



## Overview

During Program Year 2005, North Carolina continued to deliver reemployment services in accordance with the strategies in our annual plan. To optimize the program's impact, North Carolina ESC staff targeted the geographic areas with the highest unemployment by allocating staff to nineteen offices located throughout the State. The Federal Re-Employment Initiative (FREI), as it is called in North Carolina, embodies innovative, cost-effective methods for providing early intervention and on-going frequent contact with unemployed job seekers. Moreover, the FREI Program is structured to benefit both of our primary customer groups: unemployed job seekers and employers.

In order to provide optimal customer service, the FREI Program was implemented in a manner that encourages flexibility and control at the local level. Broad operational guidelines have been developed so that local management and staff may customize the FREI Program to meet the needs of the community being served. Local flexibility in developing the specifics of FREI has enabled staff to acknowledge differences in local labor markets and to utilize creativity and innovation in the delivery of worthwhile services to customers. Some local offices emphasize the development of resumes while others place greater emphasis on effectively completing company applications. In several locations, Job Seeking Skills Workshops have evolved into Job Finding Clubs, with claimants exchanging job leads and offering encouragement and support. In all of the nineteen offices, staff's primary focus is on providing services which will facilitate the reemployment of unemployed individuals.

A major strength of our FREI Program is its emphasis on collaboration with local JobLink (One-Stop) Partners to provide a full range of seamless services to all UI claimants. In North Carolina, the majority of ESC local offices have been designated JobLink Career Centers, thereby facilitating cooperation with our Partners. Also, local ESC staff provides services at all JobLink Centers operated by other service providers, such as the Community College System, the Department of Commerce and the Division of Social Services. Half of the nineteen FREI offices utilize partner agency staff to deliver services in the workshop phase of the Program.

The FREI Program is a "win/win" partnership that benefits both the job seeker and the employer. The eight-week program begins when the customer files an initial claim for unemployment insurance benefits. The thrust of FREI is early intervention and frequent customer contact. The Program goals are: (1) Providing those services which will result in the most expeditious reemployment of FREI Program participants; (2) Maintaining reduced levels of employer taxes by generating Trust Fund savings through shortening the duration of the average unemployment insurance claim; (3) Helping North Carolina employers meet their labor needs by referring qualified job candidates with recent work experience; and (4) Expediting employers' interviewing processes as a result of FREI participants having better job seeking skills (interviewing, resume' preparation, etc).

The FREI Program is comprised of three components: *Orientation*, *Job Seeking Skills Workshops* and *Intensive Job Search*. These components are designed to maximize exposure to the local labor market and to expedite the job matching process:

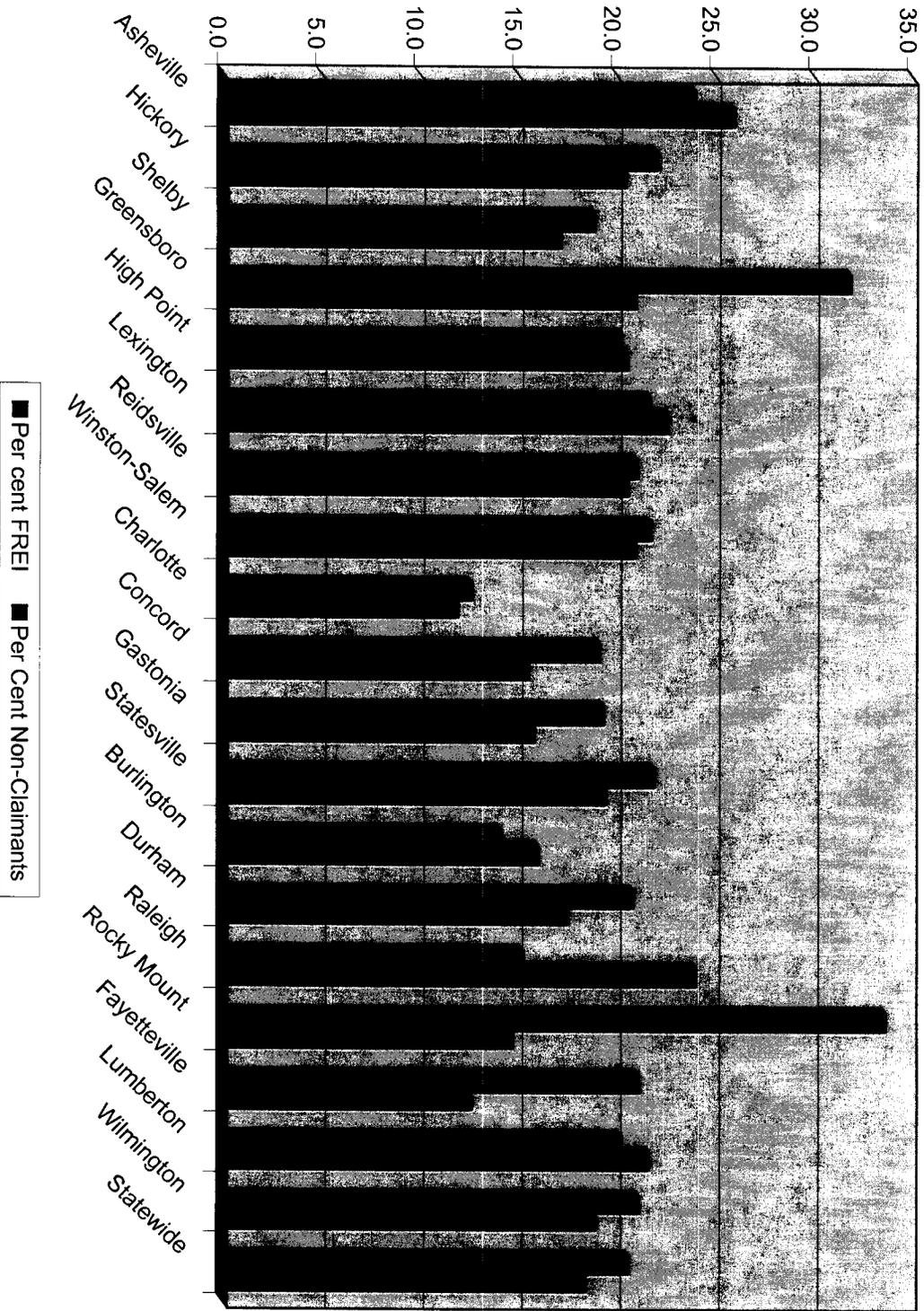
- The ***Orientation*** component is designed to familiarize customers with the services they will be receiving and to inform them about the automated service systems which can assist in their job search efforts. During Orientation, staff attempt to identify areas that customers believe they need to strengthen in order to make an effective job search. Information from these customers is used to customize elements of the Job Seeking Skills Workshops.
- Upon completion of the Orientation component, all participants attend a ***Job Seeking Skills Workshop*** to learn new and more effective job search methods. In areas of the State with large concentrations of Hispanic job seekers, the workshops are conducted in Spanish. Another innovation of North Carolina's FREI Program is that staff from the North Carolina Community College System, a partner in the State's one-stop delivery system, conducts these workshops in many locations. Also, employers participate as resource persons and as participants during practice interviews in some workshops. Topics covered in the workshops are tailored to local labor market conditions and tailored to the education and experience level of the participants. Feedback from customers is used to evaluate and strengthen the content and presentation of these workshops.
- In the ***Intensive Job Search*** component, customers develop a specific job search plan targeted to their job interest(s) and the local labor market. As a part of this component, program participants have regular and frequent contact with staff. These contacts enable local office staff to provide job referrals and develop job opportunities for unemployed customers, to review their work search efforts and to answer questions. Staff has contact with customers bi-weekly after the Job Seeking Skills Workshop.

### **Positive Results**

Attached to this report are two charts which provide quantitative information concerning the results of North Carolina's FREI Program. These charts indicate that FREI participants have received higher levels of service than non-claimants in most of the offices where staff provided FREI services. Also, during Program Year 2005, the percentage of FREI participants entering employment was higher than during the previous Program Year.

During PY 2005, over **70%** of those claimants enrolled in the program participated in job search workshops/activities. During this same time, over one-fifth (**21%**) of FREI participants entered employment.

**Entered Employment  
YTD June 30, 2006  
FREI Claimants to Non-Claimants**



## Entered Employments Comparing YTD June 2006 to YTD June 2005

