orientation were categorized as non-GROW participants.

It is also important to note that some of the questions that are addressed in this study further limit the sample to include only GROW program participants, as these questions examine issues that are only applicable or relevant for GROW participants. This report notes these instances where the sample is composed only of GROW participants.

Table 1.4.1 presents a snapshot of the GROW and non-GROW GR populations with descriptive findings of various characteristics for the sample. About 60 percent of 5,165 GR recipients in the incidence cohort participated in GROW. When examining Table 1.4.1, it is important to note that information on the level of education, prior work experience and criminal history were only available for GROW participants, since this information is collected as part of the Employment Needs Evaluation, which is only completed by employable GR participants. As such, Table 1.4.1 only reports this

information for GROW participants, and subsequent statistical analyses presented in this report only use these measures when addressing questions that limit the sample only to GROW participants.

Highlights of the results, with a description of the variables, in table 1.4.1 include:

- For both groups, the majority of participants were male, and the proportion of male GROW participants (67 percent) was higher than that of non-GROW participants.
- Age was measured from the start of the study period on January 1, 2008. GROW participants were, on average, substantially younger than non-GROW participants with an average age of 33.
- The majority of GROW participants came from age groups that more actively take part in the labor market.
- Race/ethnicity was grouped as White, Black, Hispanic, or other as mutually exclusive categories. Black (non-Hispanic) was the largest racial/ethnic category in both subgroups, and the GROW group were proportionately more Black than the non-GROW subgroups.
- More than half of the non-GROW participant subgroup was considered disabled, which was substantially more than the 2.7 percent of the GROW participant subgroup that was disabled.
- The vast majority of participants in both subgroups were single in marital status.
- More than 60 percent of both subgroups reported homelessness (at entry during first quarter of 2008).
- Among GROW participants, 16 percent reported having a high school diploma, more than two thirds disclosed having worked in the two years prior to GR receipt, and 17 percent reported having a criminal record.
- Veteran status was also a collected characteristic, but was not included because less than 1 percent of each subgroup were indicated to be Veterans, making the validity of this field questionable.
- At GR entry, 87 percent of GROW participants were considered to be employable. Among the remainder, a small number were evaluated as Administratively Unemployable (1 percent), and the rest were considered Temporarily Unemployable (12 percent).

These results suggest the presence of an additional issue concerning missing data that must be considered throughout this report. For fields like Veteran status the data field is clearly underreported and, as it is not central to this analysis, this field is omitted from Table 1.4.1 and the rest of the report. Other fields, such as high school graduation and prior criminal history, have sufficiently low percentages of positive indicators where underreporting may be an issue, but in these cases this cannot be determined with certitude.

**Table 1.4.1** Demographic Characteristics of Study Cohort, by GROW and Disability Status

	Non-GROW Participants	GROW Participants	Chi Square Test of Difference
<b>N</b>	2,156	3,009	
<b>Sex (%)</b>			85.77***
Male	53.9	66.7	
<b>Age (Mean)</b>	46.1	32.6	
<b>Age Group (%)</b>			909.32***
18-25	18.2	37.8	
26-35	14	24.9	
36-45	14.4	18.1	
46-55	22.3	15.6	
56-65	28.1	3.6	
66+	3	0	
Missing			
<b>Race/Ethnicity (%)</b>			171.26***
Black	31.5	42.1	
Hispanic	31	36.3	
White	28.1	17.6	
Other or Missing	9.4	3.9	
<b>Disabled (%)</b>	52.3	2.7	1726.5***
<b>Marital Status (%)</b>			302.7***
Married	9.5	9.4	
Divorced/Separated/Widowed	20.2	19	
Single	70.2	71.4	
Missing	0.1	0.2	
<b>Misc. Characteristics (%)</b>			
Homeless At Entry	64.8	65.4	0.20
High School Diploma	-	15.9	
Work Experience (Past 2 Years)	-	67.4	
Criminal History	-	17	
<b>Employability - GR Entry (%)</b>			3659.3***
Employable	4.2	86.7	
Needs Special Assistance	27	0	
Permanently Unemployable	7.5	0	
Temporarily Unemployable	33.3	11.8	
Administratively Unemployable	27.9	1.4	

\* -p<.05; \*\*-p<.01, \*\*\*-p<.001

Study Period was from January 2008 to May 2010

## **Section Two: GR Terminations, Tenure and Exits from GR, and GROW Sanctions**

This section examines the nature of terminations from the GR program, and in doing so responds to the first three questions put forth in the introductory section. This section then puts these terminations within the larger contexts of the length of time that GR recipients receive GR, and the circumstances whereby GR recipients exit from GR. Finally, this section addresses sanctions received by persons participating in GROW, and thereby addresses the next two questions (Questions 4 and 5) that were raised in the introductory chapter.

### **2.1 Terminations from GR for Non-Compliance**

Receipt of GR benefits is contingent upon participants meeting and sustaining eligibility for GR. This requires not only providing all information and documentation necessary to establish eligibility, but it also entails that GR participants continue to meet all program requirements and eligibility criteria in order to continue receiving GR. Failure to meet program requirements can result in the termination of GR benefits for all GR participants regardless of employability status, although certain exceptions are made for those designated as needing special assistance due to a mental disability.

Program requirements include completing required annual agreement forms and the QR-7 Quarterly Eligibility Report. Requirements also include reporting any changes in income, household composition, address or other factors that might affect eligibility. Failure to meet these requirements can result in the termination of GR benefits. In addition, failure to participate in required program activities, such as failing to attend GR Substance Abuse Recovery Assessment appointments, can result in the termination of GR benefits. Thus, a wide range of non-compliance scenarios including, but not limited to, those described above can result in the termination of GR benefits.

GR benefits can also be terminated if the status of a GR participant changes such that they no longer meet eligibility criteria. For example, a GR participant who has an application for Supplemental Security Income (SSI) benefits approved, will no longer be eligible for GR and will have benefits terminated. This type of termination is not related to a GR participant's non-compliance with GR program requirements, and thus will be examined separately from terminations that were considered to result from non-compliance with GR program guidelines.

According to GR policy guidelines, persons facing termination of GR benefits due to non-compliance, or due to a change in eligibility status, are issued a Notice of Action (NOA) informing them of an impending termination, the reason for termination, and the date of a hearing where GR participants can attempt to have a termination reversed.

As explained in greater detail below, project investigators had access to data containing detailed information about reasons for hearings, hearing dates, hearing decisions and

dates of termination of GR benefits in instances where the decision to terminate benefits was upheld.

**Question 1** – *What proportion of GR participants (both GROW and non-GROW participants) have GR benefits terminated for non-compliance with GR program requirements?*

In order to determine whether or not GR participants had GR benefits terminated for non-compliance with GR program requirements, or due to other changes in status affecting eligibility, a dataset named 'GR\_HEARING\_REASON' was used. This dataset contains information about GR hearings including the date of hearings, and the result/decision of hearings (i.e. whether the decision to terminate GR benefits was upheld or reversed). Importantly, the dataset also contains a field that specifies a NOA code, which provides information about the reason for the hearing and the termination of GR benefits.

In answering Question 1, two criteria were applied to the dataset 'GR\_HEARING\_REASON' to determine whether a GR participant with a record in that dataset had benefits terminated. First, GR participants had to have an effective termination date after January 1, 2008, and second, participants had to have a decision code that was either missing or indicating that the decision to terminate GR benefits was upheld. Records with decision codes indicating that a termination decision was reversed were accordingly counted as reversed terminations. The NOA code accompanying records that were determined to be terminations was used to assess the reason for termination of GR benefits. Appendix A provides a list of NOA codes that were considered to indicate non-compliance. Any termination that was accompanied by one of the NOA codes listed in Appendix A was categorized as being due to non-compliance with GR program requirements. Terminations accompanied by NOA codes not listed in Appendix A were not considered to be terminations resulting from non-compliance with GR requirements.

Terminations of GR benefits were examined in two different ways. First, we examined terminations of GR benefits that occurred for any reason (i.e. a termination accompanied by any NOA code, regardless of whether the NOA code was considered to indicate non-compliance or not). Second, we evaluated terminations that occurred specifically due to non-compliance with GR program requirements (i.e. a termination that was accompanied by an NOA code listed in Appendix A). In both instances, we applied the criteria described above to identify terminations that were actually carried out and those that were reversed after a hearing.

Figure 2.1.1 shows the frequency of terminations and reversals of terminations of any type for both GROW and non-GROW participants. More than two thirds of non-GROW participants had a record in the dataset GR\_HEARING\_REASON indicating that a termination occurred, substantially more than the 40 percent of GROW participants who had a termination of GR benefits. In contrast to the frequency of upheld terminations, the proportion of both groups that had a termination reversed was quite similar, with 17

percent of non-GROW participants and 15 percent of GROW participants having records indicating the reversal of a decision to terminate GR benefits.

Table 2.1.1 provides additional detail on all types of terminations of GR benefits, including the ten most common reasons for termination and ten most common reasons for terminations that were reversed. For non-GROW participants, receipt of SSI was the most common reason for termination of GR benefits, accounting for about 13 percent of all terminations. When combined with CalWORKs eligibility (10.7 percent of all terminations) and excess income (4.1 percent of all terminations), more than one quarter of all terminations of GR benefits among non-GROW recipients were for reasons that may be viewed as positive. On the other hand, four of the top ten reasons for termination appear to have been non-compliance related, with late periodic QR7 form (12.5 percent), failure to provide PA101 (6.6 percent), failure to keep appointment (3.1 percent) and failure to keep medical appointment (1.9 percent) collectively accounting for slightly less than one quarter of all terminations among non-GROW participants. When looking at reversed terminations among non-GROW participants, five of the top ten reasons for terminations that were ultimately reversed were for administrative reasons. Indeed, remediating late or incomplete periodic QR7 forms, failure to provide a PA-101 form, failures to complete an annual agreement form or failures to submit a PA-908 form were the reasons for more than half of the reversed terminations.

For GROW participants, failure to provide a PA101 (12.7 percent) was the most common reason for termination of GR benefits. When combined with the categories sanctions (12.1 percent), late QR7 forms (9.2 percent), and non-receipt of PA 908 (2.6 percent), these four non-compliance related reasons were responsible for more than one third of all terminations among GROW participants. On the other hand, two categories that indicated termination due to excess income, representing more positive reasons for termination, accounted for only about 17 percent of all terminations among GROW participants. Like non-GROW participants, for GROW participants, many of the terminations that were reversed were due to administrative reasons. More than one quarter of all reversed terminations resulted from a late QR7 form, which along with submitting an incomplete QR7, failure to provide a PA 101, and non-receipt of a PA-908 form, collectively accounted for more than half (54.6 percent) of all terminations that were reversed. In a manner similar to the non-GROW participants, GROW participants who faced termination for administrative reasons were often able to avoid termination of GR benefits, most likely through submitting the required form before GR termination took effect.

There are two issues, not conclusively captured by the data that potentially qualify these findings. First, persons who secure income or otherwise leave the GR rolls for positive reasons may simply decline to follow up on their GR cases, which may result in not providing necessary forms and then being terminated for non-compliance. It is impossible to assess how many persons who putatively had benefits terminated for non-compliance reasons had dropped GR after gaining an alternative income source. Second, there were no records in the dataset GR\_HEARING\_REASONS of termination

with NOA codes for termination of benefits resulting from reaching program time limits (i.e. NOA codes G093: GR Restricted to 277 Days; and G094: Eligibility for 277). As such, there is no indication that anyone lost benefits due to time limits. While this is unlikely, it may reflect that these time limits had a minimal impact on GR receipt. However, it is also possible that the experience of GROW participants who had benefits terminated due to reaching program time limits is not captured in the dataset and consequently is not reflected in Figure 2.1.1.

Figure 2.1.2 looks more specifically at the frequency of terminations that resulted specifically from non-compliance with GR program requirements, as well as the frequency of reversals of terminations that were for reasons that had to do with non-compliance with GR program requirements. As Figure 2.1.2 shows, nearly one quarter of both non-GROW (24.8 percent) and GROW (22.9 percent) participants experienced a termination of GR benefits due to non-compliance with GR program requirements. In a finding not shown in the figure, terminations for non-compliance accounted for 37 percent of all terminations among non-GROW participants and 56 percent of terminations among all GROW participants. Although a slightly higher proportion of non-GROW participants had GR benefits terminated due to non-compliance with GR program requirements, a slightly higher proportion of GROW participants than non-GROW participants (13 percent vs. 12.3 percent) had terminations due to non-compliance reversed.

Table 2.1.2 provides additional details about the specific reasons for terminations due to non-compliance among both GROW and non-GROW participants. Among non-GROW participants more than one third (34.2 percent) of all non-compliance related terminations resulted from late submission of a QR7 form. Also of note is that failure to keep appointment (8.6 percent), failure to keep SSI application appointment (6.4 percent), and failure to keep a medical appointment (5.2) comprised an additional 20 percent of terminations that were handed out to non-GROW. In looking at reversals of termination among non-GROW participants, the reasons were similar to upheld terminations, suggesting that a fair number of non-GROW participants are able to resolve non-compliance issues that most commonly result in termination.

Table 2.1.2 also shows that the reasons for non-compliance related terminations and reversals of non-compliance related terminations among GROW participants were very similar to those for non-GROW participants. Failure to provide a PA-101 form was the most common reason for non-compliance related termination, accounting for 22.7 percent of all non-compliance terminations among GROW participants. Late/incomplete QR7 forms and failure to submit a PA 908 form accounted for an additional 28 percent, meaning that failure to provide required administrative documentation was responsible for more than half of all non-compliance related terminations among GROW participants. On the other hand, failure to keep appointments, medical or otherwise, made up only 7 percent of non-compliance related terminations among GROW participants, which was noticeably less than the 17 percent documented for non-GROW participants.

In summary, the answer to Question 1 is that the proportion of both non-GROW and GROW participants that have benefits terminated due to non-compliance is very similar, with about one in four members of each group experiencing a non-compliance related termination. The reasons for non-compliance related terminations are also quite similar across the two groups, with failure to submit required paperwork and failure to attend required appointments accounting for the bulk of terminations for both non-GROW and GROW participants alike. While an examination of non-compliance related terminations that are ultimately reversed suggests that a fair number of GR participants are able to resolve terminations that result from administrative requirements, the fact that a higher proportion of both cohorts have terminations upheld rather than reversed suggests that many GR participants have difficulty in meeting such requirements.

**Question 2:** *What factors are associated with an increased likelihood that a GR participant will have benefits terminated for non-compliance with GR program requirements?*

**Question 3:** *Are GROW participants more likely to have benefits terminated due to non-compliance with GR requirements than GR participants who do not participate in GROW due to being designated unemployable, administratively unemployable, or needing special assistance?*

Table 2.1.3 presents the results from a logistic regression model that estimated correlates impacting the likelihood that GR participants will have benefits terminated due to non-compliance. The dichotomous dependent variable indicating termination of benefits for this model was based on the criteria used to create Figure 2.1.2 and Table 2.1.2, and represents terminations that were accompanied by NOA codes documented in Appendix A. In the analysis, special attention was paid to the effect of GROW participation (i.e. whether GROW participants were more or less likely to have benefits terminated), although a number of additional covariates were included as controls. Table 2.1.3 indicates, in response to Question 3, that GROW participants were about 20 percent less likely than non-GROW participants to experience a termination of GR benefits due to non-compliance with GR program requirements, when holding other covariates constant. In response to Question 2, other factors included in the model that impact termination were disability status and gender. Both persons classified as having a disability and females were about 25 percent less likely to experience a termination due to non-compliance.

## **2.2 GR Tenure**

Table 2.2.1 provides basic information about the episodes and total durations of GR receipt for both GROW and non-GROW participants over the course of the study period, from January 2008 to May 2010. On average, GROW participants spent 6.5 months on GR during the study period compared to 9.5 months for their non-GROW counterparts. For the GROW group, the most common length of GR tenure was only two months over the study period, which was slightly lower than the three months that was the most common length of tenure for the non-GROW group. In addition, slightly more than one

in 10 GROW participants received GR for a cumulative total of 12 months or more of the study period, which was substantially lower than the more than one quarter of non-GROW participants who spent a total of a year or more on GR.

In terms of episodes of GR during the study period, GROW participants averaged almost two episodes of GR receipt over the study period, which was higher than non-GROW participants. GROW participants did have slightly shorter episodes of GR receipt (4.1 months, compared to 6.5 months for non-GROW participants). However, compared to non-GROW recipients, GROW recipients tended to have more GR episodes. More than one quarter of GROW participants had three or more episodes over the course of the study period, while only 10 percent of non-GROW participants did.

Taken together, these findings indicate that GROW participants cycled through the GR program to a greater degree than their non-GROW counterparts. This is not entirely surprising and may be explained by GR program policies. Indeed, while all GR recipients can have their benefits terminated due to non-compliance with program requirements, GROW participants are additionally subject to GROW-program related sanctions, which can result in the termination of GR benefits for 30 or 60-day periods.

Figure 2.2.1 presents survival curves, illustrating the length of the first episode of GR receipt for both GROW and non-GROW participants subsequent to their initial entry into GR. Survival curves are a method of showing the proportion of GR episodes that last beyond a certain time period or interval. As such, they offer a more detailed portrait of the dynamics of the initial episode of GR receipt among our study cohort, and allow us to better understand the experience of GR recipients subsequent to their first entry into the GR program.

In Figure 2.2.1, as all GR recipients received GR during the month in which they entered GR, 100 percent of both GROW and non-GROW participants were included at time 1 in the graph. However, as the number of months subsequent to their initial entry into GR increased, more and more people exited GR for at least a month and thus, were dropped from the graph. In other words, Figure 2.2.1 shows that a decreasing number of GR recipients maintained a continuous episode of GR receipt as time progressed. The relatively steep curves shown for both GROW and non-GROW participants indicate that the first episode of GR receipt ended rather quickly for most GR recipients—regardless of whether or not they participated in the GROW program. Indeed, for about half of non-GROW participants, their initial GR episode ended in 4 months or less as they exited GR, and as evidenced by the steeper curve for the GROW participants, roughly two thirds had an initial GR episode of four months or fewer. In contrast, relatively few GR recipients had initial GR episodes that lasted beyond 10 months. Going even further out, less than one quarter of non-GROW participants had episodes lasting beyond 10 months, and less than 5 percent of GROW participants had initial episodes lasting greater than 10 months. This latter finding was likely in large part due to GR program guidelines that limited employable GR participants to 277 days of GR receipt in a 365-day period. Moreover, among GR

recipients in our sample who entered GR for the first time during the first quarter of 2008, only 8 percent of the non-GROW participants and none of the GROW participants remained on GR without exiting for even one month over the duration of the entire study period.

Figure 2.2.1 suggests that most initial episodes of GR receipt ended relatively quickly. However, given that Table 2.2.1 indicates that there may be substantial cycling on and off of GR—particularly among GROW participants, a subsequent section of this report will examine the returns to GR after an initial exit in more detail.

### **2.3 Sustained Exits from GR**

Looking at Table 2.2.1 indicates that 29 percent of non-GROW participants and 33 percent of GROW participants were on GR for three months or less during the 29-month study period. For those among this subgroup of participants who only had one GR episode, their GR use was short-term and their exit was sustained. The data available for this study can identify what we call “sustained exiters” – those GR recipients staying three months or less over one episode and having no record of any additional episodes of GR receipt during the study period, as well as some participant characteristics for those sustained exiters. Thus, persons in this sustained exiter subgroup can use GR to provide some financial assistance to tide them over a short-term crisis, they may decide that the requirements of participating in GR exceeds the benefits received by doing so, or their GR benefits may end due to a variety of other reasons, and this section investigates the relationship between whether an individual had GR benefits terminated due to non-compliance with program regulations and the likelihood of being a sustained exiter.

Looking more closely at sustained exiters may also provide some insights into the dynamics of the GROW enrollment process. If there are large proportions of sustained exiters among the GROW participants, these are persons for whom GROW did not provide in-depth services. Whether this short tenure is due to effectiveness of GROW, to the ability of these sustained exiters to quickly regain self-sufficiency, or to the inability or unwillingness to comply with the GR program requirements (including GROW) cannot be ascertained from this data.

Figure 2.3.1 shows that 32 percent of GROW participants and 28 percent of non-GROW participants made a sustained exit from GR after three months or less of benefits receipt. Going back to Table 2.2.1, virtually all of those in the one-to-three month category among both groups were in this category.

Table 2.3.1 shows the results of a logistic regression model that assessed the association of a variety of factors, including GROW participation, with the odds of making a short-term, sustained exit from GR. The regression model results show that there was no statistically significant difference between GROW and non-GROW participants in terms of their likelihood of making a sustained exit from GR. However, the regression model indicates that persons with a disability were about 38 percent less

likely to make a sustained exit from GR. This is not surprising, as often disabled individuals receive GR benefits while going through the long process of applying for more long-term public disability benefits such as SSI. In addition, older age was associated with a slightly decreased likelihood of making a sustained exit from GR, which may in part be due to older individuals having a harder time competing in the labor market and obtaining employment which would allow them to achieve self-sufficiency. Interestingly, persons who had benefits terminated due to non-compliance with GR program requirements were 25 percent less likely to make a sustained exit from GR. This is noteworthy as it suggests that persons in this category cycle frequently back onto GR receipt. On the other hand, having higher earnings prior to GR entry was associated with an increased likelihood of making a sustained exit from GR. This finding suggests that persons with more robust earnings histories are able to transition rapidly back to self-sufficiency after entering GR. In addition to these factors, there were several control variables that also had statistically significant impact on the odds of making a sustained exit from GR. These include being of Black or Hispanic race/ethnicity (compare to non-Hispanic White race), which in all cases were associated with a decreased likelihood of making a sustained exit from GR, and being female, which was associated with an increased likelihood of making a sustained exit from GR.

The key finding here is that just under one-third of both GROW and non-GROW groups received GR for less than three months before making sustained exits. It is difficult to make conclusions beyond these findings, as the reasons behind and circumstances surrounding these sustained exits are unclear. Additionally, as GROW and non-GROW groups are very different, it is uncertain what the similar rate of sustained exiters in the two groups means, and no conclusions related to GROW program performance can be made here.

## **2.4 Section Summary**

In answering the first three research questions presented in the first section, this section presented the following key findings:

- In response to Question 1, there was no substantial difference among GROW and non-GROW recipients in the proportions in each group who experienced termination of GR benefits for reasons related to non-compliance with program guidelines. Roughly one quarter of both non-GROW and GROW participants had their benefits terminated for this reason.
- In response to Question 2, two factors not related to GR receipt, female gender and the presence of a disability, were associated with a lower likelihood of termination of GR benefits due to non-compliance.
- In response to Question 3, GROW participants were less likely to experience termination of benefits due to non-compliance.

Additional key findings indicate that:

- A majority of non-GROW participants (68 percent) experienced any type of termination of GR benefits, while only four in 10 GROW participants

(41 percent) experienced a termination. However, the low rate of termination observed for GROW participants may have been an artifact of the data, as there was no information in the data on GROW participants who had benefits terminated due to reaching GR program time limits.

- A substantial proportion of terminations experienced by non-GROW participants appear to result from these individuals transitioning to other income support programs, including SSI and CalWORKs.
- In looking at the specific reasons for non-compliance related terminations, many were related to the failure to submit required reporting and verification forms in a timely manner.

Taken together, while many GR recipients seem to face difficulty in keeping up with the administrative requirements related to maintaining program eligibility, there is no sign that there was any additional administrative burden associated with GROW that impaired the ability of recipients to maintain their GR eligibility.

This section also went beyond these research questions to assess two additional topics. The first of these topics is GR tenure. Compared to their non-GROW counterparts, GROW participants averaged less months on GR but more GR episodes. This suggests that, on average, patterns of GR benefits utilization are substantially different between these two groups. This would be consistent with, but does not prove, the assertion that much of the difference in these GR utilization patterns is linked with programmatic restrictions for GROW participants where they are only able to receive GR for 9 months out of any 12 month period. However, there is no direct evidence, such as a clear drop off of GR receipt after nine months of receipt among GROW recipients in Figure 2.2.1 or persons terminated with a code indicating time limits were reached, that supports any direct effects of time limits on benefits receipt.

The second additional topic assessed here focused on 32 percent of GROW recipients and 28 percent of non-GROW recipients who had sustained exits from GR after receiving benefits for three months or less. Looking at this more in-depth, this section found that disabled GR recipients, older GR recipients and those who had GR benefits terminated due to non-compliance with program regulations are less likely to make quick, sustained exits from the GR program. On the other hand, persons with higher pre-GR earnings were more likely to make rapid and sustained exits from GR, indicating that persons with more robust employment experience may make largely short-term or transitional use of GR benefits, possibly to serve as a bridge between spells of longer-term employment.

**Table 2.1.1** Frequency and Reason for Any Type of Termination of GR Benefits and Reversal of Termination, by GROW Participation Status

<b>Non-GROW (n=2,156)</b>			
<b>% Experiencing Termination (%)</b>	67.9		<b>% Having Termination Reversed</b>
<b>Reason (% of all Terminations)</b>			<b>Reason (% of Reversed Terminations)</b>
SSI Recipient	12.9		Late Periodic Report QR7
Whereabouts Unknown	12.5		Failed To Provide PA101
Late Periodic Report QR7	12.5		No Annual Agreement
Potentially CalWORKs Eligible	10.7		Whereabouts Unknown
Recoupment Begin	7.0		Failed To Keep Medical Appt
Failed To Provide PA101	6.6		Overpayment POI
Termination: Client's Request	4.6		Incomplete Periodic Report QR7
Excess Income	4.1		Failed To Keep SSSIAP Appt
Failed To Keep Appointment	3.1		Potentially CalWORKs Eligible
Failed To Keep Medical Appointment	1.9		PA908 Not Received
Other	24.0		Other
			21.1
			14.9
			9.2
			7.6
			5.4
			4.3
			4.3
			4.1
			2.7
			2.2
			24.1
<b>GROW (n=3,009)</b>			
<b>% Experiencing Termination (%)</b>	40.7		<b>% Having Termination Reversed</b>
<b>Reason (% of all Terminations)</b>			<b>Reason (% of Reversed Terminations)</b>
Failed to provide PA101	12.7		Late Periodic Report QR7
Excess Income	12.2		Failed To Provide PA101
Sanctioned Individual	12.1		Sanctioned Individual
Recoupment Begin	10.3		Overpayment POI
Late Periodic report QR7	9.2		Failed To Keep Appointment
Whereabouts Unknown	5.4		Fail Ag For Mo 2 If Mo 1 Fails
Excess Income:UIC	4.9		Whereabouts Unknown
Fail ag for mo 2 if mo 1 fails	4.6		Fail To Comply With NHR
Termination: Client's Request	2.9		Incomplete Periodic Report QR7
PA908 not received	2.6		PA908 Not Received
Other	23.2		Other
			26.7
			21.3
			9.7
			7.1
			3.9
			3.7
			3.7
			3.4
			3.4
			3.2
			14.0

**Table 2.1.2 Frequency and Reason for Termination of GR Benefits Due to Non-Compliance and Reversal of Termination Due to Non-Compliance, by GROW Participation Status**

<b>Non-GROW (n=2,156)</b>				
<b>% Experiencing Termination (%)</b>	24.8		<b>% Having Termination Reversed</b>	
<b>Reason (% of all Terminations)</b>			<b>Reason (% of Reversed Terminations)</b>	
Late Periodic Report QR7	34.2		Late Periodic Report QR7	32.3
Failed To Provide PA101	18.1		Failed To Provide PA101	20.7
Failed To Keep Appointment	8.6		No Annual Agreement	12.8
Failed To Keep SSIAP Appt	6.4		Failed To Keep Medical Appt	7.5
Failed To Keep Medical Appt	5.2		Incomplete Periodic Report QR7	6.0
PA908 Not Received	3.6		Failed To Keep SSSIAP Appt	5.6
Fail Due To CAPI Assistance	3.6		PA908 Not Received	3.0
Unverified: Age	3.4		Failed To Keep Appointment	2.6
Sanctioned Individual	1.9		Unverified: Age	2.3
Fail To Comply With NHR	1.3		Failed To Register EDD-1st	1.5
Other	13.8		Other	5.6
<b>GROW (n=3,009)</b>				
<b>% Experiencing Termination (%)</b>	22.9		<b>% Having Termination Reversed</b>	
<b>Reason (% of all Terminations)</b>			<b>Reason (% of Reversed Terminations)</b>	
Failed To Provide PA101	22.7		Late Periodic Report QR7	31.6
Sanctioned Individual	21.5		Failed To Provide PA101	25.3
Late Periodic Report QR7	20.3		Sanctioned Individual	11.5
Fail Ag For Mo 2 If Mo 1 Fails	8.1		Failed To Keep Appointment	4.6
PA908 Not Received	4.7		Fail Ag For Mo 2 If Mo 1 Fails	4.3
Fail To Comply With NHR	4.4		Fail To Comply With NHR	4.1
Failed To Keep Medical Appt	3.9		Incomplete Periodic Report QR7	4.1
Failed To Keep Appointment	2.9		PA908 Not Received	3.8
Incomplete Periodic Report QR7	2.5		Failed To Keep Medical Appt	3.1
Failed To Provide SSN	1.6		No Annual Agreement	2.6
Other	7.4		Other	5.1

**Table 2.1.3 Predictors of Termination of GR Benefits Due to Non-Compliance**

	<b>Odds Ratio</b>	<b>95% CI (Lower Limit)</b>	<b>95% CI (Upper Limit)</b>
<b>GROW participation</b>	0.79*	0.63	0.99
<b>Age at Start of Study Period</b>	1.00	0.99	1.00
<b>Disabled</b>	0.75*	0.57	0.98
<b>Female</b>	0.76**	0.64	0.91
<b>Race (White is Reference)</b>			
Black	0.96	0.75	1.22
Hispanic	1.02	0.81	1.30
Other	0.97	0.65	1.45
<b>Average Quarterly income before Q1 2008 (log)</b>	0.95	0.88	1.04
<b>Homeless</b>	1.06	0.89	1.26

\* -p<.05; \*\*-p<.01; \*\*\*-p<.001

Overall Model Fit:  $\chi^2=17.6$ , d.f.=9, p<.05

Quarterly earnings is logged and reflects mean quarterly earnings prior to 2008

**Table 2.2.1 GR Tenure (Total and by Episode) During Study Period**

	<b>Non-GROW</b>	<b>GROW Participant</b>
<b>N</b>	2,156	3,009
<b>Total Number of Months on GR</b>		
Mean	9.5	6.5
Median	6	5
Mode	3	2
<b>Total Number of Months on GR</b>		
1 to 3 months	28.5	32.6
4 to 6 months	21.8	28.9
7 to 9 months	14.5	16.7
10 to 12 months	7.8	10.5
Over 12 months	27.4	11.2
<b>Number of Episodes</b>		
1	69.7	84.9
2	20.1	28.8
3	8.0	16.7
4+	2.2	9.2
Mean	1.4	1.7
Mean Episode Length (months)	6.5	4.1

Study period was from January 2008 to May 2010

**Table 2.3.1 Predictors of Making Sustained Exit From GR**

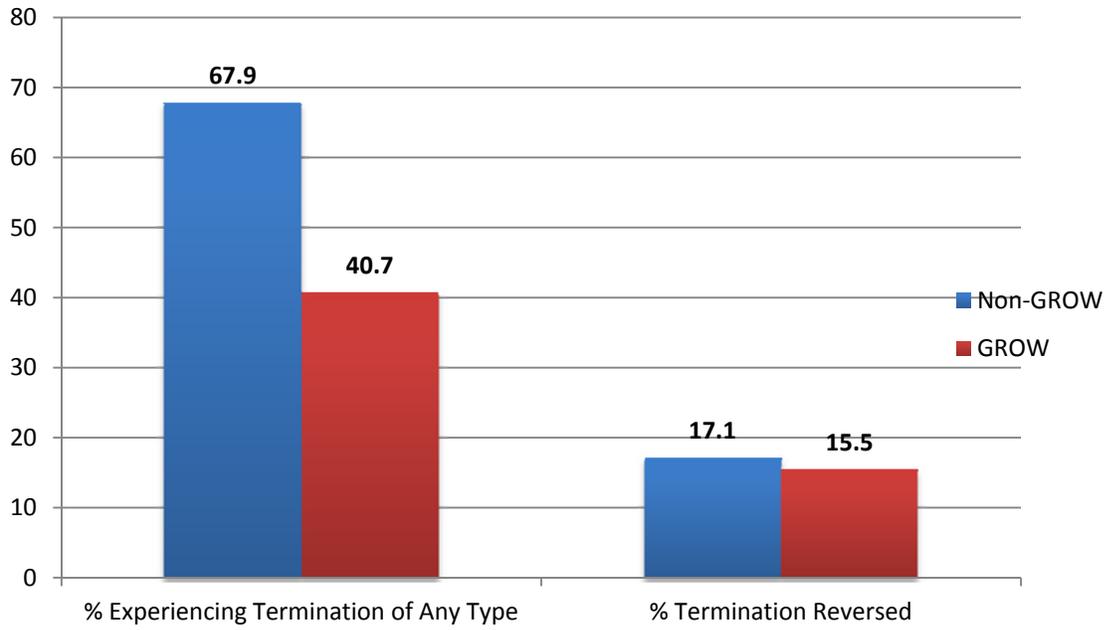
	Odds Ratio	95% CI (Lower Limit)	95% CI (Upper Limit)
<b>GROW participation</b>	0.89	0.72	1.10
<b>Age at Start of Study Period</b>	0.99***	0.98	0.99
<b>Disabled</b>	0.62***	0.48	0.80
<b>Female</b>	1.24**	1.06	1.46
<b>Race (White is Reference)</b>			
Black	0.66**	0.53	0.83
Hispanic	0.96	0.77	1.19
Other	0.60*	0.41	0.89
<b>Mean Quarterly Earnings (1)</b>	1.09*	1.00	1.18
<b>Homeless</b>	1.10	0.93	1.29
<b>Termination from Non-Compliance</b>	0.75**	0.62	0.90

\*-p<.05; \*\*-p<.01; \*\*\*-p<.001

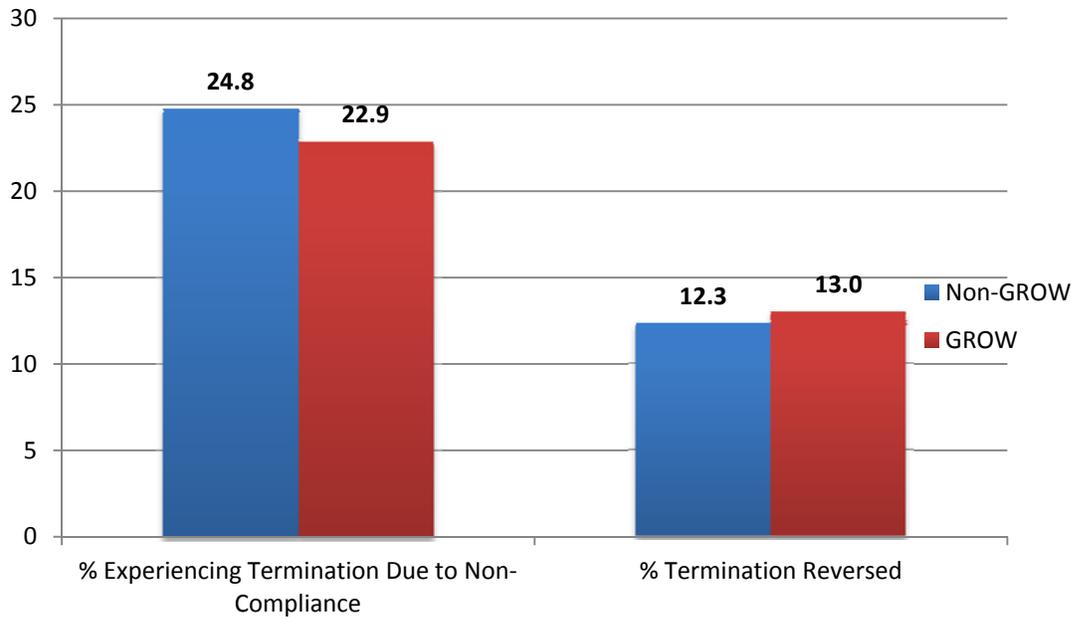
Overall Model Fit:  $\chi^2=82.4$ , d.f.=10, p<.0001

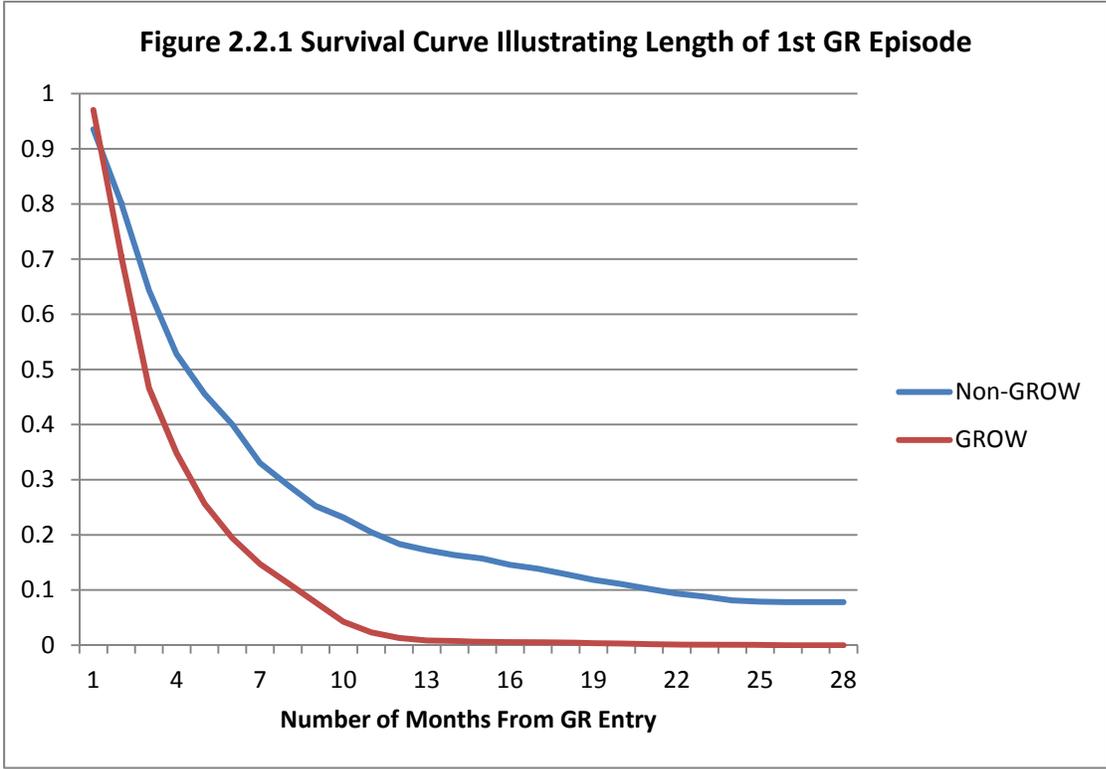
1 – quarterly earnings is logged and reflects mean quarterly earnings prior to 2008

**Figure 2.1.1 Frequency of any Type of Termination of GR Benefits and Reversal of Termination, by GROW Participation Status**

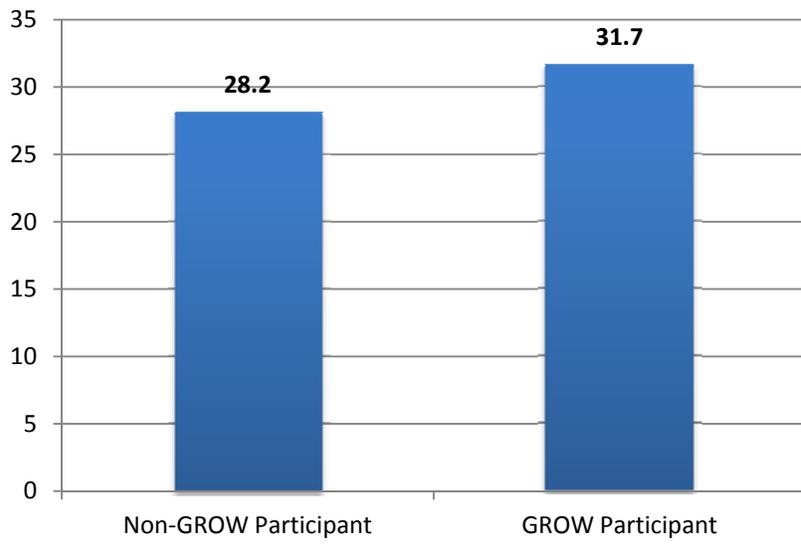


**Figure 2.1.2 Frequency of Termination of GR Benefits Due to Non-Compliance and Reversal of Termination Due to Non-Compliance, by GROW Participation Status**





**Figure 2.3.1 Proportion of GR Participants Making a Sustained Exit From GR**



### **Section Three: GROW – Sanctions and Progression through the Program**

GR recipients, and in particular, employable participants for whom GROW participation is required, must complete certain activities, which occur largely in a sequential manner. All GROW participants complete an Employment Needs Evaluation at intake, followed by an Orientation/Job Skills Assessment. From there, GROW participants must complete additional GROW program activities to satisfy program requirements. The exception is those GROW participants employed at least 20 hours per week and who do not have to participate in other GROW activities; however, this is extremely rare, since an individual working 20 hours per week at minimum wage would earn too much to qualify for any GR grant. After completion of orientation, those GROW participants who are not employed are referred to appropriate GROW program activities, including participation in a Job Skills Preparation Class, and additional program components as needed, with the ultimate goal of obtaining employment. One key way to assess the progression of GROW participants through the GROW program is to examine the extent of time that elapses between a person's first contact with the GR program and their commencement of a first GROW program activity or component. This is important, as if a significant amount of time elapses between completion of orientation and commencement of a Job Skills Preparation Class, for example, a GR participant's search for and obtainment of employment may be delayed.

Employable GR recipients in the GROW program must participate in all required GROW activities in order to maintain their GR eligibility. Employable GR recipients who do not comply with GR and GROW program requirements can be sanctioned for their non-compliance and have their benefits terminated for varying lengths of time. Sanctions can be imposed on employable GR recipients for a number of reasons including failure to perform job search activities, quitting a job or refusing an offer of employment, and missing scheduled appointments for GROW related activities. If a GR participant can establish "good cause" (e.g. illness, death in family, medical appointment) for failure to meet a program requirement, then a sanction can be avoided or waived.

This section takes an in-depth look, based on the available DPSS data, at the GROW components and the sanctions incurred when the program is not adhered to by GROW participants. Specifically this section examines in detail the frequency that GROW-related sanctions occurred and the characteristics associated with the likelihood of receiving sanctions (Questions 4 and 5). This section then reports the degree of participation by GROW participants (and also by non-GROW participants) in the various GROW components and activities. This is a prerequisite for the final set of analyses in the section, which assess the variations in the length of time between entry into the GR program and commencement of involvement with GROW program components (Questions 6 and 7).

### 3.1 Sanctions for GROW Participants

Sanctions for non-compliance with GROW program requirements are applied in a progressive manner, with more serious penalties imposed for each successive incident of non-compliance. A “0” penalty is imposed for the first incident of non-compliance, and a GR participant can have the termination of the benefits rescinded upon attending a non-compliance hearing. A second incident of non-compliance within 365 days of the first results the termination of GR benefits for a 30-day period. A 60-day sanction results from a failure to meet program requirements for the third time in a year period, and all subsequent incidents of non-compliance also carry a 60-day penalty. Once a GR participant has gone for a 365-day period without being sanctioned, the sanction process restarts, with a 0-day penalty imposed for the first incident of non-compliance.

This upcoming analysis of sanctions data will address the next two questions that frame this study:

**Question 4:** *What proportions of employable GR participants receive 0, 30, and 60-day sanctions for non-compliance with GR/GROW program requirements?*

**Question 5:** *What factors are associated with an increased likelihood that an employable GR participant will receive a sanction for non-compliance?*

The sample used to answer these two questions is out of necessity limited to GROW participants (see Table 1.4.1 for information about the demographic composition of this sample). Given that sanctions for non-compliance with GROW program requirements are progressively applied to successive incident of non-compliance, it is necessary to trace the sanction trajectory of GROW participants over time. Put differently, since sanctions are imposed in a successive manner, GROW participants cannot experience a 30-day sanction without first having experienced a 0-day sanction and likewise cannot be given a 60-day sanction without a prior 30-day sanction.

Figure 3.1.1 responds to Question 4 in examining the extent of 0, 30 and 60-day sanctions for non-compliance among employable GR recipients. Results indicate that more than eight out of 10 GROW participants received 0-day sanctions for non-compliance with program requirements. The frequency with which 0-day sanctions were imposed suggests that instances of non-compliance with GROW program requirements were fairly common. However, the proportion of GROW participants dropped sharply as the level of penalty increased. One quarter of total GROW participants were sanctioned with a 30-day penalty and 10 percent of total GROW participants received a 60-day sanction. Looking at this in another way, 30 percent of GROW participants who had received a 0-day sanction also received a 30-day sanction and 41 percent of those who experienced a 30-day sanction subsequently received a 60-day sanction. The decline in the overall proportion of GROW participants experiencing successive sanctions, and the relatively low proportion of all persons receiving 0-day and 30-day sanctions who subsequently experience 30 and 60-day

sanctions, respectively, may indicate that sanctions functioned as an effective measure for ensuring that GROW participants adhere to program requirements.

Table 3.1.1 looks only at GROW participants and reports factors associated with an increased likelihood of an employable GR participant receiving a sanction based on results from three logistic regression models that were estimated to examine what factors might explain the likelihood that GR recipients receive a 0, 30, or 60-day sanction for non-compliance. Independent variables that were previously explained (see section 1.4) were also included in these logistic regression models as factors that might be related to the likelihood of experiencing a sanction. In addition to these variables, there are components of the GROW program included as well. These GROW components are a series of dummy variables indicating participation in intensive case management; vocational services, job fair, Fastrak (a specialized job-club type component that targets individuals with more critical needs such as homelessness or being over age 50), and a catchall “other GROW components” category. The reference category here was participation in Job Skill Preparation Class.

The principal results from Table 3.1.1 are as follows:

- Increased age had a significant impact on decreasing the likelihood of receiving sanctions. Specifically, a one-year increase in age was associated with about 4 percent decrease in the likelihood of receiving 0 and 60-day sanctions and 3 percent decrease in the likelihood of receiving 30-day sanction. In other words, younger GROW participants were more likely to receive sanctions.
- Female GROW participants were found to be less likely than male participants to receive sanctions. The likelihood of receiving 0-day and 30-day sanctions for females was about 43 percent and 26 percent lower than that of males, respectively. The male-female difference for receiving 60-day sanctions was not significant.
- History of higher income (pre GR participation) was associated with a decreased likelihood of 30 and 60-day sanctions. As the logged value of income was used in the model, the odds ratio value is not meaningful other than to indicate directionality.
- Homelessness was consistently associated with an increased likelihood of receiving sanctions. The likelihood that homeless persons receive sanctions was 82 percent higher for 0-day sanction, 39 percent higher for 30-day sanction, and 88 percent higher for 60-day sanction.
- GROW participants with a criminal record were found to have a 33 percent lower likelihood of receiving 30-day sanction. The association between criminal record and the other sanction categories was not statistically significant.
- Education level also had a consistent impact on increasing the likelihood of sanction receipt, with persons having completed high school being 1.5 times more likely to receive a 30-day sanction and more than twice as likely to receive a 60-day sanction than those who had not completed high school.

- None of the GROW components, were found to have a significant relationship to sanctions.

In summary, 0-day sanctions, which effectively act as warnings, were received at some point by more than 80 percent of GROW participants. The stricter sanctions, which temporarily curtailed benefits, were less often meted out. In looking at factors associated with receiving sanctions, there is no evidence that any specific programmatic components are associated with increased likelihood of sanctions. Homelessness was the main factor included in the model that was associated with an increased risk for all types of sanctions. There are various explanations that could explain this, and this deserves further examination. Conversely, having a criminal record was not associated with risk for increased sanctions, and was even associated with a lower risk for 30-day sanctions.

### **3.2 Participation by GROW Recipients in the Various GROW Components**

Table 3.2.1 provides detailed information about participation in GROW program components and activities by GROW participants. The recorded rate of participation in most GROW activities was low. Furthermore, of those who participate in a GROW component or activity, many do not have a disposition code indicating that they completed a particular component or activity. For example, while 55 percent of GROW participants took part in a Job Skills Preparation Class, only 13 percent had a record with a disposition code indicating that they had completed the class. To a certain extent, this may reflect an under-reporting of completion of GROW components, but it may also suggest that many GROW participants fail to complete a component for various reasons. Finally, Table 3.2.1 shows that about 10 percent of GROW participants do not participate in any GROW activity. This may be due to GROW participants exiting GR before beginning a GROW component.

Figure 3.2.1 summarizes the rates of participation in and completion of GROW program components and activities by showing rates of participation in the five most frequently accessed GROW program components and activities. Job Skills Preparation Class and Intensive Case Management were the two most commonly accessed GROW activities, with about 55 percent of GROW participants taking part in the Job Skill Preparation Class and about 27 percent receiving Intensive Case Management. Early Job Search (13 percent of GROW participants), Fastrak (9 percent of GROW participants) and Job Fair (7 percent of GROW participants) were the next most commonly accessed components.

### **3.3 Examining Progression through GR and GROW**

Examining the progression through GROW components and activities can help identify areas where delays occur, and what factors might act as barriers impeding the progress of participants through program activities and into employment. The sample for this subsection's analyses is limited to employable GR recipients who were required to

participate in the GROW program. Two questions that were presented in the introductory section are used to structure this inquiry:

**Question 6:** *What is average length of time from GR approval date (defined as 1<sup>st</sup> day of 1<sup>st</sup> month of GR receipt) to GROW program component start date?*

**Question 7:** *Does average length of time from GR approval date (defined as 1<sup>st</sup> day of 1<sup>st</sup> month of GR receipt) to GROW program component start date differ by component type?*

The length of time from GR approval and GROW program component start date were measured by subtracting GROW component start date dataset from first GR approval date. As GROW participants participate in more than one GROW activity or component, only the length of time to a participant's first interaction with a GROW activity or component was tracked in this manner. Thus, in instances where a GROW participant was engaged in multiple GROW program components, the component with the start date closest to initial GR approval date was selected. This analysis was complicated slightly by the fact that a fair number of cases showed a length of time between GR approval and first GROW component start date of two years or more, which could potentially be erroneous. Therefore, the median length of time was used rather than the mean, since it is more resistant to outliers.

In response to Question 6, Figure 3.3.1 indicates that the median length of time that GROW participants took to participate in the first GROW program component was 46 days. However, the median length of time varies depending on the type of GROW component or activity. While Job Skills Preparation and Intensive Case Management both had medians 52 days, Rapid Employment Program and Early Job Search, which are voluntary activities, had a much quicker time to participation. Despite the fact that these two programs focus on participants whose GR case is in a pending status and therefore who should in principle enroll in these components prior to GR approval, the positive median value for these components indicates that a substantial number of participants were in fact, approved for GR prior to joining these programs.

Table 3.3.1, which addresses Question 7, shows the results from a simple regression model that assesses differences in time from GR approval to commencement of different GROW components. The results largely confirm what is indicated in Figure 3.3.1, that compared to Job Skills Preparation, it took significantly longer to enroll in Intensive Case Management; while enrollment in Early Job Search and Rapid Employment is significantly and substantially faster; and there are no significant differences between Clinical Assessment/Other GROW components and Job Skill Preparation.

### 3.4 Section Summary

This section examined sanctions related to GROW participation and progression through GROW as measured by participation in GROW components. In doing so, this section addressed four of the research questions posed in the Introduction section.

In response to Question 4, the results show that 83 percent of GROW participants received an initial sanction; 25 percent (30 percent of those receiving an initial sanction) received a subsequent sanction with a 30-day benefits suspension; and 10 percent (41% of those receiving a 30-day sanction) received a third sanction, this time with a 60-day benefits suspension (see Figure 3.1.1). This shows that initial sanctions related to GROW participation were widespread, and a substantial minority of those receiving this first sanction then proceeded to receive subsequent sanctions that interfered with benefits receipt. The impact of these sanctions on continued GR participation will be examined in a subsequent section.

In response to Question 5, factors associated with an increased risk of receiving sanctions included younger age, male gender, lower earnings, homelessness, and high school graduation.

Questions 6 and 7 turns the focus to participation in GROW components. Overall, it took approximately six weeks to progress from component to component (Question 6), a time period which presumably included participation in the component and time transitioning between components. There was also variability in time from GR approval to participation in the first GROW component across the range of GROW components (Question 7). The extent to which this time lag is appropriate cannot be determined from this data. However, some of the voluntary programs which GROW participants can volunteer for would be expected to have had shorter, even negative time periods to engagement (some GROW components could start before GR approval).

In additional findings, relatively high rates of sanctions were accompanied by relatively low rates of recorded participation in certain GROW components and activities. Overall, roughly 90 percent of persons designated as GROW participants had a record of participating in some GROW component or activity. However, the component “Job Skills Preparation,” which is supposed to have near universal participation, only had 55 percent participation. This leads to obvious concerns about access to these components and programs by GROW participants, but can also be at least partly due to data limitations. Indeed, the completeness of these data, and the possibility that more persons participated in and completed GROW programming but were not recorded as doing so, may also be an issue and should be examined.

Finally, the findings here do indicate further access issues among those who were recorded as participating in GROW. The first appears in the analyses of component and activity completion in Table 3.1.2, which show that large proportions of persons who started each component never completed it. For example, 55 percent of GROW participants started Job Skills preparation, but only 13 percent completed this

component. The second apparent access issue is in the length of time it takes in accessing some of the GROW components and activities. While as expected, the Rapid Employment and Early Job Search components appear to have commenced relatively quickly after GROW enrollment, other frequently accessed components such as Intensive Case Management and Job Skills Preparation seem to have taken upwards of two months to access from the point of GROW enrollment, which would impact program continuity and effectiveness. Again, the completeness of the data needs to be confirmed before taking any initiatives in response to these findings.

**Table 3.1.1 Predictors of Sanctions**

	Odds Ratio	95% CI (Lower Limit)	95% CI (Upper Limit)	Odds Ratio	95% CI (Lower Limit)	95% CI (Upper Limit)	Odds Ratio	95% CI (Lower Limit)	95% CI (Upper Limit)
	0-Day Sanction			30-Day Sanction			60-Day Sanction		
Age at Start of Study Period	0.96***	0.95	0.98	0.97***	0.96	0.98	0.96***	0.95	0.98
Female	0.57***	0.41	0.80	0.74*	0.57	0.96	0.94	0.65	1.34
Race (White is Reference)									
Black	1.41	0.87	2.26	1.32	0.88	1.96	1.32	0.75	2.33
Hispanic	1.07	0.67	1.72	1.17	0.78	1.77	0.85	0.46	1.54
Other	1.78	0.67	4.73	0.91	0.44	1.91	1.43	0.56	3.62
Mean Quarterly Earnings (1)	0.87	0.74	1.04	0.75***	0.67	0.85	0.78**	0.66	0.92
Homeless	1.82***	1.31	2.55	1.39**	1.09	1.79	1.88***	1.32	2.68
Completed High School	0.95	0.60	1.51	1.51*	1.08	2.11	2.19***	1.45	3.31
Work Experience in past two years	0.76	0.51	1.15	0.81	0.61	1.07	0.67*	0.46	0.98
Criminal Record	0.68	0.44	1.05	0.67*	0.48	0.94	0.87	0.56	1.36
GROW Component (Job Skills Prep is reference)									
Intensive Case Management	1.45	0.82	2.57	0.74	0.50	1.11	0.94	0.55	1.59
Vocational	0.83	0.36	1.91	1.11	0.54	2.27	2.17	0.93	5.06
Job Fair	0.68	0.32	1.44	1.25	0.68	2.29	0.95	0.40	2.24
Fastrak	1.21	0.64	2.30	1.38	0.84	2.25	1.15	0.57	2.31
Other Grow Components	1.11	0.75	1.63	1.03	0.78	1.38	1.01	0.68	1.48
	Overall Model Fit: $\chi^2=86.1$ , d.f.=15, p<.0001			Overall Model Fit: $\chi^2=106.2$ , d.f.=15, p<.0001			Overall Model Fit: $\chi^2=86.1$ , d.f.=15, p<.0001		

1 – quarterly earnings is logged and reflects mean quarterly earnings prior to 2008

\* -p<.05; \*\*-p<.01; \*\*\*-p<.001

**Table 3.2.1** GROW Component/Activity Participation for GROW Participants (n=3,009)

GROW Component/Activity	Enrolled	Completed
Any Component Participation (%)	91	n/a
Case Manager Appointment (%)	89.8	35.2
Job Skill Preparation (%)	54.9	12.9
Intensive Case Management (%)	27.1	8.4
Early Job Search (%)	13.3	7.2
Fastrak (%)	9.2	2.0
Job Fair (%)	7.0	2.3
Vocational Assessment (%)	5.9	2.4
Clinical Assessment (%)	2.9	1.6
Short-term training (%)	3.3	1.2
Rapid Employment & Promotion (%)	3.6	0.8
Education Training (%)	2.1	0.2
Substance Abuse Recovery (%)	1.3	0.5
SIP (%)	1.0	1.0
Mental Health Services (%)	0.6	0.1
Healthy Way (%)	1.2	0.0
One-Stop/Worksource (%)	1.3	0.4
Office Occupation (%)	0.9	0.4
Literacy (%)	0.5	0.1
CSBG (%)	0.6	0.1
Non-Custodial Parent (%)	0.3	0.0
Youth (%)	0.3	0.0
Post Employment (%)	0.3	0.1
Security Officer Training (%)	0.1	0.0
Domestic Violence Services (%)	0.1	0.0
Define Your Image (%)	0.2	0.0

**Table 3.3.1** Estimating Differences In Average Length of Time from GR Approval to GROW Component Start Date

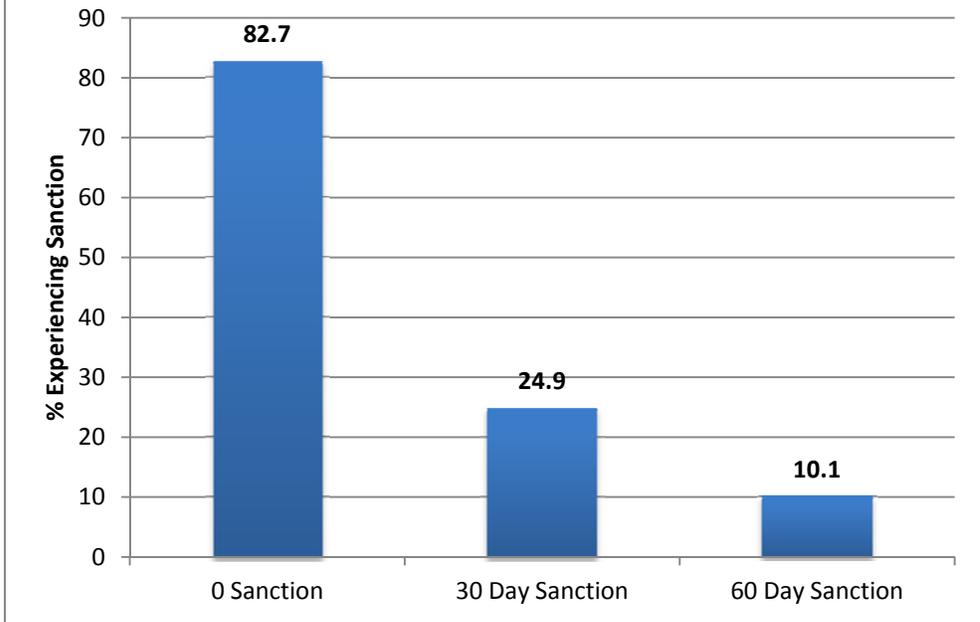
	Coefficient	Standard Error
<b>Constant</b>	105.71	4.49
<b>GROW Component</b>		
Intensive Case Management	102.67***	28.38
Early Job Search	-84.23***	9.02
Rapid Employment	-58.16***	15.26
Clinical Assessment	-40.27	22.68
Other GROW Components	11.45	13.89
Job Skills Preparation	Reference Category	

Overall Model Fit: F=33.9, d.f.=5, p<.0001

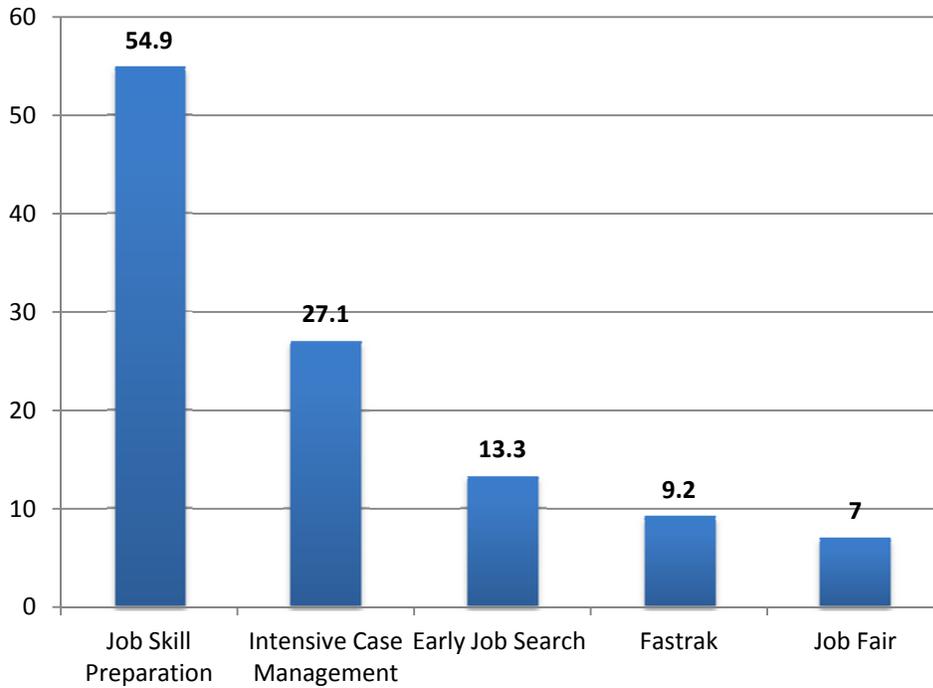
R-square=.08

\* -p<.05; \*\*-p<.01; \*\*\*-p<.001

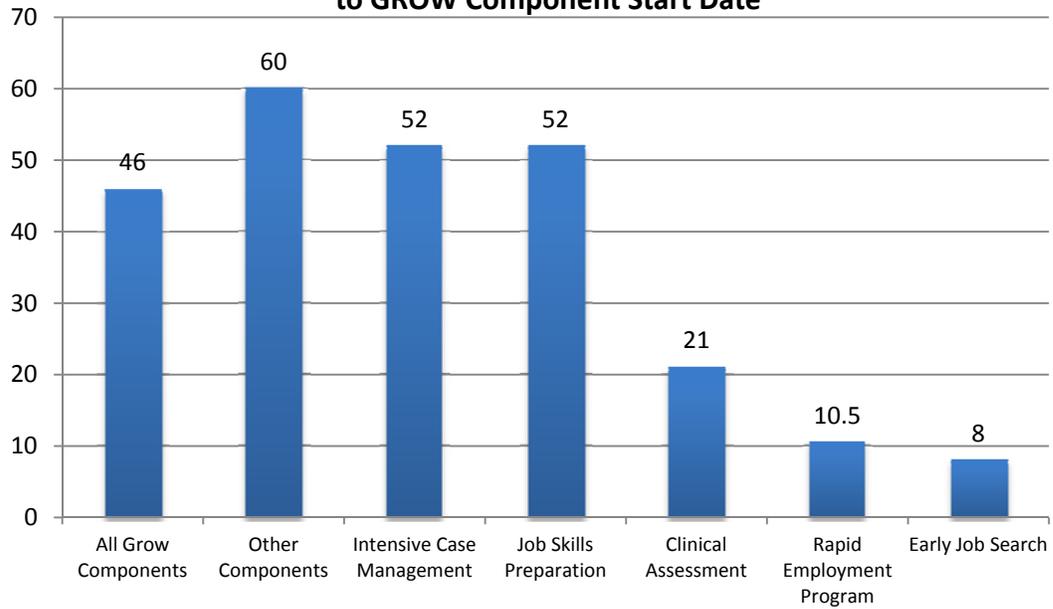
**Figure 3.1.1 Frequency of Sanctions Among GROW Participants (n=3,009)**



**Figure 3.2.1 Rates of Participation in GROW Program Components and Activities**



**Figure 3.3.1 Median Length of Time in Days from GR Approval Date to GROW Component Start Date**



## Section Four: Employment and Earnings

This section assesses the employment and earnings prospects of GR recipients. In this section there is, first, an assessment of factors that were associated with the likelihood of obtaining employment following involvement with GROW. Next, the factors associated with the earnings level of all GR recipients subsequent to their entry into the GR program are assessed. And finally, the focus shifts to describing trends in the earnings of GR recipients prior and subsequent to their entry into GR.

### 4.1 Factors Associated With Employment and Earnings

***Question 8:*** *What program level factors are associated with an increased likelihood of obtaining employment?*

***Question 9:*** *For those participating in the GROW and who obtain employment, what individual level factors are related to length of time from GR approval date to hire date?*

To address Question 8, a logistic regression model was estimated in order to examine what individual level factors and GROW components affect the likelihood that GROW participants are employed after GROW participation. In this analysis, employment status was determined on the basis of a GROW participant's disposition code upon completion of a GROW component. If the disposition code indicated that a GROW participant obtained employment upon completion of a particular component, they are considered to be employed for the purposes of this analysis. Approximately 6 percent of GROW participants met this criterion, and were hence considered to be employed for the analysis used to address Question 8. The model also controls for a number of additional covariates described in more detail in subsection 1.4.

Table 4.1.1 indicates that those who participated in Job Skill Preparation (the reference category) and Fastrak were more likely than participants in other GROW components such as Intensive Case Management, Vocational, and Job Fair to be employed, holding individual characteristics constant. The Fastrak result is counter-intuitive, as Fastrak targets GROW participants who are chronically homeless, age 50 and older, and those returning to GROW after expiration of their time limits.

To address Question 9, a multiple regression model was estimated in order to examine, among those GROW participants who obtained employment, what individual-level factors were associated with a shorter length of time from GR approval date to hire date. In this analysis, employment status was determined as in the same manner as in Question 8. The dependent variable in this analysis was length of time from entry into GR to hire date, with the date accompanying a disposition code indicating that a GROW participant obtained employment upon completion of a GROW component used as the effective hire date for that participant. The results of the multiple regression model used to answer Question 9 are presented in Table 4.1.2. As Table 4.1.2 indicates, only having a disability and being of black race were found to be significantly associated with

the length of time from GR entry to hire date, and both of these factors were associated with a longer duration from GR entry to hire date.

Taken together, the regression models used to answer Questions 8 and 9 are inconclusive for several reasons. Most prominently, a 6% employment rate for GROW participants seems low. Underreporting is likely here, and may be the result of either inconsistent or incomplete recordkeeping for this outcome, which is based on staff report, or due to participants who get work simply exiting GR by not submitting the next required QR-7 or annual agreement. Not submitting required paperwork is the most common exit reason, according to DPSS staff, and frequently is correlated with securing employment. This may contribute to both the lack of a substantial number of significant associations and, among the significant associations found, two particularly counterintuitive findings. These counterintuitive findings include the association between Fastrak and a substantially higher likelihood of obtaining employment, and findings for Black race where this covariate was associated with a much greater likelihood of getting a job but a much longer tenure on GR for those who got a job. These findings are not contradictory, but do seem at odds with each other.

Another source of information on employment and income comes from the California Employment Development Department (EDD) which records wages received for all workers in the state. This data is reported on a quarterly basis, so it is not aligned perfectly with the monthly GR data, but matching the GR data with the California EDD records provides another means to assess the extent of employment following GR enrollment. In addition, California EDD records the total amount of earnings for each quarter, and this can also be used to assess success in the employment arena after GR enrollment. California EDD data has been used in regression models in previous sections of this report for the variable “Average Quarterly Income”.

California EDD data is used as a basis to answer Question 10:

**Question 10:** *What program level factors were associated with an increased wage/income level of GR participants?*

A multiple regression model in which the log of average quarterly earnings, after the first quarter of 2008 up until the first quarter of 2010 is a dependent variable was examined to see what individual factors were associated with income level and to see if there was a difference in the earnings of non-GROW participants and GROW participants subsequent to their entry into GR. The dependent variable was measured using earnings data from the California EDD. The results in Table 4.1.3 show that average income for GROW participants subsequent to GR entry is significantly higher than that for non-GROW participants. Looking at the association between the other covariates in the model and income subsequent to GR entry, older age was associated with higher income, which may suggest that older persons who may have longer employment histories, will be more successful in the labor market. In addition, average quarterly earnings prior to GR entry had the strongest positive association with earnings subsequent to GR entry. This is an expected finding, as persons with higher earnings

prior to GR entry likely possess skills that make them more competitive in the labor market and will facilitate their transition from GR to self-sufficiency. Persons who had GR benefits terminated due to non-compliance with GR had lower earnings than those who did not experience a non-compliance related termination, although the difference was not statistically significant. Finally, the other covariates in the model, including race/ethnicity, disability status, gender, and being homeless at GR entry were not found to have a significant relationship with average income.

## **4.2 Trends in Earnings and Employment**

Where the previous subsection examined individual level factors associated with increased earnings by GR recipients subsequent to their initial entry into GR, this section examines more general earnings and employment trends over time for GR recipients both prior and subsequent to their initial enrollment in GR. Looking at such trends is important for understanding the nature of GR participation and whether for first time GR recipients, GR use is part of a continuing downward trend in employment and earnings, or whether earnings and employment recover after entering GR.

Figure 4.2.1 uses earnings data from the California EDD to show the average quarterly earnings of GR recipients who entered GR for the first time during the first quarter of 2008, over the period stretching from the first quarter of 2005 until the first quarter of 2010 for those GR recipients who received income in each quarter after the first quarter of 2008. Thus, this figure provides a picture of earnings trends for employed GR recipients for the three year period prior to their initial GR entry and the roughly two year period subsequent to their GR enrollment. One limitation of the earnings data available from EDD is that they are aggregated on the quarterly basis. As a result, it is not possible to differentiate earnings levels in the month directly prior or subsequent to an individual's entry into GR.

Despite these limitations, the trend in average earnings is quite clear in showing a relatively steady decline in earnings in the three-year period prior to entry into GR, with earnings among both GROW and non-GROW wage earners at their lowest in the first quarter of 2008. However, subsequent to GR entry in the first quarter of 2008, earnings amounts recovered quite rapidly for both GROW and non-GROW participants. Nonetheless, earnings still remained below their pre-GR enrollment high for both GROW and non-GROW participants, and leveled out after about two years subsequent to initial entry into GR. Earnings amounts (among those receiving earnings) were very similar for GROW and non-GROW participants.

Figure 4.2.2 also uses earnings data from the California EDD to show trends in the proportion of GR recipients who have any employment income in each quarter. As is clear from Figure 4.2.2, the proportion of both GROW and non-GROW participants with any employment income in a given quarter decreased quite sharply beginning in the first quarter of 2007, and was at its lowest for both groups in the first quarter of 2008 when the study cohort entered GR for the first time. Notably, the proportion of GROW participants having employment income increased relatively sharply from the first to

second quarter of 2008, and then continued to increase until the fourth quarter of 2008. This suggests that a fair number of GROW participants exited GR to employment. However, the proportion of GROW participants with employment income dropped after the first quarter of 2009. This significant drop in employment was likely related to the economic recession that was unfolding nationwide over this same time period. In contrast to the GROW group, the employment rates for the non-GROW group showed a steady decline over time, even after initial GR receipt when the rates for the GROW group recovered somewhat. This is consistent with the disabled and unemployable status that most in the non-GROW group have.

There is a substantial contrast between the proportion of persons identified as employed in conjunction with the GROW components, 6%, and the proportion of GROW participants identified as having received earnings, which never went below 27 percent in any of the quarters observed in this study, and got as high as 38 percent.

### **4.3 Section Summary**

This section examines some relationships between GROW and subsequent employment. Employment, when measured by indicators collected in conjunction with GROW data, produced little in the way of useful results and also led to unresolved questions on the reliability of the employment indicator. Thus Questions 8 and 9 cannot be conclusively answered.

Looking at employment outcomes, in the form of average quarterly earnings (for persons receiving earnings) and percent receiving any earnings in a quarter, proved somewhat more informative. Comparing the GROW and non-GROW groups, the GROW recipients were significantly and substantially more likely to gain employment following the start of their GR receipt. The extent to which this is due to GROW participation (as opposed to the employability of the recipients) is unclear, but there is a distinct difference between the two groups.

Compared to non-GROW participants, GROW participants showed better employment outcomes subsequent to GR receipt, both as measured in earnings and proportion working. The trend among GROW participants in terms of the proportion employed seems to recover quickly after the quarter where everyone became certified for GR, but after the initial rise the percentage again falls.

**Table 4.1.1** Relationship Between GROW Components and Employment

	Odds Ratio	95% CI (Lower Limit)	95% CI (Upper Limit)
<b>Age at Start of Study Period</b>	1.04***	1.02	1.06
<b>Female</b>	1.41	0.95	2.08
<b>Race</b> (White is the reference)			
Black	2.34	1.18	4.65
Hispanic	2.55**	1.27	5.12
Other	0.82	0.17	3.91
<b>Mean Quarterly Earnings (1)</b>	1.06	0.87	1.29
<b>Homeless</b>	0.89	0.61	1.31
<b>Completed High School</b>	0.98	0.57	1.69
<b>Work Experience in past two years</b>	1.38	0.85	2.25
<b>Criminal Record</b>	1.13	0.68	1.91
<b>GROW Component</b> (Job Skills Prep is reference)			
Intensive Case Management	0.39*	0.16	0.95
Vocational	0.42	0.10	1.87
Job Fair	0.46	0.11	1.97
Fastrak	2.69**	1.45	4.98
Other GROW Components	1.46	0.93	2.29

1 – quarterly earnings is logged and reflects mean quarterly earnings prior to 2008

Overall Model Fit:  $\chi^2=71.9$ , d.f.=5,  $p<.0001$

\* - $p<.05$ ; \*\*- $p<.01$ ; \*\*\*- $p<.001$

**Table 4.1.2** Factors Associated with Length of Time from GR Approval to Hire Date

	<b>Coefficient</b>	<b>t-value</b>
<b>Age</b> (at Start of Study Period)	-0.02	-0.42
<b>Disabled</b>	0.11**	2.62
<b>Female</b>	-0.01	-0.16
<b>Race</b> (White is Reference)		
Black	0.13*	2.13
Hispanic	0.05	0.76
Other	0.06	1.43
<b>Mean Quarterly Earnings (1)</b>	-0.07	-1.53
<b>Homeless</b>	0.02	0.55
<b>Completed High School</b>	0.07	1.57
<b>Work Experience</b> (in past two years)	0.02	0.45
<b>Criminal Record</b>	-0.02	-0.41

1 – quarterly earnings is logged and reflects mean quarterly earnings prior to 2008

Overall Model Fit:  $F=1.86$ ,  $d.f.=11$ ,  $p<.05$

R-square=.03

- $p<.05$ ; \*\*- $p<.01$ ; \*\*\*- $p<.001$

**Table 4.1.3 Factors Associated with Earnings Subsequent to GR Entry**

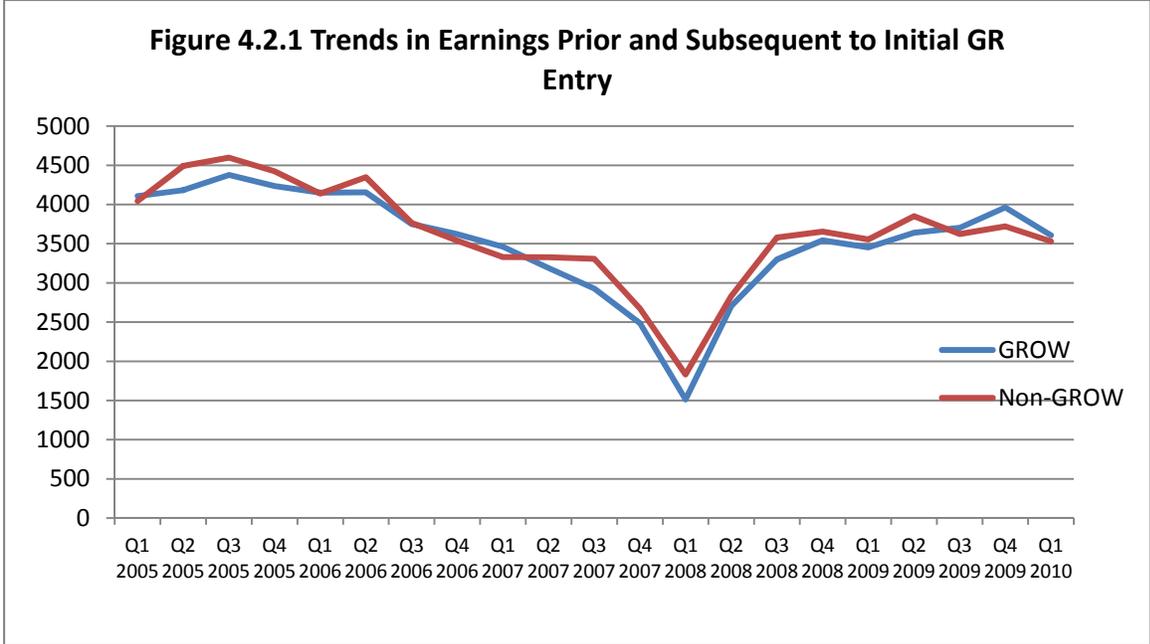
	<b>Coefficient</b>	<b>t-value</b>
<b>GROW Participation</b>	0.09***	3.40
<b>Age at Start of Study Period</b>	0.05*	2.25
<b>Disabled</b>	-0.01	-0.37
<b>Female</b>	<0.01	0.14
<b>Race (White is Reference)</b>		
Black	-0.02	-0.76
Hispanic	-0.01	-0.18
Other	-0.01	-0.54
<b>Mean Quarterly Earnings (1)</b>	0.28***	12.36
<b>Homeless</b>	0.01	-0.32
<b>Termination Due to Non Compliance</b>	-0.02	-1.11

1 – quarterly earnings is logged and reflects mean quarterly earnings prior to 2008

Overall Model Fit: F=21.8, d.f.=10, p<.0001

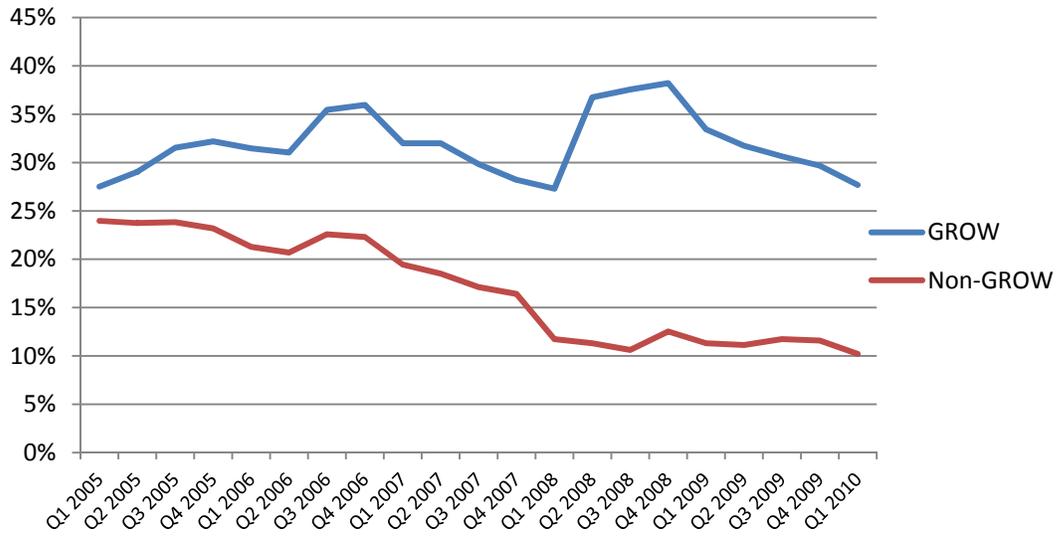
R-square=.10

\* -p<.05; \*\*-p<.01; \*\*\*-p<.001



Note: Average earnings are only for persons with any earnings (i.e. employed) in each quarter. The percentages of each group with employment, per quarter, are shown in Figure 4.2.2

**Figure 4.2.2 Trends in Employment Prior and Subsequent to Initial GR Entry**



## **Section Five: Termination Due to GROW Sanctions, Returns to GR after Exit, and Time Limits**

The final set of analyses in this report looks more in depth at what happens to GR recipients at three key points in their receipt of GR. This section examines dynamics among GR recipients, both GROW participants and others, related to exits from GR and subsequent returns. First, do GROW sanctions and terminations from GR due to non-compliance have an unanticipated consequence of initiating longer exits from GR than the suspensions required? The second focus of this chapter is returns after all exits from GR. To what extent do people return for repeat episodes of GR, and what factors impact such returns? Finally, the focus turns to time limits, and what the impact of time limits is on those GR recipients subject to restrictions on the length of time they can receive GR.

### **5.1 Returns to GR After Terminations for Non-Compliance and GROW Sanctions**

As described in Section 2 of this report, GR recipients can have GR benefits terminated due to non-compliance with program requirements. In addition, as described in Section 3 of this report, employable GR recipients enrolled in the GROW program must participate in all required GROW activities in order to maintain their GR eligibility, and failure to do so results in the imposition of progressive sanctions, which can lead to the termination of GR benefits for varying lengths of time. Section 2 of this report detailed the extent to which GR recipients have benefits terminated due to non-compliance, while Section 3 examined the frequency with which sanctions are given to GROW participants. This section builds on these prior sections by assessing returns to GR by GR participants who have benefits terminated due to non-compliance and by GROW participants after having had their benefits terminated due to GROW sanctions. Along these lines, this section will address the research questions 11 through 15, which will be listed individually.

**Question 11:** *What proportion of GR participants (both GROW and non-GROW participants) who have GR benefits terminated for non-compliance with GR program requirements return to GR after having benefits terminated?*

**Question 12:** *Does the proportion of GR participants who return to GR after having benefits terminated due to non-compliance with program requirements vary according to employability status (i.e. employable, unemployable, administratively unemployable, or needing special assistance)?*

Table 2.1.2 in Section 2 of this report demonstrated that 25 percent of non-GROW participants and 23 percent of GROW participants had benefits terminated due to non-compliance with GR program requirements. In response to Question 11, Figure 5.1.1 shows what proportion of these individuals who experienced a non-compliance related termination later returned to GR. As is clear, a higher proportion of GROW participants (43 percent) than non-GROW participants (32 percent) who had benefits terminated due to non-compliance subsequently returned to GR. Given this, it is evident that, in

response to Question 12, employable GR participants, who were mandated to participate in the GROW program, had a higher rate of return to GR following a termination of benefits due to non-compliance than their counterparts who were classified as permanently unemployable, temporarily unemployable, administratively unemployable or needing special assistance.

**Question 13:** *What proportion of GROW participants who receive sanctions for non-compliance with GROW program requirements return to GR after having benefits terminated?*

**Question 14:** *Does the proportion of GROW participants who return to GR after having benefits terminated due to non-compliance with GROW program requirements vary according to duration of penalty (i.e. 30 or 60-day sanction)?*

Figure 3.1.1 in Section 3 of this report provided information about the frequency with which 0, 30, and 60-day GROW sanctions were given to GROW participants. As shown in Figure 3.1.1, 83 percent of GROW participants experienced a 0-day sanction, while 25 percent experienced a 30-day sanction and 10 percent experienced a 60-day sanction. By way of expanding on these findings, it was also possible to identify whether GROW participants returned to GR after experiencing a 30 or 60 day sanction. Figure 5.1.2, shows the proportion GROW participants experiencing 30 and 60 day sanctions who returned to GR after having received such sanctions. Since zero-day sanctions were not accompanied by a termination of GR benefits for any period of time, such sanctions are not discussed here.

In response to Question 13, 61.3 percent of GROW participants who experienced a 30-day sanction later return to GR. On the other hand, fewer than half (47.9) of those GR participants who experienced a 60-day sanction subsequently re-enrolled in GR. Thus, in response to Question 14, the rate of return was substantially lower for those who received a 60-day sanction.

In interpreting Figure 5.1.2, it is important to note that sanctions were applied in a progressive manner, and the groups of GROW participants returning to GR after 30 and 60-day sanctions are not mutually exclusive. That is, all those returning to GR after a 60-day sanction necessarily returned to GR after a 30-day sanction.

**Question 15:** *What individual level factors are associated with an increased likelihood that GROW participants will return to GR after receiving a GROW sanction for non-compliance?*

Two separate logistic regression models were used to address Question 15, with return to GR after a 30-day sanction and return to GR after a 60-day sanction serving as the dependent variables. Independent variables included in the model as potential factors associated with the likelihood of return to GR after a sanction were age, gender, race, average quarterly earnings prior to 2008, homeless at GR entry, having a high school diploma, a work history in the two years prior to GR entry and possessing a criminal

record. The results of the two models are shown in Table 5.1.1. The models do little to identify factors associated with the likelihood of returning to GR after receiving a sanction. In the model predicting return to GR after a 30-day sanction, only having completed high school was shown to be a statistically significant predictor, and this factor was associated with an increased likelihood that a GROW participant would return to GR. Similarly, in the model that assessed returns to GR after 60-day sanctions, only having had work experience in the two year period prior to GR entry was statistically significant, in this case being associated with an increased likelihood of a return to GR after a 60-day sanction.

## **5.2 Returns to GR after Exit**

This subsection examines returns to GR after exit in a more general fashion, including all GR recipients and looking at all exits, not just ones due to sanctions or other instances of non-compliance. A prior section of this report (Section 2.2) found that the first episode of GR receipt for individuals who entered GR for the first time in the first quarter of 2008 was of relatively short duration. However, findings in that same section suggested that there was a certain amount of cycling on and off of GR that occurred among those who entered in the first quarter of 2008, and particularly among GROW participants.

Figure 5.2.1 presents survival curves showing the length of time from GR recipients' first exit from GR and their first return to GR. These survival curves are similar to those that were presented in a prior section of this report (Section 2.2.), except in this case, instead of length of a continuous episode of GR receipt, they show the length of time between episodes of GR receipt, during which an individual does not receive GR during any month. From Figure 5.2.1 it is clear that during the study period, a higher proportion of GROW participants experienced a return to GR after exiting for at least one month. Indeed, while about 40 percent of all GROW participants experienced a return to GR after having exited, only 25 percent of non-GROW participants who exited GR subsequently returned during the study period. Importantly, Figure 5.2.1 also provides information about the timing of returns to GR after an exit. For both non-GROW and GROW participants who returned to GR after an exit, most did so within 9 months of their exit, although on the whole, the non-GROW participants who returned, appear to have done so more gradually than their GROW counterparts.

A multiple regression model using Cox proportional hazards regression was used to identify factors associated with an increased likelihood that a GR participant experienced a return to GR. In this model, GROW program participation, age, disability status, gender, race, average quarterly earnings prior to the first quarter of 2008, homeless status, and having a termination due to non-compliance with GR program requirements were included as independent variables. The results of the model are shown in Table 5.2.1.

From these results:

- GROW participants were shown to be more than twice as likely to have experienced a second episode of GR receipt. This is not surprising, given that GROW participants are subject to time limits and can have their benefits terminated due to non-compliance with GROW program requirements.
- Females were less likely to return to GR than males.
- Persons of Hispanic, or black race were more likely than those of white race to return to GR.
- Being homeless upon initial GR entry and having GR benefits terminated due to non-compliance were not significant predictors of experiencing a second episode of GR receipt.
- On the other hand, higher average quarterly earnings in the years prior to 2008 were associated with a decreased likelihood that a GR participant would return to GR. This potentially indicates that persons with better employment prospects fared better in transitioning out of GR.

### 5.3 Time Limits

Employable GR participants in the GROW Program can have their benefits terminated upon reaching program time limits. Employable individuals are eligible to receive GR benefits for a maximum of 277 days in any 365-day period. An individual exhausting all 277 days of GR eligibility within a 365-day period must wait until the commencement of a new 365-day period (i.e. 365-days from initial approval or orientation date, whichever comes first) to reapply for GR. Similar to sanctions, it is important to understand the extent to which GR participants return to GR after having their benefits terminated due to reaching time limits. Therefore, this study proposes to answer two questions about GR program time limits that mirror the questions about sanctions for non-compliance with program requirements discussed in Section 3:

**Question 16:** *What proportion of employable GR participants who reach GR program time limits return to GR after having benefits terminated?*

**Question 17:** *What individual level factors are associated with an increased likelihood that an employable GR participant will return to GR after having benefits terminated due to reaching program time limits?*

According to GR policy guidelines, persons facing termination of GR benefits due to reaching program time limits are issued a NOA informing them of an impending termination and their future date of eligibility to re-apply for GR. In addition, the NOA contains a date of a hearing, which according to GR policy, is usually scheduled for the last day of GR eligibility or the last workday prior to case termination. Investigators attempted to use the dataset GR\_HEARING\_REASON to assess the extent to which GR benefits were terminated due to participants reaching program time limits, as there are NOA codes (G093: GR Restricted to 277 Days; G094: Eligibility for 277 Days End) that would seem to indicate whether a termination of benefits resulted from reaching

program time limits. However, the dataset contained no cases that had either an NOA code of G093 or G094, suggesting that the dataset may not contain information about cases terminated due to reaching program time limits.

In light of this potential limitation, project investigators attempted to use another method to assess the extent to which employable/GROW participants may be having benefits terminated due to time limits. Given that employable/GROW participants are eligible to receive GR for a maximum of 277 days, or nine months, during any 365-day period, if a large proportion of GROW participants were found to receive GR for a cumulative total of nine out of the 12 months subsequent to their initial entry into GR, this might indicate that having benefits terminated due to reaching time limits was a fairly common occurrence. Alternatively, substantial differences in the proportion of non-GROW and GROW participants receiving GR for a cumulative total of nine months might be evidence that many GROW participants have benefits terminated due to reaching program time limits.

Given this, investigators tabulated the cumulative number of months in the year subsequent to entry into GR that both non-GROW and GROW participants received GR benefits. Table 5.3.1 shows the results of this tabulation. The table shows that more than half of non-GROW (54 percent) and roughly three quarters of GROW (73 percent) participants received GR for a combined six months or less in the year following their entry into GR. In total, 84 percent of GROW recipients left GR in that first year (for all reasons) before their time limits would have set in. Additionally, if substantial numbers of GR recipients would have had their benefits abnormally terminated, then the proportion of GROW recipients with nine months of GR tenure could be expected to spike, which it does not, both in comparison to non-GROW persons and in comparison to exits in previous months. One additional point, it counterintuitive that 10 percent of GROW recipients received more than nine months of GR assistance although their benefits should have ended at nine months. One possible explanation for this may be that they had a status other than employable for one or more months, and any such months wouldn't count. It is not possible from the available data to ascertain this.

Collectively, these findings provide tentative—although far from conclusive—evidence that the large majority of GROW participants were not directly affected by time limits to their GR. Based on these findings, there is no reliable means, given the data at hand, to determine which GROW participants had their benefits terminated after receiving GR for nine consecutive months, and Questions 16 and 17 cannot be addressed with any confidence that the results would be valid.

#### **5.4 Section Summary**

This section addressed three specific topics related to exits from GR and subsequent returns, and covered the final seven questions presented in the introductory chapter.

The first section examined returns to GR following terminations either for reasons related to non-compliance or to GROW-related sanctions.

- To answer Question 11, 43 percent of GROW participants and 32 percent of the non-GROW group whose benefits were terminated due to non-compliance again received GR benefits subsequent to the termination. The practical significance of these findings is difficult to assess. On one hand, substantial minorities of both groups still were eligible for GR benefits, and reclaimed these benefits, after they were terminated. It is unclear, however, how many of those who did not return were eligible for GR benefits but did not return to apply for GR benefits after being previously terminated.
- In response to Question 12, while rates of termination for non-compliance was not substantially different between employable (i.e., GROW-eligible) GR recipients and others, rates of subsequent GR receipt among those terminated for non-compliance reasons was substantially higher for GROW participants.
- For Question 13, 61 percent of GROW recipients who experienced a 30-day GROW sanction subsequently returned to the GR rolls, and 48 percent who experiences a 60-day GROW sanction returned. Again, beyond ascertaining the relatively high proportions of those who were sanctioned continued to have substantial financial aid, it is difficult to derive more conclusive assumptions from this finding.
- Concerning Question 14, rates of return after 60-day sanctions was markedly lower than 30-day sanctions.
- No noteworthy findings are available for Question 14 on individual factors related to differential likelihoods of returning to GR receipt following 30 and 60 day sanctions.

The second section examined GROW participants and the likelihood of their returning to receive GR benefits after leaving the GR rolls for any reason. GROW participants are more than twice as likely to have experienced a second episode of GR receipt.

In the third section, there was no evidence that a substantial number of GROW participants were programmatically terminated from receiving GR benefits after nine months.

- For Question 16, the vast majority of GROW participants, 84 percent, leave the GR rolls in eight months or less, before mandatory time limits set in at nine months. There was also no evidence of any numerical “bump” in the rates of GROW participants leaving the GR rolls after nine months of GR receipt in the first year.
- Question 17 could not be answered due to data limitations.

**Table 5.1.1** Predictors of Return to GR After GROW Sanctions

	Return to GR After 30-Day Sanction			Return to GR After 60-Day Sanction		
	Odds Ratio	95% CI (Lower Limit)	95% CI (Upper Limit)	Odds Ratio	95% CI (Lower Limit)	95% CI (Upper Limit)
Age at Start of Study Period	1.01	0.99	1.03	1.00	0.97	1.03
Female	0.91	0.61	1.36	1.22	0.66	2.26
<b>Race (White is Reference)</b>						
Black	1.08	0.57	2.03	0.80	0.29	2.18
Hispanic	0.83	0.45	1.61	0.52	0.19	1.47
Other	1.22	0.40	3.49	0.90	0.19	4.26
Mean Quarterly Earnings (1)	0.87	0.72	1.04	0.87	0.66	1.15
Homeless	1.14	0.84	1.80	0.93	0.51	1.70
Completed High School	1.93**	1.16	3.16	1.64	0.81	3.32
Work Experience in past two years	1.29	0.83	1.88	1.94*	1.01	3.73
Criminal Record	0.98	0.57	1.66	0.52	0.24	1.12
	Overall Model Fit: $\chi^2=12.1$ , d.f.=10, p=.28			Overall Model Fit: $\chi^2=13.1$ , d.f.=10, p=.22		

\* -p<.05; \*\*-p<.01; \*\*\*-p<.001

1 – Quarterly income is logged and reflects mean quarterly income prior to 2008

**Table 5.2.1** *Likelihood of Return to GR after Exit*

	<b>Hazard Ratio</b>
<b>GROW participation</b>	2.07***
<b>Age at Start of Study Period</b>	1.00
<b>Disabled</b>	1.18
<b>Female</b>	0.78**
<b>Race</b> (White is Reference)	
Black	1.57***
Hispanic	1.35***
Other	1.02
<b>Mean Quarterly Earnings (1)</b>	0.94**
<b>Homeless</b>	1.01
<b>Termination due to Non-compliance</b>	1.24

1 – quarterly earnings is logged and reflects mean quarterly earnings prior to 2008

Overall Model Fit:  $\chi^2=154.0$ , d.f.=10,  $p<.0001$

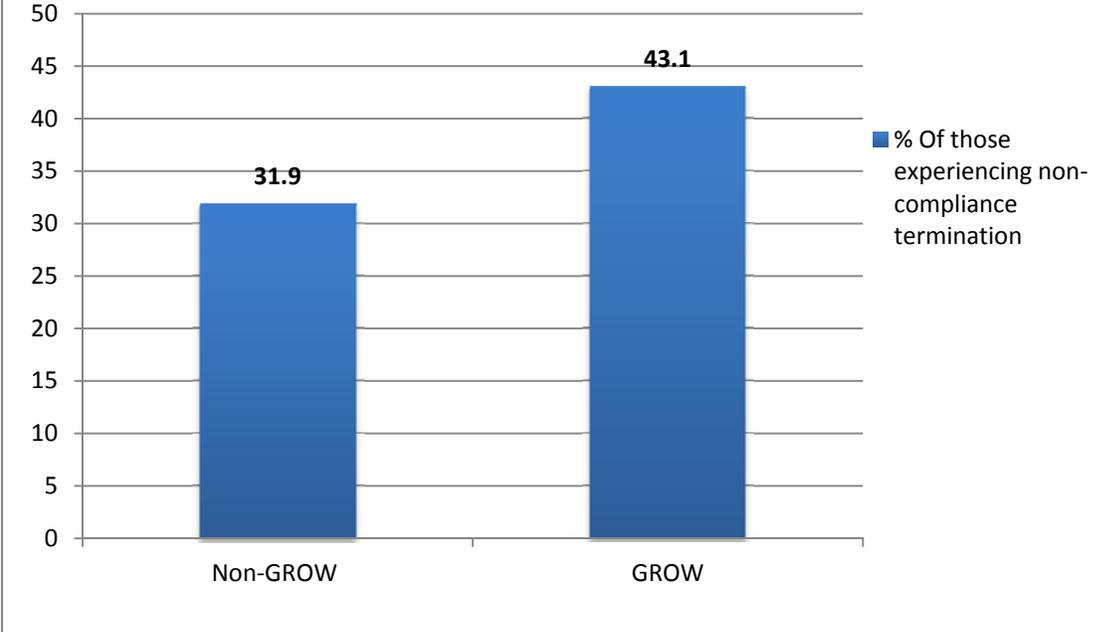
\* - $p<.05$ ; \*\*- $p<.01$ ; \*\*\*- $p<.001$

**Table 5.3.1** *Cumulative Months of GR Receipt Following GR Entry*

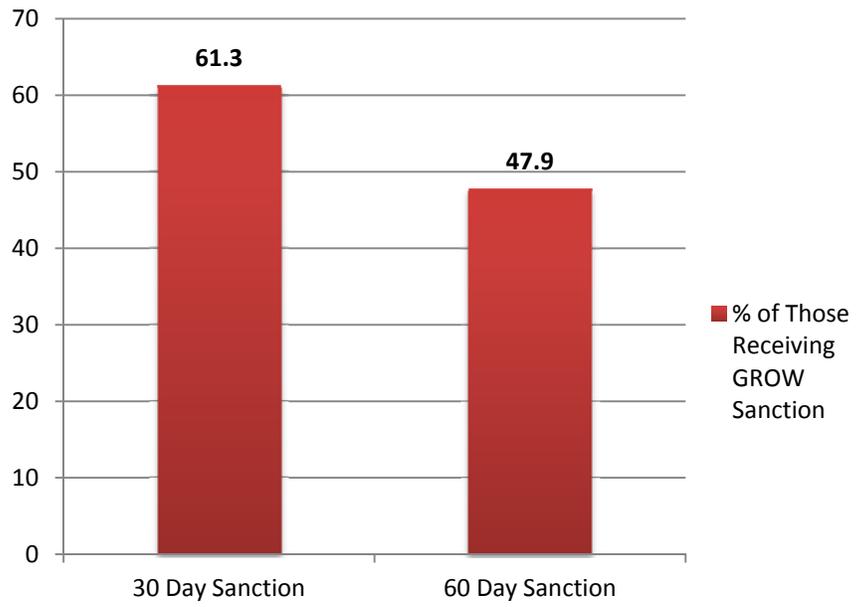
<b>Cumulative Months Receiving GR in Year Following GR Entry</b>	<b>% of Non-GROW Participants (n=2,156)</b>	<b>% of GROW Participants (n=3,009)</b>
1	5.6	2.1
2	11.5	19.9
3	13.7	19.2
4	10.5	12.8
5	7.2	11.4
6	5.8	7.9
7	7.6	6.0
8	4.5	5.2
9	5.0	5.5
10	3.2	5.2
11	4.9	2.4
12	20.5	2.3

Chi-Square=617.3, p<.0001

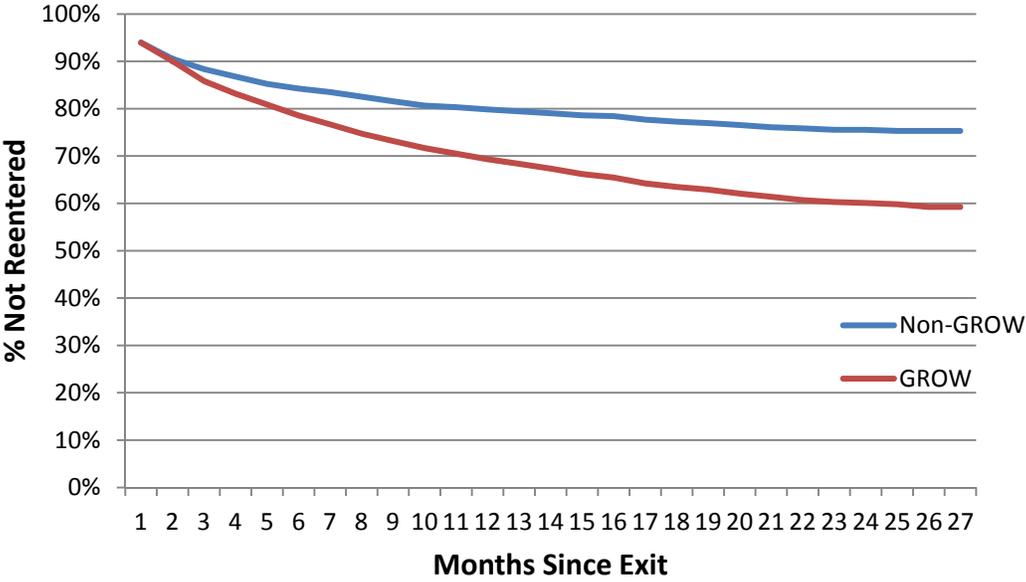
**Figure 5.1.1 Frequency of Return to GR After Termination Due to Non-Compliance**



**Figure 5.1.2 Frequency of Return to GR After GROW Sanction**



**Figure 5.2.1 Survival Curve Illustrating Length of Time Between 1st Exit From GR and Subsequent Return to GR**



## **Section Six: Implications for Policy and Research**

This report examined stay dynamics of persons receiving GR with special focus given to the impact of the General Relief Opportunities for Work (GROW) program on GR receipt and some related outcomes. While the available data limited the range of findings and associated conclusions, this report nonetheless offers some findings that have implications for both policy and further research.

Only those persons who were unambiguously either GROW participants or waived from participating in GROW were retained for this study. This meant that, of the 8,953 persons who received GR for the first time during the first quarter of 2008, 5,165 were included in this study. Of this latter figure, roughly 60 percent were mandated to participate in the GROW program, completed a GROW program orientation, and remained employable throughout their entire GR tenure. Of the remaining 40 percent, more than half (22 percent of total study group) were disabled.

The results were framed by a series of 17 questions, and the main findings will be framed here by a series of themes that in many cases span various questions and sections of this report.

### **6.1 Terminations for Non-compliance**

As was found in Section 2, there was little difference between GROW participants and the non-GROW group in the proportions who had their benefits terminated due to non-compliance issues, as approximately one-quarter of each group experienced this. In an accompanying logistic regression model, GROW participation was actually associated with a decreased likelihood of such a termination. Section 5 then shows that, among those terminated for non-compliance, 43 percent of GROW participants and 32 percent of the non-GROW group returned to receive GR benefits subsequent to the termination.

Based upon these results, many GR recipients seem to face difficulty in keeping up with the administrative requirements related to maintaining program eligibility, but there is no indication that there was any additional administrative burden associated with GROW that impaired the ability of recipients to maintain their GR eligibility. Additionally, substantial minorities of both groups retained eligibility and regained benefits following termination, and an unknown number of those who did not return might also have retained eligibility for GR benefits but did not return to apply.

These findings provide a beginning to assessing the impacts, intended and unintended, of policies that have non-compliance as a consequence, and highlight the ability of DPSS administrative data to inform assessments of consequences attached to eligibility requirements.

## **6.2 Duration of GR Receipt**

Compared to their non-GROW counterparts, GROW participants averaged fewer months on GR but more GR episodes. While this may be a result of the 9-month limit on GR receipt during the course of any 12-month period for those in the GROW group (by virtue of their being considered employable), there is mixed evidence that this is indeed the case. There are big differences between the groups in persons receiving benefits for an extended period of time, as the non-GROW group has substantially more persons who received GR benefits for more than 12 months (out of the 29-month study period, see Table 2.2.1) and for all 12 months in the year following initial GR receipt (Table 5.3.1). The GROW group had more discrete episodes of GR receipt (Table 2.2.1) and were more likely to return to GR after benefits termination (Table 5.2.1). But, as shown on Table 5.3.1, 84 percent of the GROW group received benefits for less than nine months out of the initial 12-month period, and, as shown on Table 2.2.1, half of the GROW participants (and half of the non-GROW group) received benefits for less than six months out of the 29-month study period. Finally, there were no significant differences in the rates of quick, sustained exiters (as examined in Section 2.3) between the two groups.

Taken together, there were some clear differences in the patterns of GR utilization between the two groups. It is unclear, however, from these findings whether this was due to limits on benefit-receipt for the GROW participants or due to situational differences between the groups – non-GROW recipients may have been more likely to receive GR as they wait for more long-term disability benefits while GROW recipients might have cycled on and off GR receipt as other income sources came and went.

## **6.3 GROW Sanctions**

As shown in Section 3.1, 83 percent of GROW participants received an initial sanction; 25 percent (30 percent of those receiving an initial sanction) received a subsequent sanction with a 30-day benefits suspension; and 10 percent (41 percent of those receiving a 30-day sanction) received a third sanction, this time with a 60-day benefits suspension (see Figure 3.1.1). This shows that initial sanctions related to GROW participation were widespread, and a substantial minority of those receiving this first sanction then proceeded to receive subsequent sanctions that interfered with benefits receipt. Factors associated with an increased risk of receiving sanctions included younger age, male gender, lower earnings, homelessness, and high school graduation.

Following these sanctions (see Section 5.2), 61 percent of GROW recipients who experienced a 30-day GROW sanction subsequently returned to the GR rolls, and 48 percent who experiences a 60-day GROW sanction returned. These results, and what they say about the effectiveness of sanctions, will depend on the intentions of these sanctions. The extent to which GROW requirements discouraged persons from continuing with GR receipt is unclear, but substantial numbers of GROW participants fail to return (for whatever reason) to the GR rolls, and progressive sanctions result in fewer persons returning to the GR rolls.

## **6.4 GROW Component Participation**

Section 3.2 focused on participation in GROW components. Overall, it took approximately six weeks to progress from component to component (Question 6). There was also variability in time from GR approval to participation in the first GROW component across the range of GROW components (Question 7). The extent to which this time lag is appropriate cannot be determined from this data. However, some of the voluntary programs which GROW participants can volunteer for would be expected to have had shorter, even negative time periods to engagement (some GROW components could start before GR approval).

In additional findings, relatively high rates of sanctions were accompanied by relatively low rates of recorded participation in certain GROW components and activities. Overall, roughly 90 percent of persons designated as GROW participants had a record of participating in some GROW component or activity. However, the component “Job Skills Preparation,” which is supposed to have near universal participation, only had 55 percent participation. This leads to obvious concerns about access to these components and programs by GROW participants, but can also be at least partly due to data limitations. Indeed, the completeness of these data, and the possibility that more persons participated in and completed GROW programming but were not recorded as doing so, may also be an issue and should be examined.

Finally, the findings here do indicate further access issues among those who were recorded as participating in GROW. The first appears in the analyses of component and activity completion in Table 3.2.1, which show that large proportions of persons who started each component never completed it. For example, 55 percent of GROW participants started Job Skills preparation, but only 13 percent completed this component. The second apparent access issue is in the length of time it takes in accessing some of the GROW components and activities. While as expected, the Rapid Employment and Early Job Search components appear to have commenced relatively quickly after GROW enrollment, other frequently accessed components such as Intensive Case Management and Job Skills Preparation seem to have taken upwards of two months to access from the point of GROW enrollment, which would impact program continuity and effectiveness. Again, the completeness of the data needs to be confirmed before taking any initiatives in response to these findings.

## **6.5 Employment Outcomes**

Section 4 matched GR data with data from quarterly earnings data compiled by the California Employment Development Department (EDD). This is informative in that it gives some indication of the extent to which GR recipients participate in the work force after leaving GR, and as such can provide baseline data for measuring the performance of GROW. Based on this data however, it was not possible to isolate GROW as a factor for actually facilitating employment.

Comparing the GROW and non-GROW groups, the GROW recipients were significantly and substantially more likely to gain employment following the start of their GR receipt. The extent to which this is due to GROW participation (as opposed to the employability of the recipients) is unclear, but there is a distinct difference between the two groups. Compared to non-GROW participants, GROW participants showed better employment outcomes subsequent to GR receipt, both as measured in earnings and proportion working. The trend among GROW participants in terms of the proportion employed seems to recover quickly after the quarter where everyone became certified for GR, but after the initial rise the percentage again falls—although this fall in employment may be explained at least in part by the prevailing unfavorable economic climate during the course of the study period.

In addition, while primarily descriptive, trends in the employment trajectory of GROW participants indicated that while the proportion of GROW participants with employment income increased relatively sharply in the period directly following their initial entry into GR, this proportion subsequently dropped noticeably over the longer-term. These findings indicate that while some GROW participants exit GR to employment, such employment may have been temporary in nature, and that GROW participants who exited to employment may have suffered greatly from the effects of the economic recession that was unfolding nationwide at their time of exit from GR. Thus, subsequent analyses might consider more closely examining the trajectory of GROW participants who exit GR to employment, with a focus on examining the rates and timing of return to GR among this sub-group, and the extent to which those who returned to GR were participants in the Post-Employment Services GROW component. Such analyses may be useful for refining and potentially expanding the Post-Employment Services component of GROW to include those who exit to employment and whose incomes render them ineligible for GR, but who may be in need of additional services to help maintain employment.

The job placement data maintained by DPSS is more directly linked to GROW, but is likely to be incompletely reported as only 6 percent of GROW participants have indications that they moved on to a job directly from completion of a GROW component. This is in comparison to the data match results with EDD records, which shows that between 27 percent and 38 percent of GROW participants are employed following GR receipt (Figure 4.2.2). While it is not certain that the corresponding GROW data is incomplete, it is very likely that the extent to which employment is being obtained by GROW participants is not being reflected in the GROW data. As explained in Section 4, there may be several reasons for this. However, if the Los Angeles Eligibility Automated Determination Evaluation and Reporting (LEADER) data is to be a part of any evaluation of GROW, then collecting information on key outcomes such as employment will need to be undertaken more systematically and reliably.

## **6.6 Data Quality**

The final point, and key limitation to the analyses in this report, is data limitations. It is pointed out throughout the report when data limitations are a concern to the extent where the findings based on this data are either unlikely to be reliable or need to be interpreted with data quality in mind. Missing data was the most apparent problem, as likely underreporting of GROW-based employment data and the lack of reporting for GROW participants on the extent to which persons exceeded their nine-month limits for benefits receipt hampered key issues that were examined in this report.

## **6.7 Conclusion**

This report provides findings on some key issues related to the GROW program, benefits terminations and sanctions, GR utilization patterns, and employment after GR receipt. In doing this, the report raises questions for further research as it examines key areas such as the relationship of GROW to subsequent employment, and the extent to which sanctions and non-compliance terminations lead to more extended exits from the GR rolls. In the absence of further research, these findings will provide the basis for more informed decisions related to policy around General Relief.

## Appendix A: NOA Codes Indicating Non-Compliance With GR Program Requirements

NOA Code	Description
G006	SOF Not SIGNED
G007	FAILED TO PROV SCHOOL ATTND
G012	PA908 NOT RECEIVED
G021	FAILED TO APPLY FOR SSI
G023	FAILED/REFUSED JOB TRAINING
G024	FAILED TO APPLY FOR UIB
G030	FAILED JOB SEARCH
G031	FAILED TO REGISTER EDD-1ST
G034	VOLUNTARY QUIT/FIRED FROM JOB
G052	NO ANNUAL AGREEMENT
G055	UNVERIF: RESIDENCE
G060	FAILED TO PROVIDE SSN
G061	UNVERIF: ID
G062	UNVERIF: MARITAL STATUS
G065	FAILED TO PROVIDE PA101
G072	FAILED TO KEEP APPOINTMENT
G129	FAILED TO VERIFY: LIQUID ASSET
G133	FAILED TO VERIFY: VEHICLE
G137	FAILED DUE TO PREVIOUS POI
G354	FAILED/REFUSED ASSESMENT APPT
G356	FAILED/REFUSED TREATMENT REFL
G358	DISABILITY NOT VERIFIED
G362	FAILED TO REGISTER EDD - 2ND
G368	FAIL/REFUSE JOB OR TRNG - 2ND
G380	FAILED TO KEEP MEDICAL APPT
G382	ABP 1073 NOT SIGNED
G383	UNVERIFIED: AGE
G390	UNVERIF: SSI INCOME
G400	QR7 LATE
G404	FAILED DRUG ASSMNT APPT 2ND
G407	REFUSING TO BE FINGERPRINTED
G413	FAILED TO KEEP SSIAP APPT
G416	Incomplete Periodic Report QR7
G417	Individual Requesting Term
G421	Late Periodic Report QR7
G425	Fail to Comply with IFDS
G428	Fail due to CAPI Assistance
G430	Fail to Comply with NHR
G500	FAIL AG FOR MO 2 IF MO 1 FAILS
G707	RFSD: PRESCRNG INTRVW - 2ND
G721	SANCTIONED INDIVIDUAL
G728	DID NOT APPLY OTHER PAI
G731	UNVERIFIED: REHABILITATION