

# RECENT WELFARE REFORM RESEARCH: AN ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

April 2002

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*Prepared for:*

**U.S. Department of Labor**

*Prepared by:*



**The Urban Institute**

2100 M Street, NW ? Washington, DC 20037

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# **RECENT WELFARE REFORM RESEARCH: AN ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY**

**April 2002**

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U.S. Department of Labor

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## I. Introduction

In the past thirty-five years, there has been a dramatic evolution in welfare employment and training programs. During this period, there have been numerous efforts to evaluate the effectiveness of these programs. In simple terms, the welfare reform research and evaluations of the past thirty-five years can be described in three major waves:

- (1) Work Incentives (WIN) Program evaluations conducted by states and others between the implementation of WIN in 1967 and 1988 when the Family Support Act (FSA) of 1988 was passed;
- (2) Evaluations of the Job Opportunity and Basic Skills Training Program (JOBS), passed under the FSA, between 1989 and 1996; and
- (3) Welfare evaluation from the mid-1990s to the present, after enactment of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA) welfare evaluations from the mid-1990s to the present.

The welfare reform research and evaluations presented in this annotated bibliography focus on the two latter waves of welfare reform evaluation with a particular emphasis on recently completed and ongoing research and evaluation projects. For the reader's information, however, a brief historical context of the past thirty-five years is provided here.

In 1967, the Work Incentives (WIN) Program—the first large-scale employment program for recipients of Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC)—was established as part of the Social Security Act. Prior to 1989, the WIN program was the only federal program designed to assist families in leaving welfare and finding work.<sup>1</sup> As the welfare rolls continued to grow, however, participation requirements were added and emphasis on both job placement and job training gradually increased. Under the Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1981 (OBRA), states were authorized under federal waivers to conduct their own WIN demonstrations as an alternative to the standard WIN program.<sup>2</sup> There were many large-scale evaluations of various state welfare reform and WIN demonstration programs.

Expanding upon many innovative state welfare reforms, the Family Support Act (FSA) of 1988 was passed replacing WIN with the Job Opportunity and Basic Skills (JOBS) Training Program. While continuing to focus on job training and placement, the JOBS program also emphasized education as a means for attaining self-sufficiency. Congress mandated a national evaluation of the JOBS program in 1988 to rigorously measure the effects of the program, including both economic and non-economic outcomes for welfare recipients and their children. The JOBS study, called the National Evaluation of Welfare-to-Work Strategies (NEWWS) Evaluation and described more fully in Section II, was designed to determine the effect of different welfare-to-

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<sup>1</sup> Bane, Mary Jo and David Ellwood. *Welfare Realities: From Rhetoric to Reform*. Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts: 1994.

<sup>2</sup> O'Neill, Dave M. and June Ellenoff O'Neill. *Lessons for Welfare Reform: An Analysis of the AFDC Caseload and Past Welfare-to-Work Programs*. W.E. Upjohn Institute for Employment Research, Kalamazoo, Michigan: 1997.

work program approaches on welfare recipients' future employment earnings, receipt of AFDC and other transfer payments, total income, and other family circumstances, and to assess the program's effects on the cognitive and social development, health, and school performance of recipients' children.

In 1996, the passage of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA) reformed welfare and transformed the cash welfare support system. The legislation replaced the 60-year-old Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) entitlement program with Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), providing states with block grants and considerable flexibility in designing their welfare programs. Under TANF, states have flexibility in determining eligibility, establishing benefit levels, and designing education, employment, and training services. TANF, a time-limited program, emphasizes moving welfare clients to work.

Prior to TANF, 43 states were granted waivers from AFDC and the Food Stamp Program rules to demonstrate new approaches in welfare. Federal law required that states evaluate these experiments and provide matching funds to do so. After the enactment of TANF, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services approved 20 of the states to continue with their waivers and some of their research. Each of these 20 waiver evaluations is described in Section III.

Since the passage of PRWORA, there have been numerous efforts to evaluate the effectiveness of TANF and related programs and subpopulations. Some of the many issues being studied and described in this annotated bibliography include:<sup>3</sup>

- The well-being of former welfare recipients;
- Evaluating various Welfare-to-Work strategies;
- Employment retention and advancement initiatives;
- Rural welfare initiatives;
- Programs designed to serve noncustodial parents;
- Hard-to-serve welfare recipients and barriers to self-sufficiency;
- Changes in the welfare caseload; and
- Welfare time limits
- TANF reauthorization.

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<sup>3</sup> While not every study, report, or book is included in this bibliography, an attempt has been made to include many studies, major evaluations, and publications resulting from those evaluations.

## **II. Evaluating Various of Welfare-to-Work Strategies**

### **The National Evaluation of Welfare-to-Work Strategies (NEWWS) (formerly the JOBS program evaluation)**

Researcher(s)/Evaluator(s): Manpower Development Research Corporation (MDRC)

Project Period: 6/91 to 12/93

Funder: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families (ACF) and Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation (ASPE); and The Department of Education, Office of Vocational and Adult Education (OVAE)

The National Evaluation of Welfare-to-Work Strategies (NEWWS) Evaluation was formerly known as the Job Opportunities and Basic Skills (JOBS) Training Program Evaluation. The evaluation was congressionally mandated in 1988 in order to rigorously measure the effects of different welfare-to-work program strategies on both economic and non-economic outcomes for welfare recipients and their children. The evaluation's questions and research designs were developed jointly by MDRC and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS). The evaluation was conducted by MDRC under contract to DHHS, with additional support from the U.S. Department of Education. Child Trends, as a subcontractor, worked with MDRC on examining detailed child outcomes for preschool-age children.

The NEWWS Evaluation was a large-scale evaluation of 11 mandatory welfare-to-work JOBS programs operated in the early- to mid-1990s in seven sites: Riverside, California; Atlanta, Georgia; Detroit, Michigan; Grand Rapids, Michigan; Columbus, Ohio; Oklahoma City, Oklahoma; and Portland, Oregon. The programs' chief aim, one subsequently emphasized by the TANF program, was to move welfare recipients into paid work and off welfare assistance. The programs sought to do this by requiring adult welfare recipients (mostly single parents) with no children under the age of three (or, in four of the evaluation sites, with no children under the age of one) to participate in job-search assistance, education, work experience, vocational training, and other employment-related activities or face a reduction in their monthly welfare grant amount.

The NEWWS Evaluation was designed to determine the effect of different welfare-to-work program approaches on welfare recipients' future employment earnings, receipt of AFDC and other transfer payments, total income, and other family circumstances, and to assess the programs' effects on the cognitive and social development, health, and school performance of recipients' children. The central question addressed in the evaluation—What works best for whom?—was and continues to be one of paramount importance as states implement and redesign their TANF programs and seek to minimize the number of welfare recipients who reach their welfare time limits.

The NEWWS Evaluation used a random assignment experiment to address the above central question. In each evaluation site, adults who were required to participate in programs were randomly assigned to either one or two program groups or to a control group. The program groups were required to participate in program services or face a financial penalty; the control groups had no mandate to participate and received no services through the program, but were free to seek out similar services in their own in their community. This design ensured that there

were no systematic differences between the background characteristics of people in the program and control groups when they entered the study. In addition, within each site, members of the program and control groups were subject to the same welfare grant levels, labor market conditions, and other environmental factors, ensuring that differences in outcomes between the groups within each site could be attributed with confidence to the effects of particular types of programs.

Using the above design, rigorous side-by-side tests of the comparative effectiveness of various approaches were examined. Key comparisons embedded in the design included: contrasting the effects of employment-focused approaches, which emphasize quick employment, supported by the belief that long-term self-sufficiency is best achieved through actual work, even if initial jobs are minimum wage and without health benefits, with those of education-focused approaches, which emphasize skill-building, particularly in the education area, reflecting a view that initial investments in education or training are needed to enable people to eventually obtain higher-wage, longer-lasting jobs with benefits; and contrasting the effects of using an “integrated” case management strategy, in which one case manager is responsible for welfare eligibility determinations and grant amounts as well as welfare-to-work program assignments and monitoring, with the effects of using a “traditional” case management strategy, in which each welfare recipient has two case managers, one responsible for welfare eligibility and payments and one responsible for employment-related activities. Over 55,000 adults were randomly assigned to research groups varying in some aspect of welfare-to-work programs as part of the evaluation, and these individuals and their families were followed up for five years.

In addition to the evaluation’s central question—What works best for whom?—several other key research questions included:

- How much can welfare-to-work programs contribute to reducing welfare dependency and increasing employment? Can any program approaches significantly improve the economic circumstances of the most disadvantaged welfare recipients?
- How do the children of welfare recipients fare under welfare-to-work programs? Do increases in parents’ participation in employment-directed activities, as well as changes in their welfare and employment status and literacy levels, have positive or negative “spillover” effects on their children?
- What do welfare-to-work programs cost? Are some program approaches more cost-effective than others? How can program funds be used most judiciously?
- How many welfare recipients can be expected to work or to participate in work-directed activities?

Comprehensive data on economic outcomes, including information on quarterly Unemployment Insurance-reported earnings and monthly welfare and food stamp payments, were collected over the five-year follow-up period for the approximately 55,000 sample members. In addition, information concerning program experiences, educational attainment, family composition, employment and wage progression, and total family income was collected through interviews

with a subsample of about 10,000 individuals, from all research groups in all seven sites, two years after they entered the study. Approximately 3,000 of these interviewees also took reading and math achievement tests and responded to a battery of questions concerning their children. In addition, a subset of children who were preschool-age at study entry took cognitive and social development tests at the two-year point. At five years after study entry, a subset of the 3,000 individuals who were surveyed more intensively at two years were re-interviewed, and surveys on school performance were given to the elementary school teachers of the children studied in-depth at the two-year point. Finally, data were collected on the implementation of the programs—the extent of individuals’ participation in various program activities, the quality of the activities, and staff practices and opinions—as well as on the costs of different aspects of welfare-to-work programs.

Released reports include:

Bos, Johannes M., Susan Scrivener, Jason Snipes, Gayle Hamilton, with Christine Schwartz and Johanna Walter. *National Evaluation of Welfare-to-Work Strategies: Improving Basic Skills: The Effects of Adult Education in Welfare-to-Work Programs*. Prepared for U.S. Department of Health and Human Services/ACF & ASPE and the U.S. Department of Education/OVAE. New York, NY: MDRC, March 2002.

Hamilton, Gayle, Stephen Freedman, Lisa Gennetian, Charles Michalopoulos, Johanna Walter, Diana Adams-Ciardullo, Anna Gassman-Pines (MDRC), Sharon McGroder, Martha Zaslow, Surjeet Ahluwalia, Jennifer Brooks (Child Trends) with Electra Small, Bryan Ricchetti (MDRC). *National Evaluation of Welfare-to-Work Strategies: How Effective Are Different Welfare-to-Work Approaches? Five-Year Adult and Child Impacts for Eleven Programs*. Prepared for U.S. Department of Health and Human Services/ACF & ASPE and the U.S. Department of Education/OVAE. New York, NY: MDRC, November 2001.

Scrivener, Susan, Johanna Walter with Thomas Brock and Gayle Hamilton. *National Evaluation of Welfare-to-Work Strategies: Evaluating Two Approaches to Case Management: Implementation, Participation Patterns, Costs, and Three-Year Impacts of the Columbus Welfare-to-Work Program*. Prepared for U.S. Department of Health and Human Services/ACF & ASPE and the U.S. Department of Education/OVAE. New York, NY: MDRC, June 2001.

Freedman, Stephen. *National Evaluation of Welfare-to-Work Strategies: Four-Year Impacts of Ten Programs on Employment Stability and Earnings Growth*. Prepared for U.S. Department of Health and Human Services/ACF & ASPE and the U.S. Department of Education/OVAE. New York, NY: MDRC, December 2000.

Martinson, Karin. *National Evaluation of Welfare-to-Work Strategies: The Experiences of Welfare Recipients Who Find Jobs*. Prepared for U.S. Department of Health and Human Services/ACF & ASPE and the U.S. Department of Education/OVAE. New York, NY: MDRC, December 2000.

Tansey Knab, Jean, Johannes M. Bos, Daniel Friedlander, and Joanna W. Weissman. *National Evaluation of Welfare-to-Work Strategies: Do Mandates Matter? The Effects of a Mandate to*

*Enter a Welfare-to-Work Program.* Prepared for U.S. Department of Health and Human Services/ACF & ASPE and the U.S. Department of Education/OVAE. New York, NY: MDRC, August 2000.

Michalopoulos, Charles, Christine Schwartz, and Diana Adams-Ciardullo. *National Evaluation of Welfare-to-Work Strategies: What Works Best for Whom: Impacts of 20 Welfare-to-Work Programs by Subgroup.* Prepared for U.S. Department of Health and Human Services/ACF & ASPE and the U.S. Department of Education/OVAE. New York, NY: MDRC, August 2000.

Freedman, Stephen, Daniel Friedlander, Gayle Hamilton, JoAnn Rock, Marisa Mitchell, Jodi Nudelman, Amanda Schweder, and Laura Storto. *National Evaluation of Welfare-to-Work Strategies: Evaluating Alternative Welfare-to-Work Approaches: Two-Year Impacts for Eleven Programs.* Prepared for U.S. Department of Health and Human Services/ACF & ASPE and the U.S. Department of Education/OVAE. New York, NY: MDRC, June 2000.

Hamilton, Gayle, Stephen Freedman (MDRC), and Sharon M. McGroder (Child Trends). *National Evaluation of Welfare-to-Work Strategies: Do Mandatory Welfare-to-Work Programs Affect the Well-Being of Children? A Synthesis of Child Research Conducted as Part of the National Evaluation of Welfare-to-Work Strategies.* Prepared for U.S. Department of Health and Human Services/ACF & ASPE and U.S. Department of Education/OVAE. New York, NY: MDRC, June 2000.

Zaslow, Martha J., Sharon M. McGroder and Kristin A. Moore. *National Evaluation of Welfare-to-Work Strategies: Impacts on Young Children and Their Families Two Years after Enrollment: Findings from the Child Outcomes Study.* Prepared for U.S. Department of Health and Human Services/ACF & ASPE and U.S. Department of Education/OVAE. New York, NY: MDRC, June 2000.

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### III. Evaluation of AFDC/TANF Waivers

#### State AFDC/TANF Waiver Studies

Prior to TANF, 43 states were granted waivers from AFDC and Food Stamp Program rules to demonstrate new approaches in welfare. Federal law required that states evaluate these experiments and provide matching funds to do so. After the enactment of TANF, the Department of Health and Human Services approved 20 of the states to continue with their waivers and some of their research. The studies described here include rigorous evaluations using (1) random assignment study designs (Track I waiver studies) and (2) mixed evaluation designs (Track II studies).

#### Track I:

(1) By comparing the experimental and control groups over time in the welfare reform waiver studies, states can reliably determine the causal effect of a state's reform effort on such key outcomes as welfare dependency, employment and earnings, total family income, and family structure.

#### Track II:

(2) Studies begun as state waiver demonstration evaluations prior to TANF, which have been modified, continue to be of interest. This mix of evaluations examines the process of, and in some cases the impacts related to, implementing a variety of state approaches to welfare reform, including policies related to promoting work and personal responsibility and time limiting assistance.

The following states conducted evaluations:

#### Track I:

- Arizona
- Connecticut
- Florida
- Indiana
- Minnesota (MFIP)
- Texas
- Vermont
- Wisconsin

#### Track II:

- California
- Iowa (2)
- Maryland
- Minnesota (WorkFIRST)
- Montana
- Nebraska
- New Hampshire (2)
- North Carolina
- North Dakota
- Ohio
- South Carolina
- Virginia

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#### Evaluation of Arizona Employing and Moving People Off Welfare and Encouraging Responsibility Program (EMPOWER)

Researcher(s)/Evaluator(s): Abt Associates, Inc. for the Arizona Department of Economic Security

Project Period: 7/1/97 to 6/30/02

Major Research Questions: (1) Was self-sufficiency increased according to various measures of employment, earnings and income? (2) Was welfare use reduced according to various measures

of the duration and amount of welfare receipt? (3) Was participation in program activities and use of program services increased, according to such measures as attendance at, and completion of, assigned training or employment activities? The evaluation also explored questions related to policy impact on family structure and stability, child well-being, and health benefits.

Research/Evaluation Design: The evaluation used a random assigned experiment in two counties. In addition, a quasi-experimental approach was used to compare all research cases with a pre-EMPOWER comparison group. Process and impact data for the research group was collected through June 1999, from administrative records, two waves of surveys including, for Wave 1, two supplemental telephone surveys of 25 cases each, site observations, staff interviews, program documents, and a focus group with each of three selected subgroups of 8 to 10 participants. Process, impact and cost/benefit analyses were reported.

Released reports include:

Kornfeld, Robert et. al. *Evaluation of the Arizona Works Pilot Program: Second Process Study Report*. Prepared for Arizona Department of Economics Security. Cambridge, MA: Abt Associates Inc., February 2002.

Kornfeld, Robert et. al. *Evaluation of the Arizona Works Pilot Program: Second Impact Study Report*. Prepared for Arizona Department of Economics Security. Cambridge, MA: Abt Associates Inc., February 2002.

Mills, Greg, Robert Kornfeld, Diane Porcari, and Don Laliberti. *Evaluation of the Arizona EMPOWER Welfare Reform Demonstration: Final Report*. Prepared for Arizona Department of Economics Security. Cambridge, MA: Abt Associates Inc., September 2001.

Westra, Karen L. and John Routley. *Arizona Cash Assistance Exit Study: First Quarter 1998 Cohort: Administrative and Survey Data Results*. Prepared for U.S. Department of Health and Human Services/ASPE. Cambridge, MA: Abt Associates Inc., January 2000.

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### **California Welfare Reform Impact Evaluation**

Researcher(s)/Evaluator(s): RAND Corporation for the California Department of Social Services

Project Period: 4/1/98 to 3/31/02

This demonstration attempted to estimate the impact of California's TANF program. Generally, impacts were assessed by comparing outcomes in the post-TANF period with the pre-TANF period. The impact of various county programs were examined by comparing outcomes among the counties. In developing models to estimate impacts, California used a 10 percent statewide sample of welfare recipients. These samples date back to 1987 providing a rich database to use to test the models. The sample data consisted of Department of Social Services information on AFDC, SSI, Medi-Cal and foster care. These data were supplemented by data on unemployment and disability insurance and Department of Health Services data on births.

Major Research Questions: The major research questions concern the impact of California's TANF program on self-sufficiency, family composition, and child well-being. To the extent possible, the impacts of TANF on different subgroups was considered. Subgroups included racial and ethnic subgroups as well as subgroups divided by urban and rural. Attempts were made to determine the impacts of differing implementation of TANF among the counties.

Research/Evaluation Design: Impacts were estimated using regression techniques on time series data which include pre- and post-TANF outcomes. The regression techniques corrected for changes in demographics, and for economic conditions. These techniques used on statewide data to obtain statewide effects and also applied to county-level data. On the county-level variables associated with how the county implemented TANF was used to determine if impacts associated with specific implementation strategies could be estimated.

Released reports include:

Klerman, Jacob Alex, Gail Zellman, and Paul Steinberg. *Welfare Reform in California: State and County Implementation of CalWORKs in the Second Year*. Prepared for California Department of Social Services. Santa Monica, California: RAND Corporation, 2000.

Zellman, Gail, Jacob Alex Klerman, Elaine Reardon, Donna Farley, Nicole Humphrey, Tammi Chun, and Paul Steinberg. *Welfare Reform in California: State and County Implementation of CalWORKS in the First Year*. Prepared for California Department of Social Services. Santa Monica, California: RAND Corporation, 1999.

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### **State of Connecticut Welfare Reform Evaluation Project**

Researcher(s)/Evaluator(s): Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation (MDRC) for the Connecticut Department of Social Services

Project Period: 5/1/97 to 12/31/01

This project continued the originally planned evaluation of Reach for Jobs First, which was implemented in January 1996, as an amendment to an earlier welfare reform demonstration, and subsequently incorporated in the state's TANF plan.

Major Research Questions: (1) Was self-sufficiency increased according to various measures of employment, earnings and income? (2) Was welfare use reduced according to various measures of the duration and amount of welfare receipt? (3) Was participation in program activities and use of program services increased, according to such measures as attendance at, and completion of, assigned training or employment activities? The evaluation also explored questions related to policy impact on family structure and stability, child well-being, and health benefits.

Research/Evaluation Design: The evaluation employed a random assignment experiment operated in Manchester and New Haven. Impacts, implementation, and operation were observed using baseline information forms, program record data, on-site observation, semi-structured staff

interviews, client focus groups, client surveys, and document reviews. Reports on impacts, implementation and operation processes, and costs/benefits were produced.

Released reports include:

Bloom, Dan, Susan Scrivener, Charles Michalopoulos, Pamela Morris, Richard Hendra, Dianna Adams-Ciardullo, Johanna Walter, and Wanda Vargas. *Jobs First: Final Report on Connecticut's Welfare Reform Initiative*. Prepared for Connecticut Department of Social Services. New York, NY: MDRC, February 2002.

Melton, Laura and Dan Bloom. *Connecticut's Jobs First Program: An Analysis of Welfare Leavers*. Prepared for Connecticut Department of Social Services. New York, NY: MDRC, December 2000.

Bloom, Dan, Laura Melton, Charles Michalopoulos, Susan Scrivener, and Johanna Walter. *Jobs First: Implementation and Early Impacts of Connecticut's Welfare Reform Initiative*. Prepared for Connecticut Department of Social Services. New York, NY: MDRC, February 2000.

Bloom, Dan, Mary Andes, and Claudia Nicholson. *Jobs First: Early Implementation of Connecticut's Welfare Reform Initiative*. Prepared for Connecticut Department of Social Services. New York, NY: MDRC, July 1998.

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### **Florida Family Transition Program (FTP) Evaluation**

Researcher(s)/Evaluator(s): MDRC for the Florida Department of Children and Families

Project Period: 5/1/97 to 4/30/00

Major Research Questions: (1) Was self-sufficiency increased according to various measures of employment, earnings and income? (2) Was welfare use reduced according to various measures of the duration and amount of welfare receipt? (3) Was participation in program activities and use of program services increase, according to such measures as attendance at, and completion of, assigned training or employment activities? The evaluation also explored questions related to policy impact on family structure and stability, child well-being, and health benefits.

Research/Evaluation Design: The evaluation used a random assignment experiment in one county. Data on implementation, operations and impacts were obtained from administrative records, client surveys at 24 and 48 months, a survey on post-welfare experiences of families who have lost benefits because of time limits, staff interviews, client focus groups, site observations, and program documents.

Released reports include:

Bloom, Dan, James J. Kemple, Pamela Morris, Susan Scrivener, Nandita Verma, and Richard Hendra with Diana Adams-Ciardello, David Seith, and Johanna Walter. *The Family Transition*

*Program: Final Report on Florida's Initial Time-Limited Welfare Program.* Prepared for Florida Department of Children and Families, December 2000.

Bloom, Dan, Mary Farrell, James J. Kemple, and Nandita Verma. *The Family Transition Program: Implementation and Three-Year Impacts of Florida's Initial Time-Limited Welfare Program.* Prepared for Florida Department of Children and Families, April 1999.

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### **Indiana Welfare Reform Evaluation Project**

Researcher(s)/Evaluator(s): Abt Associates Inc. and The Urban Institute for the Indiana Family and Social Services Administration

Project Period: 5/1/97 to 4/3/02

The Indiana Manpower Placement and Comprehensive Training Program (IMPACT) implemented the following major policy provisions: (1) a 24 month time limit for adults eligible for JOBS; (2) a family benefit cap; (3) child immunization and school attendance requirements; (4) a higher resource limit for AFDC eligibility; and (5) grant diversion. Under TANF, two major policy changes were added under IMPACT: (1) the 24-month welfare benefit time limit was expanded to apply to all mandatory employment or training cases, and (2) adults with children over the age of 12 weeks and under the age of 3 years are no longer exempt from participating in employment or training activities.

Major Research Questions: Policy Impact questions were: (1) Was self-sufficiency increased according to various measures of employment, earnings and income? (2) Was welfare use reduced according to various measures of the duration and amount of welfare receipt? (3) Was participation in program activities and use of program services increased, according to such measures as attendance at, and completion of, assigned training or employment activities. The evaluation also explored questions related to policy impact on family structure and stability, child well-being, and health benefits.

Research/Evaluation Design: The evaluation employed a random assignment experiment operated statewide. Impacts, implementation and operation were observed using administrative records, a client survey, staff interviews, site observations, and program documents. The process study was conducted in eight sites and aimed to provide early implementation data. A variety of quasi-experimental methods were used to address caseload changes, time limit effects, and pre/post TANF differences. The evaluation produced process and impact analyses reports.

Released reports include:

Fein, David J., Erik Beecroft, William Hamilton, Wang S. Lee (Abt Associates), Pamela A. Holcomb, Terri S. Thompson, and Caroline E. Ratcliffe (The Urban Institute). *The Indiana Welfare Reform Evaluation: Program Implementation and Economic Impacts After Two Years.* Prepared for Indiana Family and Social Services Administration, November 1998.

Fein, David J., Erik Beecroft, Jennifer Karweit (Abt Associates), Pamela A. Holcomb, Sandra J. Clark, Carolyn T. O'Brien and Caroline E. Ratcliffe (The Urban Institute). *The Indiana Welfare Reform Evaluation: Assessing Program Implementation and Early Impacts on Cash Assistance*. Prepared for Indiana Family and Social Services Administration, August 1997.

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## **Iowa State Welfare Reform Evaluation Track 2**

Researcher(s)/Evaluator(s): Mathematic a Policy Research, Inc. (MPR) for the Iowa Department of Human Services

Project Period: 5/21/97 to 9/29/00

This project, which complements a separately-funded evaluation being completed on Iowa's Family Investment Program (FIP), consisted of two studies—a study of repeat limited benefit plan (LBP) assignment and a study of post-employment services. The study of repeat LBP assignments describes the experiences and outcomes of welfare cases that have been assigned to the LBP more than once. It gathers information on why cases were reassigned, how reassigned cases were affected by the immediate cessation of cash assistance in a second LBP and the time-pattern of their return to cash assistance. This study of post-employment services described and compared standard and enhanced post-employment services and assessed their contribution to client's progress toward self-sufficiency and off cash assistance. It also documents the processes for developing, implementing, and delivering post-employment services.

Major Research Questions: The major research questions for the study of repeat LBP assignments were: (1) To what extent do recipients assigned to the LBP for a second time understand the Family Investment Agreement (FIA), a social contract requirement? (2) After experience with LBP, what efforts do clients make to meet FIA requirements? (3) What events, barriers and circumstances contribute to their failure to meet these requirements following their first LBP? (4) What are the nature of changes in family income, employment, housing and stability following benefit termination under a second LBP? (5) What are the demographic characteristics of cases assigned to the LBP for a second time? The major questions for the study of post-employment services were: (1) How do standard and enhanced post-employment services differ? (2) After initial job entry, what are: the employment patterns of clients, their initial and subsequent earnings, and their pattern of cash assistance and Food Stamps receipt and Medicaid eligibility? (3) What are the barriers to types of employment that could lead to self-sufficiency?

Research/Evaluation Design: The LBP assignment study is based on administrative data, survey data, and case studies. The study of post-employment services utilized a comparison site design to describe the delivery of post-employment services and to examine their role in promoting self-sufficiency. The post-employment study has four components: a process study, an analysis of program data, a client survey, and case studies.

Released reports include:

Nixon, Lucia A., Jacqueline F. Kauff, and Jan L. Losby. *Second Assignments to Iowa's Limited Benefit Plan*. Prepared by Mathematica Policy Research, Inc. under subcontract to the Institute for Social and Economic Development. Princeton, NJ: MPR, August 1999.

Prindle, Carol S., John F. Else, Jan L. Losby, Tom J. Martin, and Mark E. St. Andre. *Iowa's Family Investment Program: A Process Study of the Program's First Two Years*. Princeton, NJ: MPR, February 1999.

Nixon, Lucia A., Elizabeth F. Closter, and Thomas M. Fraker. *A Study of Well-Being Visits to Families on Iowa's Limited Benefit Plan*. Prepared for Iowa Department of Human Services. Princeton, NJ: MPR, June 1998.

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### **Iowa: The Family Investment Program (FIP)**

Researcher(s)/Evaluator(s): Mathematica Policy Research, Inc. (MPR) for the Iowa Department of Human Services

Project Period: 5/1/97 to 4/30/00

Major Research Questions: (1) Was self-sufficiency increased according to various measures of employment, earnings and income? (2) Was welfare use reduced according to various measures of the duration and amount of welfare receipt? (3) Was participation in program activities and use of program services increased, according to such measures as attendance at, and completion of, assigned training or employment activities? The evaluation also explored questions related to policy impact on family structure and stability, child well-being, and health benefits.

Research/Evaluation Design: The final impact study compares treatment and control cases through March 1997 (the first 13 quarters), after which time all research cases including the control group operated under State TANF rules. In quarter 14 through 20, the research cases (treatment and former control) are compared to control cases during the first 13 quarters. Thus, FIP, which began as a random assignment experiment adopted a quasi-experimental, pre/post design. The final study reports analyses and descriptions based on data obtained from administrative records, a client survey, and focus groups for several key groups of clients.

Released reports include:

Kauff, Jacqueline, Thomas M. Fraker, and Julita Milliner-Waddell. *Iowa Families That Left TANF: How Are They Faring Two Years Later?* Prepared by Mathematica Policy Research, Inc. for the Iowa Department of Human Services. Washington, DC: MPR, February 2002.

Sing, Merrile, Heather Hill, and Linda Mendenko. *Work, Welfare, and Family Well-Being: Summary Report. Evaluation of Welfare Reform in Iowa*. Prepared by Mathematica Policy Research, Inc. for the Iowa Department of Human Services. Washington, DC: Mathematica Policy Research, Inc., August 2001.

Hill, Heather and Jacqueline Kauff. *Living on Little: Case Studies of Iowa Families with Very Low Incomes*. Prepared by Mathematica Policy Research, Inc. under subcontract to the Institute for Social and Economic Development for the Iowa Department of Human Services. Washington, DC: MPR, August 2001.

Kauff, Jacqueline, Lisa Fowler, Thomas M. Fraker, and Julita Milliner-Waddell. *Iowa Families That Left TANF: Why Did They Leave and How Are They Faring?* Prepared by Mathematica Policy Research, Inc. for the Iowa Department of Human Services. Washington, DC: MPR, February 2001.

Fraker, Thomas M. and Jonathan E. Jacobson. *Iowa's Family Investment Program: Impacts During the First 3-1/2 Years of Welfare Reform*. Prepared by Mathematica Policy Research, Inc. for the Iowa Department of Human Services. Washington, DC: MPR, May 2000.

Gordon, Anne R. and Thomas J. Martin. *Cost-Benefit Analysis of Iowa's Family Investment Program: Two-Year Results*. Prepared by Mathematica Policy Research, Inc. under subcontract to the Institute for Social and Economic Development for the Iowa Department of Human Services. Washington, DC: MPR, February 1999.

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### **Maryland Family Investment Program Evaluation**

Researcher(s)/Evaluator(s): University of Maryland School of Social Work for the Maryland Department of Human Resource

Project Period: 10/1/97 to 9/30/00

This is a statewide process study examining and documenting front-line assessment and allocation practices under TANF in the state's 24 local jurisdictions. The objective of this analysis was to help clarify the relationship between agency factors and county-level characteristics by describing county-level variation in front-line procedures. Maryland's TANF program includes a required initial up-front client assessment and completion of a case-level Family Responsibility Plan. The State views this as a key component in its aim to transform eligibility workers to job developers and family counselors. An objective of the study was to determine to what extent the assessment processes enable workers to successfully triage clients and track them to what is likely to be an effective service.

Major Research Questions: (1) How much discretion is granted to county-level workers in assessing clients and directing them to services that are likely to address their need? How does worker discretion vary from one county to another? (2) How do county management differences influence assessment practices? (3) How do county front-line assessment practices and differences affect welfare service delivery? (4) Do assessment practices appear to be appropriate to clients' situations and clearly directed to desired TANF outcomes (e.g., successful employment placement before a time limit is reached) and other measures of family well-being?

Research/Evaluation Design: Researchers visited and interviewed public assistance managers in each of the state's 24 counties and collected and performed content analysis on assessment

policy and procedure manuals and assessment forms. The results of this field work are contained in the year one report entitled: "Examining Customer Pathways and Assessment Practices" by researchers at the School of Social Work, University of Maryland, Baltimore. This report was followed by an anonymous mail survey of front-line workers. After describing local assessment processes, the researchers examined these practices and procedures in relation to other agency and local jurisdiction characteristics, e.g., worker/client ratio.

Released reports include:

Maryland Department of Human Resources (MDHR). *The Maryland Family Investment Program: A summary of Maryland's plan for human service reform*. Baltimore, MD: MDHR, 1998.

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**Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP)**

Researcher(s)/Evaluator(s): Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation (MDRC) for the Minnesota Department of Human Resources

Project Period: 7/1/97 to 12/31/00

Major Research Questions: (1) Was self-sufficiency increased according to various measures of employment, earnings and income? (2) Was welfare use reduced according to various measures of the duration and amount of welfare receipt? (3) Was participation in program activities and use of program services increased, according to such measures as attendance at, and completion of, assigned training or employment activities? The evaluation also explored questions related to policy impact on family structure and stability, child well-being, and health benefits.

Research/Evaluation Design: The evaluation was based on a random assignment experiment in eight counties, four rural and four urban. Impacts, implementation, and operation were observed using a baseline survey at intake, staff surveys, client field surveys, administrative records, program documents, and site observations. The evaluation produced process, impact and cost/benefit analyses reports.

Released reports include:

Knox, Virginia, Cynthia Miller, and Lisa A. Gennetian. *Reforming Welfare and Rewarding Work: A Summary of the Final Report on the Minnesota Family Investment Program*. Prepared for Minnesota Department of Human Resources. New York, NY: MDRC, September 2000.

Miller, Cynthia, Virginia Knox, Patricia Auspos, Jo Anna Hunter-Manns, and Alan Orenstein. *Making Welfare Work and Work Pay: Implementation and 18-Month Impacts of the Minnesota Family Investment Program*. Prepared for Minnesota Department of Human Resources. New York, NY: MDRC, September 1997.

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### **Minnesota WorkFIRST Program**

Researcher(s)/Evaluator(s): Maximus for the Minnesota Department of Human Services

Project Period: 10/1/97 to 9/30/02

This project provided a comparative evaluation of Minnesota's WorkFIRST and the state's TANF program which continues operation of the Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP) welfare reform demonstration. WorkFIRST uses a mandatory labor force attachment strategy which includes providing benefits through vendor payments. MFIP represents what might be characterized as a progressive labor force attachment model in which work is rewarded through a more liberalized structure of income disregards for TANF recipients.

Major Research Questions: (1) Will the WorkFIRST program have a greater impact on moving first-time applicants into employment and promoting long-term self-sufficiency, or will MFIP's "make work pay" strategy prove more effective in moving people off welfare? (2) Is WorkFIRST more effective in preventing first-time applicants from becoming dependent on public assistance? (3) Do tough sanctions and vendor payments reinforce the WorkFIRST message of personal responsibility?

Research/Evaluation Design: The study included both a process and impact evaluation, the latter employing a quasi-experimental, pretest/posttest comparison group design. Various pretest measures were obtained that relate to client and caseload outcomes. WorkFIRST was carried out in two counties and matched with four MFIP comparison sites selected from throughout the state. Data sources included administrative data records and universal client interviews. The process evaluation described study development and implementation and supported the impact evaluation. Data collection for the process study relied on site visits and focus groups with selected applicants.

Released reports include:

Final report to be released December 2002. No publicly available interim reports released to date.

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### **Montana Welfare Reform Evaluation Project: Implementation Process and Outcome of the Families Achieving Independence in Montana (FAIM) Program**

Researcher(s)/Evaluator(s): Abt Associates the Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services

Project Period: 9/1/98 to 8/31/01

This project conducted an implementation and process analysis in 10 rural counties and 4 Indian reservations on how Montana's FAIM welfare program works, analyzed the flow of individuals through the program, assessed success and problems of county flexibility in the implementation of FAIM, and identified lessons and best practices.

Major Research Questions: The major research questions focused on rural and Tribal areas and concern the impact of FAIM's three principal components on the population: (1) a diversion

component, (2) a 24-month work participation component with cash assistance, case management and support services, and (3) a 36-month community services program as a follow-up program for the work participation component for families unable to support themselves.

Research/Evaluation Design: This study included a process study and outcome analysis. A two-wave survey of low-income families, including intensive in-person interviews in focus counties and reservations, was conducted. Statewide administrative data was used linking individual level FAIM, TANF, and other records to members of the survey sample. This included data on TANF, food stamps, Medicaid, Child Care, and UI records.

Released reports include:

Long, David. Montana FAIM Evaluation: Assessment of Welfare Reform in a Rural Setting. Prepared for the Montanan Department of Public Health and Human Services. Princeton, NJ: Abt Associates, December 2001.

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### **Evaluation of the Nebraska Employment First Program**

Researcher(s)/Evaluator(s): Mathematica Policy Research, Inc. (MPR) for the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services System  
Project Period: 5/29/97 to 9/29/02

This project evaluated state welfare policies initiated under a welfare reform demonstration begun on November 1, 1995 and now incorporated statewide under the Employment First (TANF) Program. These policies include: (1) intensive case management based on assessment and a self-sufficiency contract/employability plan; (2) time-limiting cash assistance to two out of every four years; (3) strict full-family sanctions imposed only as a last resort and after careful review and mediation; (4) temporary or permanent good cause exemptions from participation and time limits; (5) liberalized earnings and assets disregards; and (6) 24 month child care and Medicaid transitional benefits. The evaluation focused primarily on implementation and operation of the program and included a special study to assess successful case management. A separate impact evaluation was carried out comparing an intensive up-front job search strategy with an up-front assessment approach.

Major Research Questions: The process study was concerned with how well the program is managed and provided to the clients, how well the clients understand it, and how the clients interact with it. The case manager study asked whether up-front job search (a labor market screen) or up-front assessment and employability planning is more likely to result in sustained self-sufficiency, especially when unemployment is low and the demand for labor makes it easier for more able clients to get jobs, leaving behind clients with more barriers.

Research/Evaluation Design: The process study was conducted in four sites, including Omaha and Lincoln, and will include a 180-case sample interviewed in three months to determine understanding of the program and a 350-case sample to obtain data not available from the State's data system. The case manager study began with a case-manager background information

questionnaire supported by client outcomes data. High performing case managers were identified and interviewed to determine the components of their success. The impact study randomly assigned current recipient and new applicant cases to two treatment groups; a sub-sample of treatment cases was interviewed in a survey.

Released reports include:

Meckstroth, Alicia, LaDonna Pavetti, and Michelle K. Derr. *Implementing Welfare Reform in Nebraska: Accomplishments, Challenges, and Opportunities for Improvement: First Interim Process and Case Manager Studies Report*. Prepared by Mathematica Policy Research, Inc. for Nebraska Health and Human Services. Princeton, NJ: MPR, September 1999.

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### **Impact Study of the New Hampshire Employment Program**

Researcher(s)/Evaluator(s): University of New Hampshire for the New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services

Project Period: 9/97 to 12/02

This project was an impact analysis of New Hampshire's employment-focused welfare reform program, which includes up-front job search followed by a client assessment and placement into one of two types of Employment Program Group if employment is not found within four weeks of up-front job search. The groups were divided according to employability of clients, and services are structured appropriately. Participants who did not find employment after a 26-week job search component entered a Work Benefits Program, which included activities such as On-the-Job Training and subsidized employment. Special needs payments were available to address employment obstacles, and individuals were exempt from employment requirements if personally providing care for a child under age 3. The impact study involved a pre-post non-experimental design consisting of comparisons between baseline and post-implementation cohorts, caseload modeling techniques, and a pre-post time series analysis of trends on selected welfare-related aggregate measures.

Major Research Questions: (1) Does New Hampshire's welfare reform program impact state welfare case dynamics, including exit rates, length of benefit receipt and recidivism? (2) Does the program have an impact on welfare caseloads compared to forecasted caseload values such as new welfare case openings, case closings, denials and withdrawals, "child only" cases, earned income cases, and benefit payments? (3) Does the program affect welfare-related measures such as foster care placements, child abuse and neglect, homelessness, paternity establishments, and child support collections?

Research/Evaluation Design: Using statewide case-level and aggregate data, baseline cohorts were constructed for the pre-post cohort analysis consisting of persons who were on AFDC in January 1992 and who would have been state TANF-mandatory participants and monthly entry cohorts of persons entering welfare between January 1992 and December 1993. The post-implementation cohorts consisted of all TANF participants in October 1997 and monthly entry cohorts of persons entering the program between October 1997 and September 1999. Regression

analysis and survival and hazard functions analysis were used to control for case characteristics and other extraneous factors.

Released reports include:

Barnow, Burt S. *The Impact of Welfare Reform in New Hampshire on the TANF Caseload: Year Four Report*. Prepared for the New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services under a subcontract to the University of New Hampshire. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University, Institute for Policy Studies, December 2001.

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### **New Hampshire Employment and Training Program Process and Outcome Study**

Researcher(s)/Evaluator(s): University of New Hampshire for the New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services

Project Period: 9/97 to 12/02

The overall objectives of this study were to examine the planning, funding, and implementation of the state's welfare reform program and its different components at the state and local level. This examination included documenting the organization and staffing of New Hampshire's program and observing and documenting service delivery processes; describing client flow and participation; and analyzing participant outcomes in terms of key variables such as employment and earnings and family structure and stability. The thrust of the analysis was to observe how the implementation of the state's program affects participant outcomes by studying client and staff reactions to the new program and by examining the contextual factors surrounding the program in terms of local economic conditions, caseload characteristics, resources, and legislative developments. Special studies were conducted on the characteristics of families who leave welfare as well as those who are sanctioned, diversion cases, and utilization patterns of child care and transitional case management and benefits. Administration for Children and Families (ACF) funded a New Hampshire impact evaluation as a separate project.

Major Research Questions: (1) What are the allocated funding levels for planning and ongoing program operation? (2) What are the reactions to, and effects of, the various sorts of interagency collaborations around which the program is designed? (3) What activities has the state conducted to promote culture change among the staff, clients, and community partners? (4) What has been the reaction to the up-front diversion and employment aspects of the program? (5) How are staff implementing assessment and program assignment procedures? (6) Overall, what do the assessment procedures help discover about client barriers and needs? (7) What are outcomes on measures such as employment rates, length of employment, amount of earned income, child support collections, total family income and savings?

Research/Evaluation Design: The approaches used to conduct this process study included interviews with state program officials, site visits to local offices, longitudinal analysis of administrative data on participant flows and outcomes, participant surveys and focus groups, and surveys of local program staff.

Released reports include:

Final report to be released October 2002. No publicly available interim reports released to date.

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**Evaluation of the North Carolina Work First Program**

Researcher(s)/Evaluator(s): Maximus for the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services

Project Period: 9/30/97 to 9/29/00

Major Research Questions: (1) To what extent are the observed differences between counties in client outcomes attributable to variations in local economic conditions and unemployment rates? (2) To what extent are the differences among the counties attributable to other contextual factors, such as variations in health coverage, or demographics of the local population? (3) What political and organizational factors may have affected the results for each county? The major research questions for the outcome evaluation were what are the outcomes of Work First in terms of indicators for: (1) self-sufficiency? (2) welfare costs? (3) levels of work activity participation? (4) family structure and stability? and (5) child health and well-being?

Research/Evaluation Design: The evaluation consisted of a process/outcome evaluation that incorporated a study of TANF implementation and the outcomes for project participants. Survey-based data were collected from diverted and closed cases in Mecklenburg, Cumberland and six other counties. Information was also be gathered through the review of automated state administrative records, case record reviews and state and county site visits.

Released reports include:

Maximus. *The Study of Families Leaving Work First In Selected Counties*. Maximus, May 2000.

Maximus. *Analysis of Administrative Data on Welfare Recipients*. Maximus, January 2000.

Maximus. *Analysis of Administrative Data on Families Receiving Welfare and Diversion Assistance*. Maximus, May 2000.

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**North Dakota: The Training, Education, Employment, and Management (TEEM) Project**

Researcher(s)/Evaluator(s): Berkeley Policy Associates for the North Dakota Department of Human Services

Project Period: 5/23/97 to 9/29/00

This project produced a process evaluation of the Training, Education, Employment, and Management (TEEM) Project, a welfare reform demonstration initiated prior to implementation

of the state's TANF program. The TEEM project consolidated TANF and LIHEAP into a single cash assistance program. TEEM includes the following major provisions: a social contract, increased work incentives, sanctions, raised asset limits and incentives for family stability and marriage.

Major Research Questions: (1) How are policies, services and program rules implemented? (2) How are families and county staff affected by the new policies and programs, and does this vary by sub-population (e.g., ethnicity) and county? (3) What are the components of the TEEM screening system? (4) What barriers to employment are experienced and how does TEEM address them? (5) What are the clients' perceptions of the screening system and social contract? (6) How well does TEEM serve clients with special needs (such as disabled clients, clients with disabled children or those with substance abuse or domestic violence problems)? (7) How do clients' rates of participation in employment/training programs and cooperation with Child Support Enforcement change with the implementation of TEEM?

Research/Evaluation Design: The evaluation consisted of a process study drawing on administrative data, site visits, and focus groups.

Released reports include:

London, Rebecca, Courteney Smith, Kristin Porter, and Kendra Lodewick. *Evaluation of North Dakota's Training, Education, Employment, and Management (TEEM) Program: Final Report*. Prepared for North Dakota Department of Human Services, March 2000.

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### **Ohio Works First Evaluation**

Researcher(s)/Evaluator(s): Macro International Inc. for the Ohio Department of Human Services (OHDS)

Project Period: 6/97 to 6/03

This project evaluated Ohio's Work First program which includes completion of a Self-Sufficiency Contract, more generous earned income disregards, a 36-out-of-any-60-month time limit, and whole-family sanctions as well as other policies designed to help families obtain employment and become self-sufficient. Local jurisdictions had flexibility regarding the specific methods and approaches they implemented in carrying out Ohio Works First.

Major research questions: (1) Is the core set of services mandated under Ohio Works First being implemented by counties in a consistent and equitable manner? (2) What are the major variations across counties in program design and service delivery? (3) How do policy changes affect recipients' attitudes and behaviors toward work participation? (4) What is the response and reaction of local officials to the new policies and governance structure under welfare reform? (5) How does Ohio Works First affect recipients' participation in work activities? (6) How effective are work participation activities in increasing employment levels and self-sufficiency? (7) What are the most effective components of work participation activities? (8) How are different groups affected by Ohio Works First? (9) What groups are most at risk of exceeding

the time limit? (10) What has been the impact of specific policy provisions (e.g., time limits, sanctions)? (11) How are families affected?

Research/Evaluation Design: The project included process and implementation analysis to examine and document a wide array of issues regarding the transformation of the service delivery system throughout the state. It also included an impact evaluation to measure the effectiveness of the program policies and operations in meeting objectives.

Released reports include:

Macro International Inc. and the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services. *Legislative Outcomes Study*. August 2000.

Mantovani, Richard, JoAnn Kuchak (Macro), Jacquelyn Martin, Helen Anne Sweeney, and Steven Tate (ODHS). *A Non-Experimental Approach to Evaluating Welfare Reform*. Calverton, MD: Macro International Inc., 1999.

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### **South Carolina Project Independence**

Researcher(s)/Evaluator(s): The Urban Institute for the South Carolina Department of Social Services

Project Period: 5/1/98 to 4/30/03

This project examines the state's TANF implementation of two provisions: (1) relocation requirements and services affecting recipients in counties with higher unemployment rates; and (2) policies related to alcohol or drug abuse referral and treatment. In addition, Project Independence former and diverted clients will be surveyed, and the survey results will be linked to administrative records to determine the status and well-being of the families and their children.

Major Research Questions: (1) How case managers refer clients to substance abuse treatment and how does the process and rate of referrals differ among counties? (2) How many clients complete substance abuse treatment? (3) Do clients that complete treatment do better in terms of jobs entries, wages, and job retention? (4) How is State law governing relocation services for clients to accept jobs in another community communicated to case managers? (5) Are case managers aware of State policy governing relocation services? (6) How many clients use relocation services and how do they perform in their jobs? (7) What services are provided to relocated clients and how is the well-being of the families and their children affected by relocation?

Research/Evaluation Design: Process evaluation using interviews, case records, financial records, and agency administrative data.

Released reports include:

Ratcliffe, Caroline, Patrick Sharkey, and Demetra Smith Nightingale. *An Analysis of South Carolina Counties' Family Independence Welfare Program Performance*. Prepared for the South Carolina Department of Social Services. Washington, DC: The Urban Institute, February 2002.

Pindus, Nancy and Robin Koralek. *South Carolina Family Independence Program Process Evaluation Report on Overall Findings, Context, and Methods*. Prepared for South Carolina Department of Social Services. Washington, DC: The Urban Institute, December 2000.

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### **Achieving Change for Texans**

Researcher(s)/Evaluator(s): University of Texas at Austin with the Texas Department of Human Services

Project Period: 7/1/97 to 9/30/02

Pilot sites tested “fill-the-gap” budgeting combined with disregarding assets in Individual Development Accounts, and “One-Time” voluntary grant diversion payment of \$1,000 to TANF eligibles agreeing not to reapply for 12 months were evaluated by quasi-experimental or survey methods.

Major Research Questions: (1) Was self-sufficiency increased according to various measures of employment, earnings and income? (2) Was welfare use reduced according to various measures of the duration and amount of welfare receipt? (3) Was participation in program activities and use of program services increased, according to such measures as attendance at, and completion of, assigned training or employment activities? The evaluation also explored questions related to policy impact on family structure and stability, child well-being, and health benefits.

Research/Evaluation Design: The evaluation employed a random assignment experiment operated in various counties that implement different sets of policies. The experimental group was subject to all provisions described above, except the “One-Time” grant diversion that was evaluated with a quasi-experimental design or survey. Implementation, operations, and impacts were observed using administrative records, site observation, staff and client interviews, and sample surveys of those that left the rolls or were diverted from entering the rolls. The evaluation reported process, impact, and cost/benefit analyses.

Released reports include:

Final Report expected in November 2002.

*Evaluation of Achieving Change for Texans: Welfare Reform Waiver Track One Evaluation*. Austin, TX: Texas Department of Human Services, Executive Office of Planning, Evaluation, and Project Management, Program Analysis and Evaluation, December 1998.

Lein, Laura, Veronica De La Garza, Greg Ellis, Audrey Steiner. *Recipients of the Texas One-Time Benefit Payment: An Interim Report*. Prepared for Texas Department of Human Services.

Austin, TX: The University of Texas at Austin, Center for Social Work Research, December 1998.

Schexnayder, Deanna T., Jerome A. Olson, Daniel O. Schroeder, Alicia M. Betsinger, and Shao-Chee Sim. *Achieving Change for Texans Evaluation: Net Impacts Through December 1999*. Prepared for Texas Department of Human Services. Austin, TX: The University of Texas at Austin, Lyndon B. Johnson School of Public Affairs, Center for the Study Of Human Resources, December 1998.

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### **Vermont Welfare Restructuring Project (WRP)**

Researcher(s)/Evaluator(s): Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation (MDRC) for the Vermont Department of Social Welfare

Project Period: 5/1/97 to 4/30/02

Major Research Questions: (1) Was self-sufficiency increased according to various measures of employment, earnings and income? (2) Was welfare use reduced according to various measures of the duration and amount of welfare receipt? (3) Was participation in program activities and use of program services increased, according to such measures as attendance at, and completion of, assigned training or employment activities? The evaluation also explored questions related to policy impact on family structure and stability, child well-being, and health benefits.

Research/Evaluation Design: The evaluation operated state-wide and employed a random assignment experiment to test separately the impacts of all WRP provisions and WRP provisions without the community service program. Research questions were be answered using surveys, administrative data, self-administered questionnaires for staff, focus groups, program documents and published data, on-site observation, and interviews with staff and recipients. The evaluation provided process and impact studies and a cost/benefit analysis.

Released reports include:

Bloom, Dan, Richard Hendra, and Charles Michalopoulos. *Vermont's Welfare Restructuring Project: Key Findings from the Forty-Two-Month Client Survey*. Prepared for Vermont Department of Social Welfare. New York, NY: MDRC, June 2000.

Hendra, Richard and Charles Michalopoulos. *Forty-Two-Month Impacts of Vermont's Welfare Restructuring Project*. New York, NY: MDRC, September 1999.

Bloom, Dan, Charles Michalopoulos, Johanna Walter, and Patricia Auspos. *Implementation and Early Impacts of Vermont's Welfare Restructuring Project*. Prepared for Vermont Department of Social Welfare. New York, NY: MDRC, October 1998.

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## **Virginia Independence Program (VIP)**

Researcher(s)/Evaluator(s): Mathematica Policy Research, Inc. (MPR) for the Virginia Department of Human Services

Project Period: 9/30/97 to 9/29/02

This project examined the state's TANF implementation which continued policies begun under its welfare reform demonstration—Virginia Independence Program (VIP). Among the policies studied under the State's VIP program were: diversionary assistance, a family cap, time-limited assistance, personal responsibility agreements, expanded earned income disregards, school attendance requirements, paternity establishment rules, requiring minor parents to live in adult settings, child immunization requirements, incentives promoting individual savings accounts and transitional Medicaid and child care benefits.

Major Research Questions: (1) What happens to families after they reach the time limit? (2) What are the effects of post-employment and job retention services offered by the State? (3) What are the implications of the growing number of child-only cases the State is finding on its rolls? (4) What are the issues around players and localities where unique innovations have been introduced in the State? (5) How does diversionary assistance work in a limited number of localities? (6) What are the dynamics of the Virginia caseload over time, under the TANF regime? (7) Are there social health indicators for TANF recipients—other than those required by law—which would help the State keep abreast of developments as they affect the caseload?

Research/Evaluation Design: New efforts connected with this phase of the research consisted of an implementation study with site visits, surveys and interviews. There was also a descriptive study of cases reaching the two-year time limit through survey and administrative data. The evaluation also assessed the early impact of its original random assignment experiment. Experimental/control treatments under random assignment were discontinued October 1, 1997. The State wants to reassess what long term follow-up efforts are needed for its original implementation plans and reduce the number of policies included in the original waiver demonstration.

Released reports include:

Gordon, Anne, Susanne James-Burdumy, Renee Loeffler, Barbara Guglielmo, and Carole Kuhns. *Experiences of Virginia Time Limit Families After Case Closure: An Interim Report*. Prepared by Mathematica Policy Research, Inc. under subcontract to the Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University. Princeton, NJ: MPR, January 2002.

Gordon, Anne and Susanne James-Burdumy. *Impacts of the Virginia Initiative for Employment Not Welfare. Final Report*. Prepared by Mathematica Policy Research, Inc. under subcontract to the Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University. Princeton, NJ: MPR, January 2002.

Gordon, Anne and Roberto Agodini. *Early Impacts of the Virginia Independence Program: Final Report*. Prepared by Mathematica Policy Research, Inc. under subcontract to the Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University. Washington, DC: MPR, November 1999.

Gordon, Anne, Carole Kuhns, Renee Loeffler, and Roberto Agodini. *Experiences of Virginia Time Limit Families in the Six Months After Case Closure: Results for an Early Cohort: Final Report*. Prepared by Mathematica Policy Research, Inc. under subcontract to the Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University. Washington, DC: MPR 452, November 1999.

Pavetti, LaDonna, Nancy Wemmerus, and Amy Johnson. *Implementation of Welfare Reform in Virginia: A Work in Progress. Final Report*. Prepared by Mathematica Policy Research, Inc. under subcontract to the Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University. Washington, DC: Mathematica Policy Research, Inc., February 1999.

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**Wisconsin Pay for Performance/Self-Sufficiency First Evaluation**

Researcher(s)/Evaluator(s): Institute for Research on Poverty for the Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development

Project Period: 5/1/97 to 4/30/98

Major Research Questions: (1) Was self-sufficiency increased according to various measures of employment, earnings and income? (2) Was welfare use reduced according to various measures of the duration and amount of welfare receipt? (3) Was participation in program activities and use of program services increased, according to such measures as attendance at, and completion of, assigned training or employment activities? The evaluation also explored questions related to policy impact on family structure and stability, child well-being, and health benefits.

Research/Evaluation Design: The evaluation employed a random assignment experiment operated in four sites. The experimental group was subject to Self-Sufficiency First/Pay for Performance policies, while the control group was subject to AFDC program policies in effect prior to TANF. Impacts, implementation, and operation were observed using baseline information forms, program record data, on-site observation, and document reviews. Process and impact studies were completed.

Released reports include:

Cancian, Maria, Thomas Kaplan, and Ingrid Rothe with Hwa-Ok Park and Dan Ross. *Wisconsin's Self-Sufficiency First/Pay for Performance Program: Results and Lessons from a Social Experiment*. Madison, WI: The Institute for Research and Poverty, March 2000.

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#### IV. Welfare Leavers Studies

The dramatic drop in cash assistance caseloads has generated interest in what is happening to families after they leave the cash assistance welfare roles. This has resulted in two types of “welfare leavers” studies: (1) state-level studies; and (2) syntheses of state-level studies.

In order to obtain a broader national picture of how welfare leavers are faring in the post-reform era and to facilitate cross-state comparisons, thirteen states and four sub-state areas received grants from U.S. Department of Health and Human Services/Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation (ASPE) in 1998-99 to conduct leavers studies. The leavers studies are designed to assess the well-being of former welfare recipients including employment rates, wages, earnings, employment retention, continuing forms of income support (e.g., food stamps, Medicaid), reasons for leaving welfare, food security, and other measures of family well-being.

In general, the ASPE-funded leaver studies follow these guidelines:<sup>4</sup>

- They focus on cohorts of leavers, defined as all families that stopped receiving welfare during a particular quarter. In most cases, a family had to remain off welfare for two consecutive months in order to be considered a leaver. Similarly, ASPE encouraged its grantees to present at least some findings for single-parent families.
- For each cohort of leavers, the studies use administrative records to examine leavers’ subsequent use of cash assistance under TANF and their participation in the Food Stamp and Medicaid programs. Some studies have broader administrative data on leavers’ participation in additional social support programs, such as child care subsidies and child support, as well as data from state child welfare agencies.
- Almost all studies link their administrative program data with data on employment and earnings from the state’s Unemployment Insurance system.
- The studies supplement their administrative data using surveys of TANF leavers. Generally the survey samples are drawn from a single cohort of leavers. These surveys provide richer information about families than can be garnered from administrative data.

These leavers studies are useful tools for monitoring the well-being of families that have received TANF and subsequently left the rolls. They can help policy makers identify the range of problems that families who have left welfare are facing. The states and sub-state areas include:

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<sup>4</sup> Acs, Gregory and Pamela Loprest with Tracy Roberts. *Final Synthesis Report of Findings from ASPE “Leavers” Grants*. The Urban Institute, December 2001.

- |  |                                       |
|--|---------------------------------------|
| 1. Arizona   | 9. Massachusetts                      |
| 2. California: Contra Costa and Alameda Counties         | 10. Missouri                          |
| 3. California: San Mateo/Santa Clara/Santa Cruz Counties | 11. New York                          |
| 4. District of Columbia                                  | 12. Ohio: Cuyahoga County (Cleveland) |
| 5. Florida   | 13. South Carolina                    |
| 6. Georgia   | 14. Texas                             |
| 7. Illinois  | 15. Washington                        |
| 8. Iowa  | 16. Wisconsin                         |
|  | 17. Wisconsin: Milwaukee County       |

ASPE-funded reports for the states and sub-state areas listed above can be found at:  
<http://aspe.hhs.gov/hsp/leavers99/reports.htm>

Additional leavers studies not funded by ASPE can also be found at this website for the following states and sub-state areas:

- |                               |                                       |
|-------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 1. California: Sonoma County  | 10. North Carolina                    |
| 2. California: Alameda County | 11. Ohio                              |
| 3. Florida                    | 12. Ohio: Cuyahoga County (Cleveland) |
| 4. Georgia                    | 13. Oklahoma                          |
| 5. Illinois                   | 14. Oregon                            |
| 6. Massachusetts              | 15. Texas                             |
| 7. Missouri                   | 16. Virginia                          |
| 8. New Mexico                 | 17. Wisconsin                         |
| 9. New Jersey                 |                                       |

There have also been quite a few of the second type of leavers studies—those presenting syntheses of state-level studies. Often completed by research organizations rather than the states themselves, many of these leavers studies compare the state-level findings with other state’s findings or with nationwide data.

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**Earnings of Welfare Leavers: Substantive and Methodological Explorations**

Researcher(s)/Evaluator(s): RAND Corporation

Project Period: 9/30/00 to 9/29/02

Funder: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services/Administration for Children and Families (ACF)

This demonstration will examine two methodological issues in the context of the Leavers Studies conducted in the CalWORKS demonstration. One issue is to determine how well data from UI records reflect the total family earnings and income from all sources. The other issue is to determine whether outcomes for persons that do not respond to surveys can be accurately estimated from those that do respond.

Major Research Questions: This demonstration addresses two major research questions. The first question involves determining the extent to which earnings as recorded in UI records reflect the real earnings of a particular recipient and how well UI earnings reflect the total earnings and income of the family. The second question involves determining how representative survey respondents are, whether non-response bias can be fixed through proper weightings, and what data should be used to construct these weightings.

Research/Evaluation Design: In order to determine the extent to which UI data reflects total family income several data bases for recipients in the CalWORKS demonstration will be linked. The CalWORKS demonstration involves a recipient interview. This interview will probe for employment and earnings that might not be reflected in the UI records. In addition, records from the California Department of Social Services will be linked to determine other sources of family income such as TANF payments and Food Stamps. Finally, RAND will obtain SSA data to learn about earnings sectors not covered by UI records as well as about out-of-state earnings. In order to determine whether non-response bias can be eliminated, data from surveys will be linked to other databases that contain outcomes of interest. For outcomes that can be determined outside the survey, comparisons can be made with techniques that seek to extend survey results to the non-response group. The demonstration will test whether propensity score techniques can be used to accurately predict non-response outcomes.

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**Final Synthesis Report of the Findings from ASPE-Sponsored “Leavers” Studies**

Researcher(s)/Evaluator(s): The Urban Institute, Gregory Acs and Pamela Loprest with Tracy Roberts

Publication Date: December 2001

Funder: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation

This report reviews and synthesizes key findings from fifteen of the ASPE-funded leavers studies. All fifteen studies collected some information about employment rates and earnings, wages, and/or employer-related benefits of families that left welfare.

The fifteen ASPE-funded leaver studies reviewed provide a considerable amount of information on the status of families leaving welfare focusing key outcomes and measures of well-being that are commonly reported in these studies. The major findings indicate that, in general, about three-quarters of all leavers work at some point in the year after exiting TANF. Mean earnings of employed welfare leavers are about \$2,600 per quarter, according to administrative data with increases in quarterly earnings of at least \$200 between the first and fourth quarter after exit.

Employed leavers tend to work at least 35 hours per week, on average. A substantial minority of leavers must overcome both child care and health-related problems in order to work. A quarter to a third of families who left welfare returned to TANF at some point in the first year after exit. About half of leaver families receive food stamps in the first quarter after exit and about two-thirds receive these benefits at some point in the year after exit.

Average monthly family income for leavers from all sources, including earnings, generally lies near the poverty line. Most studies that compare material hardship across employment status find that leavers who are working have lower levels of food, housing, and health care-related problems.

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**Findings from ASPE-Sponsored “Leavers” Studies (Appendix B)**

Researcher(s)/Evaluator(s): Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation (ASPE) Staff

Publication Date: July 2001

Funder: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation

As of March 2001, 15 leavers studies had released preliminary reports based on administrative data findings, and 12 of the 15 also had released reports with more detailed findings from follow-up surveys. Appendix B, presents highlights from these reports with a focus on outcomes in employment and earnings, recidivism and program participation, and household income and family well-being.

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**How Are Families That Left Welfare Doing? A Comparison of Early and Recent Welfare Leavers**

Researcher(s)/Evaluator(s): The Urban Institute, Pamela Loprest

Publication Date: April 2001

This study examines whether more recent leavers—those who left welfare between 1997 and 1999—appear more disadvantaged or less job-ready than an early group of leavers—those who left between 1995 and 1997—by comparing barriers to work and economic outcomes between the two groups. The study uses data from the National Survey of America’s Families—a large, nationally representative survey—conducted in 1997 and 1999. The term “leaver” includes former recipients who received cash benefits at some point between 1995 and 1997 (for the early group) or 1997 and 1999 (for the later group) and who were no longer receiving benefits at the time of the interview in 1997 or 1999, respectively. As time limits were being reached in some states during the 1997 to 1999 period and full family sanction use also increased during this period, it is possible that this more recent group of leavers is composed of fewer job-ready former recipients, on average.

Despite these concerns, this study finds relatively little evidence that recent leavers are more disadvantaged than earlier leavers. The characteristics of the two groups are similar, except that a larger percentage of the recent group is in poor health.

Labor market outcomes (including employment, wages, and earnings) and receipt of government benefits are also similar across both groups of leavers. In addition, there is a significant decline in the percentage of families with income below the poverty level in the more recent group.

However, despite this evidence that the economic outcomes of recent leavers are the same or even better than those of earlier leavers, a greater percentage of recent leavers report experiencing economic hardships such as trouble paying rent.

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**Initial Synthesis Report of the Findings from ASPE-Sponsored “Leavers” Studies**

Researcher(s)/Evaluator(s): The Urban Institute, Gregory Acs and Pamela Loprest

Publication Date: January 2001

Funder: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation (ASPE)

This report presents preliminary results from eleven studies of former welfare recipients funded by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation. The studies include administrative and survey data on the well-being of families who left welfare. Efforts were made to have these studies use comparable measures to facilitate cross-study comparisons.

This synthesis focuses primarily on economic well-being. It includes information on welfare leavers' employment and earnings, income and poverty status, public program participation, material hardships, and child care use. The results of the summary show a number of common findings across these study areas. Broadly speaking, among families leaving welfare, about three out of five work at any given time after exiting, and about three-quarters have worked at some point within a year of leaving welfare. When leavers work, they usually work full-time and earn \$7-\$8 dollars per hour. On average, working leavers make about \$3,000 a quarter, and leavers' family incomes hover around the poverty line. A significant minority of leavers return to TANF in the year after initially exiting. Over one-third of leavers receive food stamps and about 2 in 5 have public health insurance coverage during the fourth quarter following their exit from welfare. Finally, many leavers experience hardships, such as not having enough food to eat, but in general they do not experience these hardships more frequently than when they were on welfare.

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**Interpreting TANF Leaver Studies: Comparing ASPE Grantee States to the Nation as a Whole**

Researcher(s)/Evaluator(s): Mathematica Policy Research, Inc., Jacquelyn Anderson and Scott Cody

Publication Date: March 2000

Funder: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services/Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation (ASPE)

This study examines how well the 16 ASPE funded study states and sub-states represent the nation. The study assesses the study state/non-study state similarities and differences that are likely to be correlated with these outcomes. Specifically, it examines how study states compare

with non-study states in terms of caseload declines, the employment and earnings of low-income, single-parent households. TANF policy, and state-level economic and demographic indicators.

Primary research questions: (1) Do low-income, single-parent households in the TANF leaver study states resemble the rest of the nation prior to welfare reform? Do these households resemble the rest of the nation after welfare reform? (2) How do TANF policies differ in the study states compared with the rest of the nation? (3) How do the economic and demographic indicators of the study states compare with the rest of the nation? (4) How are low-income families in general faring after welfare reform?

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**W-2: Converting to Wisconsin Works. Where Did Families Go When AFDC Ended in Milwaukee?**

Researcher(s)/Evaluator(s): Hudson Institute and Mathematica Policy Research Inc. (MPR), Rebecca Swartz, Jacqueline Kauff, Lucia Nixon, Tom Fraker, Jay Hein, and Susan Mitchell  
Publication Date: December 1999

Hudson Institute contracted with MPR to assist in designing and conducting a study to assess the following characteristics of former AFDC recipients:

- Their experiences converting from AFDC to W-2
- The nature and level of their participation in W-2 and other assistance programs about a year after W-2 implementation
- Their employment and income about a year after W-2 implementation
- Other measures of well-being

Hudson and MPR conducted a telephone survey of 400 randomly selected cases from Milwaukee County, Wisconsin who received AFDC cash benefits in August 1997 pertaining to these four topics. The survey was completed between October 1998 and March 1999. While the sample left AFDC as it ended, many in the sample did not leave welfare. Some converted to W-2, some began working or receiving another form of government assistance, some found jobs, and some pursued different strategies.

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**How Families That Left Welfare Are Doing: A National Picture**

Researcher(s)/Evaluator(s): The Urban Institute, Pamela Loprest  
Publication Date: August 1999

This study uses the 1997 National Survey of America's Families (NSAF)—a large nationally representative sample that overrepresents low-income families—to examine welfare leavers on a national basis. Unlike many other leaver studies, the Loprest study presents a counterfactual—a sense of how well former welfare recipients “should” be doing—to compare to how well they are actually doing.

Findings: The NSAF data suggest several important commonalities between former welfare recipients and their nonwelfare counterparts. The majority of families in both groups rely on work. At the same time, former recipients' hourly wages and monthly earnings indicate that they are entering the low end of the labor market, where they are working in much the same circumstances as other near-poor and low-income mothers who have not recently been on welfare. More than a quarter of former recipients, near-poor, and low-income mothers work mostly at night, and over half struggle to coordinate work schedules with child care. A third or less have employer-sponsored health insurance (compared with more than half of all workers under age 65).

How many former recipients are falling through the cracks of policies designed to get them into jobs? NSAF does not allow a definitive answer, but it yields some useful information. About 20 percent of former recipients are not working, do not have a working spouse, and are not relying on government disability benefits. What they are living on is not known. Nearly 30 percent of those who left welfare for at least a month between 1995 and 1997 had returned to welfare and were receiving benefits in 1997. As welfare time limits expire and cash assistance is terminated, people who leave welfare in the future may face greater economic hardships than the former recipients described here, and they will constitute a larger proportion of all former recipients.

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## V. The National Welfare-to-Work (WtW) Grants Evaluation

### The National Evaluation of the Welfare-to-Work Grants Program

Researcher(s)/Evaluator(s): Mathematica Policy Research, Inc. (MPR), The Urban Institute, and Support Services International, Inc.

Project Period: 8/98 – 9/02

Funder: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services/Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation (ASPE) with support from the U.S. Department of Labor and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development

The purpose of this project is to evaluate the effectiveness of welfare-to-work (WtW) initiatives, including those undertaken by formula and competitive grantees and by American Indian and Alaska Native tribal organizations.

The evaluation plan includes three main components:

1. *A Descriptive Assessment of All WtW Grantees.* A mail survey of all formula and competitive grantees, in 1998 and 1999, will provide a comprehensive overview of program designs and activities offered, target populations, characteristics of participants, and, to the extent available, placement outcomes. Site visits will be made to about 35 grantees to develop a fuller understanding of program variations and to aid in selection of sites for in-depth studies.
2. *In-Depth Impact and Cost-Effectiveness Study.* In 8-10 sites that agree to participate, rigorous studies using random assignment designs will be conducted over the period 1999-2001 to determine what difference WtW programs make in employment and family well-being outcomes. Comparisons will also be made between the net benefits of these impacts and the additional costs of delivering program services.
3. *In-Depth Process and Implementation Study.* In 1999-2000, site visits will be conducted in 12-15 grantee sites, including impact evaluation sites and several others where impact analysis may not be possible but that are of interest for their innovative approaches, settings, or target groups. These visits will include discussions with staff of WtW programs and related agencies, focus groups with participants, and program observation. The study will identify implementation issues and challenges, and program details that help explain how programs achieve desired impacts.

Released reports include:

Hillabrant, Walter and Mack B. Rhoades, Jr. (Support Services International, Inc.), Nancy Pindus and John Trutko (The Urban Institute). *The Evaluation of the Tribal Welfare-to-Work Grants Program: Initial Implementation Findings.* January 2002.

Nightingale, Demetra Smith. *Program Structure and Service Delivery in Eleven Welfare-to-Work Grant Programs.* Washington, DC: The Urban Institute, January 2001.

Perez-Johnson, Irma, Alan Hershey, and Jeanne Bellotti. *Further Progress, Persistent Constraints: Findings from a Second Survey of the Welfare-to-Work Grants Program*. Princeton, NJ: MPR, May 2000.

Nightingale, Demetra Smith, Terri Thompson, Nancy Pindus, Pamela Holcomb, Edgar Lee, Jesse Valente, and John Trutko. *Early Implementation of the Welfare-to-Work Grants Program: Findings From Exploratory Site Visits and Review of Program Plans*. Prepared by The Urban Institute under subcontract to Mathematica Policy Research, Inc. Washington, DC: The Urban Institute, February 2000.

Perez-Johnson, Irma and Alan M. Hershey. *Early Implementation of the Welfare-to-Work Grants Program: Report to Congress*. Princeton, NJ: MPR, March 1999.

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## VI. Employment Retention and Advancement

Over time it has become clear that job retention and advancement is an important issue facing welfare recipients. Two major employment retention and advancement initiatives came out of this.

First, to collect information about employment paths out of welfare and to test innovative ways to promote job retention, the Department of Health and Human Services initiated the Postemployment Services Demonstration (PESD). PESD went beyond helping welfare recipients find jobs. PESD focuses on helping welfare recipients *keep* jobs. The cornerstone of PESD services was extended case management. The programs operated from mid-1994 through mid-1996 in Chicago, Illinois; Portland, Oregon; Riverside, California; and San Antonio, Texas. Over a 12- to 18-month period, nearly 5,000 welfare recipients who had just found work were identified and referred to the program. Half were randomly assigned to a program group and could receive PESD services; the other half were assigned to a control group and could receive regular JOBS services. The Department of Health and Human Services retained Mathematica Policy Research, Inc. to evaluate the PESD.

Second, to help build knowledge about how best to help welfare recipients sustain employment and advance in the labor market, Administration for Children and Families (ACF) funded the Employment Retention and Advancement (ERA) Project. The ERA Project is designed to help states implement and refine their employment, retention, and advancement strategies. To that end, there are two phases as part of this initiative, Phase I constituted 13 planning grants to states to work with the Lewin Group, as the technical assistance contractor, to develop strong retention and advancement projects. Phase II provided five \$100,000 grants to states deemed ready to fully implement and test their initiatives as part of a national evaluation conducted by MDRC, and seven \$10,000 planning grants to states to complete development of an ERA project for initiatives that were not deemed sufficiently far enough along in the planning process to move to full implementation.

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### **The Postemployment Services Demonstration (PESD)**

Researcher(s)/Evaluator(s): Mathematica Policy Research, Inc. (MPR)

Project Dates: 4/94 to 4/99

Funder: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services/Administration for Children and Families (ACF)

The Postemployment Services Demonstration (PESD), funded by the Department of Health and Human Services/Administration for Children and Families (ACF), was the first large-scale field program that used extended case management services and temporary financial support to promote job retention and reemployment among newly employed welfare recipients. This evaluation examined early measures of the effectiveness of the PESD programs in promoting job retention, sustaining employment, and reducing welfare dependency during clients' first year after program enrollment. In general, the preliminary findings suggest that the PESD programs

had, at best, small or modest success in increasing employment and earnings and reducing welfare dependency among newly employed welfare recipients.

To test the effectiveness of the PESD program, staff at each site randomly selected between 400 and 500 newly employed welfare recipients (including those who left welfare as a result of their employment) to participate in the PESD program. The rest became part of a control group receiving regular services available to employed welfare recipients in the state, mostly through the Job Opportunities and Basic Skills Training (JOBS) program. The analysis—which compares the experiences of program and control group members—is based on survey data for a representative subsample of 1,200 demonstration enrollees, evenly divided across the sites and between the program and control groups. The report focused on this subsample because, at the time of the analysis, there were not complete administrative records data for the full sample. Administrative records were available and were used in the final impact analysis conducted during Spring 1998.

Released reports include:

Rangarajan, Anu and Tim Novak. *Off Welfare and Into Work A Report Series of the Postemployment Services Demonstration: The Struggle to Sustain Employment: The Effectiveness of the Postemployment Services Demonstration*, April 1999.

Rangarajan, Anu, Peter Schochet, and Dexter Chu. *Employment Experiences of Welfare Recipients Who Find Jobs: Is Targeting Possible? Volume I & II*. Princeton, NJ: MPR, August 1998.

Rangarajan, Anu, Alicia Meckstroth, and Tim Novak. *Off Welfare and Into Work A Report Series of the Postemployment Services Demonstration: The Effectiveness of the Postemployment Services Demonstration, Preliminary Findings*, January 1998.

Rangarajan, Anu. *Taking the First Steps: Helping Welfare Recipients Who Get Jobs Keep Them*. Mathematica Policy Research, Inc., November 1996.

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### **Employment Retention and Advancement (ERA) Project**

Researcher(s)/Evaluator(s): Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation (MDRC) and The Lewin Group (technical assistance)

Project Period: 9/1/98 to 9/30/06

Funder: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services/Administration for Children and Families (ACF)

One of the central challenges currently facing policymakers and administrators is how to help low-wage workers sustain employment and advance in the labor market. To obtain credible, reliable information about the effectiveness of various strategies and services, ACF has contracted with MDRC to conduct a rigorous, long-term, multi-site evaluation of programs designed to improve employment stability and career progression for current or former TANF

recipients or other low-income families. The project will provide information on how different programs work, whether they produce the desired effects for families, and how the programs' costs compare to their benefits.

MDRC is conducting the national evaluation of the ERA Project. States/localities involved in this project include:

Phase I: Planning Grants and Technical Assistance

California, Illinois, Maryland, New Jersey, North Carolina, Ohio, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, Washington, and Wisconsin.

Phase II: Implementation and Planning Grants

California (Riverside), South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, and Virginia.

Major Research Questions: In all sites, the evaluation will have three main analysis components, which will answer the following broad research questions:

*Process/implementation analysis.* What services are provided, how are they delivered, who receives them, and why? What problems are encountered when implementing the programs and how are they addressed?

*Impact analysis.* To what extent do the programs improve employment retention, advancement, and other outcomes for participants and their children? Which approaches are most effective and for whom? All sites will use a rigorous random assignment research design to assess program impacts.

*Cost-benefit analysis.* What are the costs of the programs, and to what extent do their benefits outweigh their costs from the perspectives of program participants, taxpayers, employers, and society overall? How do these findings vary by program type and participant characteristics?

Research/Evaluation Design: Sites selected to participate in the final evaluation phase are required to utilize random assignment to compare approaches to improve retention and advancement. ACF has contracted with MDRC to mount a random-assignment 5-year evaluation of up to eight to ten sites.

Released reports include:

First evaluation report forthcoming from MDRC in Summer 2002.

Fishman, Michael E., Burt S. Barnow, Karen N. Gardiner, Barbara J. Murphy, and Stephanie A. Laud. *Job Retention and Advancement Among Welfare Recipients: Challenges and Opportunities.* Prepared for U.S. Department of Health and Human Services/ACF. The Lewin Group, January 1999.

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**Assessing Enhanced Transitional Employment (ETE) Programs**

Researcher(s)/Evaluator(s): Mathematica Policy Research, Inc. (MPR)

Project Period: 4/1/00 to 3/31/01

Funder: Rockefeller Foundation; Charles Stewart Mott Foundation; and U.S. Department of Health and Human Services/Administration for Children and Families (ACF)

This project will identify and describe operating employment-focused programs that help individuals who face significant employment challenges by providing transitional employment or work experience that builds the skills and capacity of participants through a supportive environment. Strategies for providing a supportive environment may include close supervision, peer supports, progressive performance expectations, and linkage or provision of needed services as well as other methods. The project will provide detailed descriptions of the programs identified, an assessment of program capacity and the feasibility of expanding existing programs to serve more participants, and, if not now served, TANF recipients with significant employment barriers. It will also provide suggestions on how these programs might be replicated in other state/local settings and an assessment of the feasibility of conducting a large-scale evaluation of such employment strategies, including an impact evaluation based on an experimental design.

Major Research Questions: (1) To what extent do programs operate nationwide that are similar to the Supported Work Programs evaluated under the previous national demonstration and evaluation? (2) What are the guiding principles on which the programs were developed and operate? (3) What are the major “supportive” or “transitional” features or components used within the programs to address the needs of those requiring a more supportive employment environment to sustain employment, including the provision of specific services to address individual or family issues that may interfere with sustained employment? (4) What are the characteristics of these programs (e.g., the types of sponsoring organizations, mission of organization, other programs operating in the same organization, size of programs, capacity of programs, age of programs, staff qualifications, staffing levels or allocation, collaborating entities or agencies)? (5) Could programs be expanded to include more participants or TANF recipients? (6) Could program models be replicated in other sites? (7) What is the “program” (e.g., the sequence of events for participants engaged in the program, the component parts of the program, services provided, allowable length of program, average stay in program by participants)?

Research/Evaluation Design: Surveys and site visits.

Released reports include:

Kirby, Gretchen, Heather Hill, LaDonna Pavetti, Jon Jacobson, Michelle Derr, and Pamela Winston. *Transitional Jobs: Stepping Stones to Unsubsidized Employment*. Princeton, NJ: MPR, April 2002

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## VII. Rural Welfare Research

There are two phases of recent rural welfare research funded by Department of Health and Human Services/ACF. The first phase of this initiative provided planning grants to 10 states. Representatives from states and localities, working together with the federal technical assistance contractor Macro International and other experts, sought to develop well-informed workable strategies to be tried, and appropriate research questions, measures and methods for later implementation and evaluation efforts. The second phase will consist of the participation by 3 to 5 states/sites in a national demonstration evaluation managed by Mathematica Policy Research, Inc., over a period of five years to determine the effectiveness and cost-benefits of programs designed to help current or former rural TANF recipients or other rural low-income families transition from welfare to work.

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### **Rural Welfare-To-Work Strategies Project: Planning Grants and Technical Assistance**

Researcher(s)/Evaluator(s):

1. Illinois Department of Human Services
2. Iowa Department of Human Services
3. Louisiana Department of Social Services
4. Maryland Department of Human Resources
5. Minnesota Department of Human Services
6. Mississippi Department of Human Services
7. Missouri Department of Social Services
8. New York State Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance
9. Vermont Department of Social Welfare
10. Washington State Department of Social and Health Services

Technical Assistance: Macro International and Mathematica Policy Research, Inc. (MPR)

Project Period: 9/30/98 to 2/29/00

Funder: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services/Administration for Children and Families (ACF)

The rural initiative builds on the experiences of states and localities with substantial rural populations. The purpose of this initiative was to stimulate research on emerging approaches to welfare reform policy and programs in rural America aimed at increasing knowledge about strategies currently used in rural areas, developing new strategies and approaches to be tested, and assisting in designing appropriate research questions and methods to evaluate alternative strategies to welfare reform in low-income rural communities. The goal of this initiative is to increase knowledge through information sharing and through research to provide sound information about effective approaches in working with rural populations.

Major Research Questions: How does the rural TANF population differ from the non-rural population with respect to employability, access to affordable and quality child care, special circumstances, and service needs? What strategies, policies and programs hold the best promise for overcoming the difficulties in rural areas affecting welfare populations and child in low-

income families? How best can alternative approaches be mounted and tested to produce meaningful data to effect positive changes?

Research/Evaluation Design: Ideally, alternative approaches could be subjected to rigorous study to measure their impacts on the populations served. However, small numbers, geographic dispersion and other rural conditions strongly suggest that well-controlled, random assignment experimental studies would be infeasible. Nevertheless, what questions can be answered reliably remains an important issue to be addressed by this initiative to inform and build the knowledge necessary to improve policy and practice for rural areas and population groups given their special circumstances.

Released reports include:

Marks, Ellen (Macro), Sarah Dewees (Rural Policy Research Institute), Tammy Ouellette, and Robin Koralek (Macro). *Rural Welfare To Work Strategies: Research Synthesis*. Calverton, MD: Macro International Inc., June 1999.

Chezem, Joanne, Wayne Evans, Paul Sarvela, Robyn Nawrot, Jack Hill, and Jerry King. *Rural Welfare-to-Work Strategies Project*. Prepared for Illinois Department of Human Services, July 2000.

Miller, Kathleen K., Diane L. Huneke, and James K. Scott. *Missouri Rural Welfare-to-Work Strategies Project: Identifying Barriers to finding and Keeping Employment for Rural TANF Recipients in Missouri, Final Report*. Prepared for U.S. Department of Health and Human Services/ACF. Columbia, MO: University of Missouri-Columbia, Community Policy Analysis Center, May 2000.

Dewees, Sarah. *Transportation in Rural Communities: Strategies for Serving Welfare Participants and Low-Income Individuals*. Prepared for U.S. Department of Health and Human Services/ACF. Rural Policy Research Institute, April 2000.

Bildner, Cheryl and John Else. *Microenterprise in Rural Communities: Opportunities for Welfare Participants and Low-Income Workers*. Prepared for U.S. Department of Health and Human Services/ACF, February 2000.

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**Rural Welfare-to-Work Strategies Demonstration and Evaluation Project**

Researcher(s)/Evaluator(s): Mathematica Policy Research, Inc. (MPR)

Project Period: 09/00 to 9/05

Funder: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services/Administration for Children and Families (ACF)

This multi-year national evaluation is designed to learn how best to help TANF and other low-income rural families move from welfare to work. The evaluation will lead to increased information on well-conceived rural welfare-to-work strategies and lessons about the operational

challenges and methods to address them that can be used by state and local TANF agencies and others. During the initial phase of this initiative, 10 states received planning grants to develop strategies targeted to serve rural TANF populations. These states received assistance from a federal technical assistance contractor. In FY 2001, MPR was selected to evaluate the implementation phase of the demonstration and the first participating state, Illinois, began implementation in a five-county site. It is expected that four states/sites will participate in the national demonstration and evaluation.

Major Research Questions: (1) What types and packages of services are provided under the Rural Welfare-to-Work project, and how do they compare with services already available under TANF or other funding? (2) What are the issues and challenges associated with implementing and operating the service packages and policy approaches studied? (3) What are the net impacts of selected approaches under the project on employment and on families' well being? (4) What are the net costs of the programs, and do the programs/benefits outweigh the costs? (5) What strategies should policymakers and program managers consider in designing approaches to improve the efficacy of welfare-to-work strategies for families in rural areas?

Research/Evaluation Design: The evaluation has three main parts: (1) an in-depth process study that will identify implementation issues and challenges and provide program details on how programs operate and achieve observed results; (2) an impact study that will rigorously assess the effects of the program on participants' employment and other outcomes by drawing on data from WtW program sponsors, administrative records data from human services programs, and baseline data and survey data collected in follow-up interviews; and (3) a cost-benefit study to assess the cost effectiveness in which program's achieve its objectives.

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## VIII. Noncustodial Parents

### Evaluation of the Parents' Fair Share (PFS) Demonstration

Researcher(s)/Evaluator(s): Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation (MDRC)

Project Period: 1994 - 2001

Funders: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Department of Labor, and several Foundations

The Parents' Fair Share (PFS) Demonstration was authorized in the Family Support Act of 1988. From 1994 through 1996, PFS worked with unemployed and underemployed noncustodial parents, principally fathers with child support orders who were not paying their child support as ordered. The purpose of that demonstration was to determine if employment interventions with poor noncustodial parents would increase payment of child support.

MDRC helped develop the initial nine pilot demonstration sites and in conjunction with Department of Health and Human Services determined the seven random assignment sites for the evaluation. The demonstration and evaluation was funded by a large consortium of federal agencies, state agencies and community and national foundations. The demonstration has produced a number of important reports on implementation and impact findings. Findings from the evaluation activity relevant to this effort include:

- MDRC developed a client information system for the evaluation, but on the whole the sites did not find it useful for their own internal management purposes. One site, Los Angeles, did adopt and revise the system to meet their ongoing management needs but the other sites discontinued its use when the evaluation activities were completed.
- The random assignment evaluation design affected the demonstration design and the participation of pilot sites in the evaluation phase. All sites ended up using random assignment at the point of court intervention for nonpayment of court-ordered child support. Although initially some projects intended to recruit fathers without paternity and/or orders established, the recruitment efforts for this population proved so difficult that it was not possible to do random assignment and to achieve sufficient sample size for analysis. Additionally, one of the sites dropped out of the evaluation when unemployment rates dropped so low in the region that random assignment resulted in excess program capacity.
- The demonstration did show that child support payments could be increased even if there were no increases in employment and earnings. The impact findings on increases to employment and earnings were not significant in general, but the evaluation provided substantial insights about the needs of low-income fathers and their families and how programs can be better designed to serve them. These include: most poor fathers have a strong desire to be good parents, but have too few skills or too little experience to make good parenting a reality; reinforcement of the fathering role and of self-improvement through peer groups contributed to positive outcomes; behavioral change was hardest for fathers who had a longer history of disengagement from the child and the child's mother; employment strategies need to be improved to better facilitate job retention and wage growth for low-

income, low-skilled workers; and the demonstration sites that were the most successful had the strongest relationship with the local child support enforcement office.

Released reports include:

Knox, Virginia and Cindy Redcross. *Parenting and Providing: The Impact of Parent's Fair Share on Paternal Involvement*. New York, NY: MDRC, October 2000.

Hayes, Eileen with Kay Sherwood. *The Responsible Fatherhood Curriculum*. New York, NY: MDRC, 2000.

Martinez, John and Cynthia Miller. *Working and Earning: The Impact of Parent's Fair Share on Low-Income Father's Employment*. New York, NY: MDRC, 2000.

Johnson, Earl, Ann Levine, and Fred Doolittle. *Father's Fair Share: Helping Poor Men Manage Child Support and Fatherhood*. New York: Russell Sage, 1999.

Doolittle, Fred and Suzanne Lynn. *Working With Low-Income Cases: Lessons for the Child Support Enforcement System from Parents Fair Share*. New York, NY: MDRC, 1998.

Doolittle, Fred, Virginia Knox, Cynthia Miller, and Sharon Rowser. *Building Opportunities, Enforcing Obligations: Implementation and Interim Impacts of Parents' Fair Share*. New York, NY: MDRC, 1998.

Johnson, Earl and Fred Doolittle. *Low-Income Parents and the Parents Fair Share Program: An Early Qualitative Look at Improving the Ability and Desire of Low-Income Noncustodial Parents to Pay Child Support. Fathers Under Fire: The Revolution in Child Support Enforcement*. New York: Russell Sage, 1998.

Bloom, Dan and Kay Sherwood. *Matching Opportunities to Obligations: Lessons for Child Support Reform from the Parents' Fair Share Pilot Phase*. New York, NY: MDRC, 1994.

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**Serving Noncustodial Parents: A Descriptive Study of Welfare-to-Work Programs**

Researcher(s)/Evaluator(s): Karin Martinson and John Trutko (The Urban Institute), Debra Strong (Mathematica Policy Research, Inc. (MPR))

Funder: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services/Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation (ASPE)

Recent changes to the U.S. Department of Labor's Welfare-to-Work (WtW) grants program eligibility criteria have reemphasized the importance of noncustodial parents (NCPs) as a key population in need of WtW interventions. By targeting non-custodial parents (NCPs), the WtW program aims to increase absent fathers' involvement in their children's lives and their commitment to their families' economic and personal well-being.

In Spring of 2000, an interagency effort led by the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation (ASPE) in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services was initiated to identify and describe some of the WtW programs serving NCPs. This descriptive study gathered and presents information on a variety of program models and service approaches that can help guide the larger community of social service and workforce development agencies in their efforts to serve the needs of noncustodial parents and their families. The study will focus on how WtW grantees serving NCPs design and implement their programs, identify and recruit their clients, and develop partnerships with other organizations serving NCPs such as the local child support enforcement and TANF agencies.

Information collected from grantees has shown that many programs are still in the early stages of program implementation. Grantees also indicate that identification and recruitment of noncustodial fathers has been especially challenging. Thus, there are few examples yet of mature NCP service models to study. However, information on WtW programs' successes and challenges to date in serving NCPs will be valuable to other agencies and organizations contemplating serving this population.

The project studied ten purposively selected WtW programs in eight cities: Los Angeles, CA; Milwaukee, WI; Atlanta, GA; Houston, TX; Yakima, WA; Las Vegas, NV; Kansas City, MO; and Minneapolis, MN.

Released reports include:

Martinson, Karin, John Trutko (The Urban Institute), and Debra Strong (MPR). *Serving Noncustodial Parents: A Descriptive Study of Welfare-to-Work Programs*. The Urban Institute, December 2000.

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**Multi-Site Evaluation and Synthesis of Responsible Fatherhood Projects**

Researcher(s)/Evaluator(s): Policy Studies, Inc. and Center for Policy Research

Project Period: 10/99-2/01

Funder: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services/Administration for Children and Families (ACF), Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation (ASPE), and the Office of Child Support Enforcement (OCSE); and the Ford Foundation

In late 1997, the federal Office of Child Support Enforcement (OCSE) funded Responsible Fatherhood Demonstration Projects in eight states: Colorado, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, California, Wisconsin, Missouri, Maryland, and Washington. The projects address recent research findings that (a) unemployment and/or lack of access to children are cited by parents who owe child support as key reasons for non-payment, and (b) payment of child support is associated with non-custodial parent involvement with their children. States were awarded demonstration grants and waivers in 1997 to implement comprehensive responsible fatherhood programs designed to assist unemployed or low income fathers to: (1) secure jobs or improve income, (2) facilitate father involvement, (3) facilitate access and visitation with children, and (4) access related social services as needed.

This project evaluated the implementation and client outcomes of the eight Responsible Fatherhood programs. The evaluation design includes assessments of project implementation and of client, family, and program outcomes.

The released report is an early implementation analysis of the programs focusing on: (1) how they are administered; (2) the types of services they deliver; (3) the coalitions they created with community-based organizations and state and local service agencies; (4) how they recruit program participants; and (5) how they monitor client progress. Future reports will focus on the outcomes the projects achieve with respect to employment, earnings, parent-child contact, and the payment of child support.

Released reports include:

Pearson, Jessica, Nancy Thoennes (Center for Policy Research), David Price, and Jane Venohr (Policy Studies Inc.). *Responsible Fatherhood Programs: Early Implementation Lessons*. Denver, CO: Policy Studies, Inc. and Center for Policy Research, June 2000.

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**Evaluation of the Partners for Fragile Families Demonstration Projects**

Researcher(s)/Evaluator(s): The Urban Institute with Johns Hopkins University and NuStats

Project Period: 10/01 – 9/06

Funder: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services/Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation (ASPE) and the Office of Child Support Enforcement (OCSE); the Ford Foundation; and the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation

In March 2000, the Department approved ten state waivers for the Partners for Fragile Families (PFF) demonstration projects. The PFF projects will test new ways for state-run child support enforcement programs and community-based organizations, including many faith-based organizations, to work together to help young fathers obtain employment, make child support payments and learn parenting skills. Unlike previous efforts which have focused on fathers with unpaid child support obligations, the PFF projects will test approaches to serving young, never-married, non-custodial parents who do not have a child support order in place and may face obstacles to employment. This is a different group of fathers than have previously been targeted by similar projects, such as Parents' Fair Share. The PFF demonstration projects began serving clients in September 2000, and by March 2001 every site was operating and serving clients. Each site will serve a maximum of 300 clients over a three year period.

The Partners for Fragile Families demonstration sites, through their state Child Support Enforcement (CSE) agencies, have been granted waivers from the Department of Health and Human Services to allow foundation funds to be used to match federal funds that will support the program services of the Fragile Families demonstration. As a condition of granting the waivers that make the sites eligible for federal cost sharing, HHS requires sites to cooperate with independent evaluation requirements.

The goal of the evaluation is to determine if changes in the way public agencies and community organizations work with unmarried parents increase the likelihood of positive outcomes for children and parents, including stronger family ties, more voluntary establishment of paternity, payment of child support, provision of medical child support, and other types of financial and emotional support. The evaluation shall produce both descriptive and analytic findings by documenting the process by which the demonstration sites, along with their partner agencies, form, collaborate, and operate; describing clients characteristics and outcomes; and analyzing the relationships between program characteristics and outcomes. There will be no random assignment.

Much of the past research and evaluation efforts to date have focused on client outcomes and impacts. A large part of the evaluation of the PFF demonstration sites will focus on process and systems change, although client outcomes are also an important component of the evaluation. The evaluation design consists of three components, and a fourth which may be executed at the option of the government. These are: (1) Site-specific implementation/process evaluations; (2) Site-specific enhanced process evaluations, which would use individual client level administrative and survey data to document the relationship between client characteristics, service delivery and outcomes for demonstration participants; (3) Cross site outcome analysis which would analyze and compare demonstration participants' outcomes across sites; and optional task (4) Ethnographic studies which would provide in-depth qualitative information on a small number of client families in selected sites.

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**The Fragile Families and Child Well-Being Study**

Researcher(s)/Evaluator(s): The Center for Research on Child Well-Being at Princeton University and the Social Indicators Survey Center at Columbia University

Project Period: 1/00 – 12/03

Funder: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, the Ford Foundation, and the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation

The Fragile Families and Child Well-Being Study examines a birth cohort of mostly unwed parents and their children over a four-year period. The study is designed to provide new information on the capabilities and relationships of unwed parents, as well as the effects of policies on family formation and child well-being. Data will be collected in 20 U.S. cities. Although this survey is not affiliated with the Partners for Fragile Families demonstration projects, it is anticipated that fathers who responded under the Fragile Families and Child Well-Being Study will be similar to the target population for the Partners for Fragile Families demonstration projects.

The study follows a new cohort of unwed parents and their children and provides previously unavailable information on questions such as:

- (1) What are the conditions and capabilities of new unwed parents, especially fathers? How many of these men hold steady jobs? How many want to be involved in raising their children?

- (2) What is the nature of the relationship between unwed parents? How many couples are involved in stable, long-term relationships? How many expect to marry? How many experience high levels of conflict or domestic violence?
- (3) What factors push new unwed parents together? What factors pull them apart? How do public policies affect parents' behaviors and living arrangements?
- (4) What are the long-term consequences for parents, children, and society of new welfare regulations, stronger paternity establishment, and stricter child support enforcement? What roles do child care and healthcare policies play? How do these policies play out in different labor market environments?

Data are being collected in 20 cities across the United States. The total sample size is 4,700 families, including 3,600 unmarried couples and 1,100 married couples. The new data will be representative of nonmarital births in each of the 20 cities, and they also will be representative of all nonmarital births in U.S. cities with populations over 200,000. Follow-up interviews with both parents are scheduled for when the child is 12, 30 and 48 months old. Data on child health and development is collected from the parents during each of the follow-up interviews, and in-home assessments of child well-being will be carried out at 30 and 48 months. Child well-being measures will overlap with those used in other national studies, including the Infant Health and Development Program, the Early Head Start Evaluation, the Teenage Parent Demonstration Project, and the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study - Birth Cohort Study.

Released reports include:

Osborne, Cynthia. *A New Look at Unmarried Parents: Diversity in Human Capital, Attitudes and Relationship Quality*. Center for Research on Child Well-Being, Working Paper 02-01-FF, January 2002.

Mincy, Ronald B and Chien-Chung Huang . *“Just Get Me To the Church...”: Assessing Policies To Promote Marriage Among Fragile Families*. Center for Research on Child Well-Being, Working Paper 02-02-FF, November 2001.

Mincy, Ronald B. *Who Should Marry Whom?: Multiple Partner Fertility Among New Parents*. Center for Research on Child Well-Being, Working Paper 02-03-FF, October 2001.

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## **IX. Hard-to-Serve Welfare Recipients and Barriers to Employment**

### **The Enhanced Services for the Hard-to-Employ (HtE) Demonstration and Evaluation Project**

Researcher(s)/Evaluator(s): Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation (MDRC) with The Urban Institute, The Lewin Group, and the California Institute for Mental Health

Project Period: 2001 – 2010

Funder: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services/Administration for Children and Families (ACF) and Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation (ASPE)

The Enhanced Services for the Hard-to-Employ (HtE) Demonstration and Evaluation Project is envisioned as multi-year, multi-site effort to rigorously test employment programs for low-income parents who face serious obstacles to steady work, including physical and mental health problems, substance abuse, human capital deficiencies, and situational barriers. At least two of the sites included in the evaluation will feature “two generation” models, serving both parents and their children.

Participating sites may target individuals facing specific barriers to employment, such as mental or physical health problems, or target more heterogeneous populations, such as long-term welfare recipients or families in the child welfare or homeless services systems.

Programs may be sponsored or operated by states, localities, or private organizations. Program interventions may include (but are not limited to):

- Supported work or supportive employment models;
- Programs designed to increase participation and retention in mental health or substance abuse treatment, and link treatment with employment services;
- Models that use financial incentives to encourage employment and retention; and
- Two-generation models that provide coordinated services to parents and their children.

The evaluation will include: an *implementation and process analysis* that will examine how the HtE programs operate; an *impact analysis* that will utilize a customized research design to measure differences that are attributable to the HtE program, rather than to client characteristics or changes in the external environment; and a *benefit/cost analysis* that will compare the financial costs and benefits of the interventions, both for participants and for government budgets. Some funding will be provided to participating sites to offset costs associated with the research.

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### **Screening and Assessment in TANF/WtW**

Researcher(s)/Evaluator(s): The Urban Institute

Project Period: 10/99 – 2/02

Funder: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services/Administration for Children and Families (ACF) and Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation (ASPE)

Welfare reform makes it increasingly important for TANF agencies to find ways to help recipients with health conditions, disabilities, and barriers to employment make the transition from welfare to work. To do this, TANF agencies must consider implementing strategies to identify the barriers that are inhibiting or prohibiting this transition. This report discusses issues related to the development and use of screening/assessment practices to assist in the identification of four common barriers to employment—substance abuse and mental health problems, learning disabilities and domestic violence situations. The paper presents questions that TANF agencies and their partners should consider when developing identification processes.

Released reports include:

Thompson, Terri S., Asheley Van Ness, and Carolyn O'Brien. *Screening and Assessment in TANF/Welfare-to-Work: Local Answers to Difficult Questions*. Prepared for the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, ACF & ASPE. Washington, DC: The Urban Institute, Forthcoming 2002.

Thompson, Terri S. and Kelly S. Mikelson. *Screening and Assessment in TANF/Welfare-to-Work: Ten Important Questions TANF Agencies and Their Partners Should Consider*. Prepared for the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, ACF & ASPE. Washington, DC: The Urban Institute, March 2001.

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**Work-Based Strategies for Hard-to-Employ TANF Recipients: A Preliminary Assessment of Program Models and Dimensions**

Researcher(s)/Evaluator(s): Mathematica Policy Research, Inc. (MPR), LaDonna Pavetti and Debra Strong with Ruchika Bajaj, Jon Jacobson, Chrishana Lloyd, Charles Nagatoshi, Randy Rosso, and Ali Stieglitz

Publication Date: May 2001

Funder: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services/Administration for Children and Families (ACF)

This study was designed to achieve two goals: (1) to identify and provide detailed information about the design and structure of work-based programs that serve or that have the potential to serve hard-to-employ TANF recipients; and (2) to assess the feasibility of conducting a rigorous, large-scale evaluation of such programs.

The study gathered information on 65 programs, conducted telephone conversations with 33 programs, and conducted site visits to nine programs. The study identified four different program models that are currently being used to help hard-to-employ individuals find and maintain employment:

- (1) Paid work experience programs: provides temporary employment to program participants through a social enterprise—a program-operated business that employs groups of individuals who would otherwise be employed.

- (2) Supported transitional publicly funded jobs programs: provides temporary paid employment experience in non-profit organizations, governmental agencies, or private sector businesses, usually through individual placements.
- (3) Supported transitional structured employment programs: characterized by their emphasis on providing transitional employment opportunities in a “forgiving” work environment prior to placing participants into competitive employment and on providing intensive personal and employment support for as long as it is needed.
- (4) Supported competitive employment programs: place program participants directly into competitive employment, rather than an initial transitional employment situation. These programs models mirror supported employment programs for the disabled and are usually operated by organizations that have a long histories of helping disabled clients find employment.

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**Beyond Work First: How to Help Hard-to-Employ Individuals Get Jobs and Succeed in the Workforce**

Researcher(s)/Evaluator(s): Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation (MDRC), Amy Brown  
 Publication Date: April 2001

Funder: Annie E. Casey, the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, David and Lucile Packard Foundation, and several other foundations

This book was developed as part of a multifaceted effort to assist states and localities in designing and implementing their welfare reform programs. The project includes a series of “how-to” guides, conference, briefings, and customized, in-depth technical assistance.

Despite a strong economy and the efforts of welfare- to-work and workforce development programs, many families have not yet made a successful transition from welfare to work, and others who have not been on welfare have difficulties finding work. For some of these families, a host of complex problems play a part, including substance abuse, domestic violence, and physical, mental, and learning disabilities. This “how-to” guide presents promising practices for identifying and assisting these hard-to employ people by distilling information and lessons from relevant research and the experiences of rehabilitation, clinical treatment, and welfare-to-work providers.

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**State Welfare-to-Work Policies for People with Disabilities Implementation Challenges and Considerations**

Researcher(s)/Evaluator(s): The Urban Institute, Pamela Holcomb and Terri S. Thompson  
 Publication Date: August 2000

Funder: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services/Administration for Children and Families

This report examines key operational issues and implementation challenges associated with serving welfare recipients with disabilities. The term “disabilities” is used broadly in this report and includes limiting physical conditions, substance abuse and mental health problems, and learning disabilities. These are sometimes referred to as “hidden disabilities” and are generally considered to be a subset of a broader range of barriers faced by “hard-to-serve” TANF recipients. In order to serve this population, the two primary issues that TANF agencies must address are (1) how to identify disabilities among TANF recipients, and (2) how to create and structure services to assist in their transition from welfare to work. These issues provide the conceptual framework for our study.

Our findings are based primarily on interviews conducted December 1998-April 1999 with local welfare agency administrators, front-line staff and service providers in four localities: Phoenix, AZ; Chicago, IL; Providence, RI; and Portland, ME.

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**Strategies for Addressing the Needs of Domestic Violence Victims within the TANF Program: The Experience of Seven Counties**

Researcher(s)/Evaluator(s): The Urban Institute, Martha Burt, Janine M. Zweig, and Kathryn Schlichter

Publication Date: June 2000

Funder: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services/Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation (ASPE)

This project used several techniques to summarize existing information about domestic violence issues within TANF and child support enforcement caseloads, learn what states were doing about the FVO, and examine the day-to-day operations of TANF and child support programs surrounding the issue of domestic violence. The project first developed an annotated bibliography of critical writings to serve as a primer for people interested in learning about domestic violence issues in the welfare setting. The Center for Impact Research conducted all-state surveys in early 1998 and early 1999 and wrote reports summarizing state TANF and child support agency responses to and actions regarding the FVO. The Urban Institute and Center for Impact Research held a conference in November 1998 to bring together states, counties, and experts to describe initial efforts to identify, assess, and address domestic violence issues in their TANF and child support caseloads. Finally, Urban Institute staff conducted site visits to seven counties in five states to learn how the FVO was being used in actual practice.

Findings:

- A state’s or county’s basic approach to TANF played a critical role in determining the nature and success of its approach to domestic violence issues in the sites we visited.

- The programs that did the best at identifying domestic violence issues were those set up to identify *all* major barriers to self-sufficiency—that is, those with a strong orientation to use “carrots.”
- Programs focused more on immediate employment rather than on longer-term self-sufficiency were not well set up to identify any type of barrier, and the same was true for domestic violence issues.
- TANF programs created a wide variety of resources to support their clients with domestic violence issues including on-site availability of domestic violence expertise, using TANF funds for supportive services, developing smooth relationships with community partners for the provision of specialized services, providing related supportive services such as mental health and substance abuse treatment, options for “what counts” as participation and cooperation, the credentials and experiences of staff, and arrangements that concentrate specialized resources on clients with particular problems.

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**Barriers to the Employment of Welfare Recipients**

Researcher(s)/Evaluator(s): University of Michigan, Poverty Research and Training Center, Sandra Danziger, Mary Corcoran, Sheldon Danziger, Colleen Heflin, Ariel Kalil, Judith Levine, Daniel Rosen, Kristin Seefeldt, Kristine Siefert, and Richard Tolman  
 Publication Date: February 2000.

This study relies on a survey of a representative sample of single months who were welfare recipients in an urban Michigan county to explore how such employment barriers, often ignored by previous welfare researchers and by policy makers, constrain their employability.

Four primary research questions are: (1) How prevalent among women who were welfare recipients is each of a large number of barriers to employment? (2) What percentage of these women have multiple barriers? (3) Is the number of barriers associated with welfare mothers’ employment? How much does employment decrease as the number of barriers increase? (4) Which individual barriers matter for employment and how much more do we learn when we examine a comprehensive set of barriers that when we predict employment as a function of their schooling, work experience and past welfare receipt?

Findings:

- Over half of the sample were fulfilling the work requirement of at least twenty hours per week suggesting that, when the county unemployment rate is about 5.7 percent, many recipients can meet policy expectations.
- However, most of these women were working in low-wage, service sector jobs that provide few benefits.

- For the group with few or no barriers to employment, the low wages and lack of health insurance in many of these jobs suggests a continuing need for policies that make work pay.
- For those with none or one barrier, the “work first” emphasis and job search assistance common among many state welfare programs may meet their needs in today’s robust economy.
- But, for recipients who have more of these barriers, welfare-to-work programs and services may need to be more finely targeted.
- Prevalent barriers include lack of transportation, lack of job-specific skills, poor health or physical disability, major depression, lack of a high school degree, and perceptions of workplace discrimination.

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## **X. Changes in the Welfare Caseload**

### **The Effects of Welfare Policy and the Economic Expansion on Welfare Caseload: An Update**

Researcher(s)/Evaluator(s): Council of Economic Advisors (CEA)

Publication Date: August 1999

This study investigates the causes behind recent changes in welfare caseloads, updating a 1997 CEA report of caseload change.

- *The fall in welfare caseloads has been unprecedented, wide-spread, and continuous, and employment of welfare recipients has increased.* 14.1 million people received welfare in January 1993, and this number had fallen to 7.3 million by March 1999, according to estimates released today (August 3, 1999). In 31 states the caseload is less than half of what it was when President Clinton took office, and all states have experienced double-digit percentage declines. For 22 states, the percent drop during 1998 was larger than during 1997 (from January to December). Previous analyses by the Department of Health and Human Services show that the percentage of welfare recipients working tripled between 1992 and 1997, and an estimated 1.5 million adults who were on welfare in 1997 were working in 1998.
- *The 1996 legislation has been a key contributor to the recent declines.* PRWORA produced a dramatic change in welfare policy: work and self-sufficiency became a primary goal; state and local governments were given much greater control of their programs; and states experimented with a host of program designs. The evidence suggests that these changes caused a large drop in welfare participation, a drop that is independent of the effects of the strong labor market. The estimates imply that TANF has accounted for roughly one-third of the reduction from 1996 to 1998, the last year of data analyzed in this study. In the earlier years, 1993-1996, most of the decline was due to the strong labor market, while welfare waivers played a smaller yet important role.
- *The strong labor market has made work opportunities relatively more attractive, drawing people off welfare and into jobs.* The unemployment rate has not declined as much in the post-TANF period as it did in the 1993-96 waiver period. As a result, the share of the decline in the caseload that is attributable to improvements in the labor market was much higher in the 1993-96 period (roughly 26 to 36 percent) than in the 1996-98 period (8 to 10 percent).
- *Past increases in the minimum wage have made work more attractive and, as a result, caused welfare participation to decline.* The estimates imply that about 10 percent of the caseload decline was due to increases in state and federal minimum wages.
- *The specific program design adopted by a state can affect its caseload declines.* The study examines the effects of a number of specific policies, including family caps, earnings disregards, time limits, work exemptions, and work sanctions on the size of the caseload.

The large sustained declines in caseloads provide one piece of evidence about the effectiveness of welfare reform efforts. However, there are multiple indicators of the impact of welfare reform, including changes in work and earnings among welfare leavers, in marriage rates and out-of-wedlock pregnancies, and in poverty rates.

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**What Causes Public Assistance Caseloads to Grow?**

Researcher(s)/Evaluator(s): Rebecca M. Blank, NBER Working Paper No. W6343

Publication Date: December 1997

This paper uses state panel data to investigate changes in public assistance caseloads. Compared to other research, it uses more extensive data, both across states and over time; it utilizes a particularly rich set of control variables; it investigates the different subcomponents of the AFDC program separately; and it investigates the extent to which changes in caseloads are driven by changes in take-up rates versus in eligibility. The results indicate that an unexplained increase in AFDC-Basic caseloads started in the mid-1980s. This trend appears to be driven by three underlying components: a rise in child-only cases, an increase in take-up rates over the early 1990s during the economic slowdown, and a long-term increase in eligibility which is not well explained by a large set of control variables. In contrast, AFDC-UP caseload changes are relatively well-explained by the model in this paper and are far more responsive to economic factors. Recent state policy changes are correlated with caseload declines, but more than half of their affect appears to precede their implementation, suggesting that other changes in client and caseworker behavior was occurring in states that adopted major policy changes.

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## **XI. Welfare Time Limits**

### **Ways That States Can Serve Families That Reach Welfare Time Limits**

Researcher(s)/Evaluator(s): Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, Liz Schott

Publication Date: June 2001

This paper examines time limits as welfare clients in many states are beginning to hit time limits, considering the effect of the final TANF rules, and declining caseloads and the resulting caseload of clients facing barriers to employment.

This paper discusses each of the following approaches that states can take to address the needs of families facing loss of welfare due to time limits. It also discussed how these approaches can be funded with state or federal welfare funds.

- A state can impose the time limit on the adults and continue benefits to the children when a family reaches the time limit. At least six states that impose time limits do not stop aid to children when the time limit is reached.
- A state can provide wage-paying community service jobs to adults in families that reach the time limit and are not fully employed.
- A state can provide ongoing cash work supports to families that lose ongoing TANF cash assistance due to time limits.
- A state can provide extensions to the time limit without limiting the number of extensions to 20 percent of the caseload.
- A state can provide safety net assistance to families that lose benefits due to time limits.

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### **State Choices on Time Limit Policies in TANF-Funded Programs**

Researcher(s)/Evaluator(s): Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, Liz Schott

Publication Date: September 1998

This paper examines some of the time limit approaches, including exemption and extension policies, that various states have adopted and the policy bases for such choices. The paper also explains how states can structure the financing for their programs to meet their policy objectives consistent with the requirements of the federal law and considers the advantages of addressing these issues now rather than waiting until families begin to reach the time limit.

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## **XII. TANF Reauthorization**

Many books and reports are being released concerning various issues related to TANF reauthorization (e.g., publishers include but are not limited to the National Governor's Association, U.S. General Accounting Office reports, The Brookings Institution). The following books were selected for their comprehensive nature; both include numerous chapters related to many topics affecting reauthorization. The report below was selected due its clear and concise explanation of the final TANF regulations.

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### **Welfare Reform: The Next Act**

Researcher(s)/Evaluator(s): Edited volume by Alan Weil and Kenneth Finegold  
Publication Date: By The Urban Institute, March 2002

Welfare Reform: The Next Act offers the most comprehensive synthesis of research on post-1996 welfare policy. It presents in one volume key findings from six years of the Urban Institute's Assessing the New Federalism project, an ongoing effort to analyze the devolution of responsibility for social programs from the federal government to the states. The book informs current debate over issues such as: work requirements; TANF and child care funding levels; benefit restoration to immigrants; marriage promotion and discouragement of out-of-wedlock childbirth; safety net program access; welfare caseload changes; state budget choices; work; and poverty.

Contributors include Gina Adams, Martha R. Burt, Kenneth Finegold, Michael Fix, John F. Holahan, Pamela A. Holcomb, Robert I. Lerman, Pamela J. Loprest, Karin Martinson, Demetra Smith Nightingale, Jeffrey S. Passel, Monica Rohacek, Sarah Staveteig, Alan Weil, Sheila R. Zedlewski (The Urban Institute), Kristin Anderson Moore, Juliet P. Scarpa, Kathryn Tout, Sharon Vandivere, Martha Zaslow (Child Trends), and David Merriman (Loyola University Chicago).

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### **The New World of Welfare**

Researcher(s)/Evaluator(s): Edited volume by Rebecca Blank and Ron Haskins  
Publication Date: By The Brookings Institution, 2001

The New World of Welfare is an attempt to frame the policy debate for reauthorization, and to inform the policy discussion among the states and at the federal level, especially by drawing lessons from research on the effects of welfare reform. In the book, a diverse set of welfare experts—liberal and conservative, academic and nonacademic—engage in rigorous debate on topics ranging from work experience programs, to job availability, to child well-being, to family formation. In order to provide a comprehensive overview of the current state of research on welfare reform, the contributors cover subjects including work and wages, effects of reform on family income and poverty, the politics of conservative welfare reform, sanctions and time

limits, financial work incentives for low-wage earners, the use of Medicaid and food stamps, welfare-to-work, child support, child care, and welfare reform and immigration.

Contributors include Thomas L. Gais, Richard P. Nathan, and Irene Lurie (Rockefeller Institute, SUNY-Albany), Thomas Kaplan (University of Wisconsin), Lucie Schmidt (University of Michigan), Charles Murray (American Enterprise Institute), Hugh Hecllo (George Mason University), Lawrence M. Mead (NYU), Julie Strawn, Mark Greenberg, and Steve Savner (Center for Law and Social Policy), LaDonna Pavetti (Mathematica Policy Research), Dan Bloom (Manpower Demonstration Research Corp.), Charles Michalopoulos and Gordon Berlin (Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation), Jason A. Turner (Commissioner of Welfare, State of New York), Thomas Main (Baruch College of the City University of New York), Sheila Zedlewski and Pamela Loprest (Urban Institute), Robert Greenstein and Jocelyn Guyer (Center on Budget and Policy Priorities), George Borjas (Harvard University), Greg Duncan and Lindsay Chase-Landsdale (Northwestern University), Wade F. Horn (National Fatherhood Initiative), Isabel V. Sawhill (Brookings Institution), Irwin Garfinkel (Columbia University), Douglas Besharov and Nazanin Samari (American Enterprise Institute), Lynn A. Karoly, Jacob A. Klerman, and Jeannette A. Rogowski (RAND Corporation).

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### **Highlights of the Final TANF Regulations**

Researcher(s)/Evaluator(s): Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, Liz Schott, Ed Lazere, Heidi Goldberg, and Eileen Sweeney

Publication Date: April 1999

On April 12, 1999, the Department of Health and Human Services issued the final TANF regulations which took effect on October 1, 1999. They include many provisions, some of which reflect significant changes from the proposed regulations, that affirm and enhance the flexibility of states to determine how best to use TANF funds to assist low-income families. The regulations, together with the already-existing substantial TANF reserves in many states, provide strong support for states to re-visit their welfare reform approaches and include improvements targeted on both families receiving TANF who so far have not been able to work and on families that are working but continue to have low incomes.

The paper considered several TANF policies as discussed in both the TANF guidance issued in January 1997 and as discussed in the final TANF regulations. These TANF policies include:

- The definition of “assistance” in the final TANF rules makes it clear that states can use TANF funds to provide a very broad range of benefits and services without triggering time limit, work participation, detailed data reporting or child support assignment consequences.
- The flexibility of separate state programs created using only state maintenance-of-effort (MOE) funds, i.e. without any TANF funds. Expenditures on these so-called “separate state programs” can help states meet the MOE requirement, but none of the basic requirements that attach to use of TANF funds — time limits, work participation requirements, and child support assignment — apply because the programs include no TANF funding.

- The final rules give states significant freedom to serve child-only cases without a threat of incurring penalties. The provision in the proposed regulations that would have required states to count child-only cases under some circumstances when calculating whether work participation and time limit requirements are met was taken out.
- The proposed and final regulations largely restate the TANF statutory provision on time limits with some additional explication.

The proposed and final regulations clarify that the required hours of participation in a work activity can be a monthly average of a participant's weekly hours.

The paper also goes on to discuss several other policy issue including: (1) Relief from penalties for failure to meet work participation rates; (2) Caseload reduction credit; (3) Sanctions imposed on individuals for noncompliance with work requirements; (4) Waivers; (5) Family violence option; (6) EITC and other refundable tax credits; (7) Transfers of TANF funds to the social services or child care block grants; (8) Issues related to MOE spending; and (9) Data collection.

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