# Evaluating a Decade of Welfare Reform in New York State

## Putting Jobs into New York’s Welfare to Work Program

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Introduction

In 1996, President Bill Clinton signed legislation repealing the nation’s principal anti-poverty entitlement program for children – Aid to Families with Dependent Children (ADC) – and replacing it with the Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF).

Critics of AFDC, a cornerstone of President Roosevelt’s New Deal, claimed that it bred dependency. They argued that an assistance program that was more focused on work would help move poor parents into employment at a faster rate, enabling them to become economically independent. The focus would now be on identifying barriers poor adults face in becoming employable. Each individual’s barrier to employment would be assessed at application; an individual employment program would be developed; and the “welfare” system would work with them to obtain the skills needed to make them employable and escape welfare dependency forever.

This report examines whether New York’s implementation of TANF has been successful in assisting households move from welfare to employment and whether this has improved their economic status, enabling them to become economically independent.

Under TANF, states are given more “flexibility” in helping their residents become employable. A five year lifetime time limit was established on receipt of federal welfare assistance. The states receive a block grant from the federal government based on the 1996 caseload – the federal funds would remain the same regardless of the number of participants receiving assistance. Stricter weekly work participation rules for adult participants was established, a minimum of 20 hours per week.

Critics argued the repeal of the Aid to Dependent Children’s Program was based on the false premise that by merely imposing a time limit of five years on assistance, there would be enough jobs for everyone (i.e., a full-employment economy would be produced). The new federal TANF program did not invest in job creation. The lack of jobs was, and remains, a problem in many low-income inner city neighborhoods where welfare participants are concentrated. It is also a major problem in rural areas.

Critics also argued that welfare reform failed to reflect the true demographics of those receiving AFDC. The vast majority of ADC participants were poor children; their need for a stronger safety net were largely ignored (i.e., there was no requirement that benefits for children be adequate or even raised beyond their existing level). There had been two distinct groups of people on welfare ADC. Most welfare participants used ADC as a transitional program, often when an emergency arose such as the departure of one of the parents. Most welfare participants were on welfare for less than 18 months. But on any one day, the average length of stay for welfare participants was five years. There was a small but significant group of women which had only limited interaction with the work force. They may have dropped out of school early to have a child, and they may have had various mental health or substance abuse problems.

Much of the public rhetoric over welfare reform focused on those who long-term recipients of assistance. While the need for assistance such as child care and access to education and training were cited, critics contend that the need for additional funding to pay for expanded programs was not adequately addressed.

Many welfare participants initially welcomed some of the changes, because the message they heard was the welfare was now going to lead them to a job. They were even supportive of being required to “work” 20 or more hours a week, since they assumed that after they satisfactorily performed for a few months, they would be provided with a decent paying jobs.
As part of its mission to end hunger in New York State, Hunger Action has made improving the performance of OTDA (Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance) a central goal since its formation in 1982. If local districts provide needed food stamps and public assistance to eligible individuals, it reduces the demand upon emergency food programs. Helping welfare participants to become economically independent also reduces poverty and hunger.

Since 1987, Hunger Action has issued a report every few years documenting particular problems with state and local district performance and make recommendations for improvements. This has often included a survey of participants’ experiences with DSS / HRA (Department of Social Services / Human Resources Administration in NYC).

In recent years Hunger Action Network has focused on improving access to education and training for welfare participants. A number of our recommendations related to strengthening access to education and training have been at partially implemented during the tenure of NYS OTDA Commissioner David Hansell (appointed following the election of Eliot Spitzer as Governor in 2007).

We decided to next focus on how to improve the effectiveness of the state’s welfare to work programs.

New York Decided to Invest Heavily in Workfare Despite Prior Studies Concluding that it was Ineffective as a Welfare to Work Program

More so than other states, New York elected to prioritize workfare (e.g., Work Experience Program in NYC) in meeting the expanded work requirements for individuals under TANF.

NY made this decision despite the fact that studies had shown workfare to be both ineffective and expensive to administer. For instance, a 1991 report from the Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation\(^1\) pulled together the results of evaluations of 45 work-incentive programs. They found that recipients most able to re-enter the labor market (e.g., those with recent job experience) benefited least from workfare programs; they saw no improvement in their earnings from pre-welfare wages, and government outlays for social welfare were not greatly reduced. Programs targeting low-skilled, long-term recipients reaped welfare savings but left the recipients with no real economic advantage. Recipients with some skill but little recent experience enjoyed the greatest gains in their earnings, but, because they are expensive to administer, these programs also offered few short-term savings in welfare costs.

Over the years Hunger Action has done a series of reports on workfare and welfare to work. They are summarized in the appendix to the chapter on this year’s SNAPSHOT survey. The 1997 report recommended “That since workfare is among the least effective of the state’s welfare to work programs, workfare should be used as a last resort in meeting federal work participation requirements….In light of the much higher success rate of programs like grant diversion and on the job training in moving welfare participants into jobs, the state, New York City and counties should take advantage of every opportunity to create such opportunities for workfare participants.”

The NY Times reported on April 12, 1998 that “an extensive examination…found scant evidence that workfare has accomplished one of its central goals -- moving a significant number of people from welfare to full-time work. Workfare has provided limited job training for many of the poorly skilled, poorly educated New Yorkers on public assistance. Much of the work is so menial that it offers few, if

\(^1\) From Welfare to Work, by Judith M. Gueron and Edward Pauly
any, skills that employers demand. Participants receive little help looking for a permanent job; half of them get none at all. And there is no indication that many people have been able to use workfare as a springboard to a real job: a recent state survey, the first of its kind, found that after three months off the rolls, fewer than a third of those who left welfare in New York City found full- or part-time jobs on the books.” The Times added “Across the country, where the welfare caseload has dropped by about a third, local officials rethinking welfare have largely shunned workfare as an expensive program that has not been notably successful at getting people into real jobs.”

**Hunger Action’s 2008 Welfare to Work Report**

Hunger Action Network decided upon a multi-prong approach to evaluate the effectiveness of the state’s present welfare to work efforts.

First, we would seek to update the information that lawmakers had required the Cuomo administration to annually report on the Job Opportunities and Basic Skills (JOBS) program.

Second, we would pull together data and analysis from the state and federal government about NY’s welfare to work programs, as well as reports done by other organizations.

Third, we would survey welfare participants about their experiences with welfare to work. While this would not be a scientific, random sample, it would give us feedback from participants as to how they felt about the program.

**General Overview of work requirements under TANF**

Welfare for the poor in America has always been subject to a complicated set of rules, with exceptions to exceptions. TANF continued that pattern despite the stated intention of giving states more flexibility. Below is a brief, simplistic overview of the TANF program, particularly its welfare to work requirements. Those seeking a more detailed explanation of TANF’s requirements, state options, etc. can look at federal Health and Human Services and NYS OTDA websites. New York is unusual in that the counties administer TANF and other welfare programs rather than having the state do it directly.

Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) is a block grant created by the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996, as part of a federal effort to “end welfare as we know it.” The TANF block grant replaced the Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) program, which had provided cash welfare to poor families with children since 1935. New York’s block grant - $2.4 billion – remains the same regardless of the number of individuals receiving benefits. Thus if caseload expands, the state must either cut individual benefits or use its own funds to pay for the additional participants. The state is generally required to match the federal block grant (a somewhat complicated calculation know as Maintenance of State efforts).

States can use TANF dollars to meet any of the four purposes in federal law: “(1) provide assistance to needy families so that children may be cared for in their own homes or in the homes of relatives; (2) end the dependence of needy parents on government benefits by promoting job preparation, work, and marriage; (3) prevent and reduce the incidence of out-of-wedlock pregnancies and establish annual numerical goals for preventing and reducing the incidence of these pregnancies; and (4) encourage the formation and maintenance of two parent families.”

Key elements of state TANF programs are work requirements and a five year limit on receipt of federal benefits. States were required to have 50% of their caseloads engaged in work activities, though there were some exempt categories (e.g., domestic violence). States were given a work goal reduction to
reflect reductions in caseloads. Participants were required to work 30 hours per week for single parent households; except for parents with a child under five, it was 20 hours per week. New York actually set weekly work requirements in excess of the national standard.

Disabled individuals who did qualify for federal SSI benefits were also required to engage in work, though the state / districts are supposed to “accommodate” their disability.

Most participants must fulfill the first 20 hours of work through various core activities. The nine core activities are unsubsidized employment, subsidized private sector employment, subsidized public-sector employment, work experience, on-the-job-training, job search (limited to six weeks a year) and job readiness, community service programs, vocational education training, and providing child care services to an individual participating in a community service program. The three “non-core” activities are job skills training directly related to employment, education directly related to employment, and attendance at a secondary school or a GED course.

Participants were allowed to count up to one year of college as a core work activity; local districts had the option to allow a second year. Up to 30% of the caseload could be engaged in vocational educational activities that led to employment.

In 2002, TANF was up for reauthorization in Congress for another five years. There seemed to be a consensus among anti-poverty advocates and many of the nation’s Governors that the program should be reauthorized to reflect the fact that many of the participants remaining in the program had multiple barriers to employment. Thus increased investments would be made in support services such as child care and the provision of education and training. Advocates also wanted to make the reduction of poverty an express goal of the TANF program.

Unfortunately, rather late in the process President Bush decided to reframe the debate around higher work requirements. The President also sought to eliminate vocational education and job search from the list of acceptable work activities.

While the House supported President Bush’s proposals, they ran into significant opposition in the Senate. For three years Congress was unable to reach agreement. Eventually, in February 2006, they agreed to a stripped down version of the bill as part of the 2005 deficit reduction package. Changes in work hours were not directly addressed, though the states no longer received credit for caseload reductions since 1996, a major challenge for the state. Work participation rates would increase in annual 5% increments. Starting with 50% in 2006, the increase follows as 55% in 2007, 60% in 2008, 65% in 2009 and 70% in year 2010. There were also changes in what could count as work activities. States were also not given partial credits for participants who worked but didn’t meet the federal minimal requirements, reforms supported by NYS.

In 2006, some of these rules were changed at the federal level, including more restrictive definitions of work and elimination of the caseload deduction credit for the state. There were also subsequent regulatory changes by the Bush administration with respect to education and college.

New York has relied heavily upon workfare (WEP or work experience in NYC) to meet the work participation requirements. These activities have often been make work such as sweeping up leaves, picking up garbage, doing copying and other clerical activities in government offices, cleaning up floors, etc.

Workfare is not treated as a real “job”. Participants do not have the rights of other workers, qualify for social security or unemployment, get a paycheck, receive the same training or equipment, vacation time,
workplace protections, etc. Critics have argued that these positions seldom provide real job experiences or training that make the participant more employable. Even if the goal is to teach participants skills like showing up on time, those skills can be demonstrated after the first month or so in the position.

One of the complaints advocates had about New York is that it failed to take advantage of exemptions or other strategies to “stop the clock” on the federal five year time limit. The Pataki administration felt that bringing participants to the federal time limit as soon as possible would increase pressure on participants to move into jobs. However, unlike other states, New York has a constitutional requirement to provide care for the needy and has its own state-county (NYC) financed system to provide welfare participants to those not eligible for federal aid. Governor Pataki did make some proposals to make the state system more punitive (e.g., less benefits) but these were not enacted. New York’s strategy proved to be a major mistake as it pushed more costs onto the state and local governments. Five times as many individuals now move from TANF to the Safety Net program as move into jobs.

2009-10 State Budget

Hunger Action Network urged OTADA and staff officials to increase funding for employment programs for welfare participants in the 2009-10 state budget. Hunger Action provided an advance copy of the report to OTDA, the Governor’s Office and the State Senate Social Services Committee. Lawmakers decided to provide an additional $30 million in funding for transitional jobs, subsidized employment, and Career Pathways.

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2 In a previous Hunger Action report, one welfare worker who had twice trained her previous supervisors was denied the right to apply for the next job opening since her time on the job did not count for civil service requirements.
EMPOWER (Rochester); Bethesda Missionary Baptist Church (Queens); St. Vincent Food Pantry (Albany); and Sara Skolnick, Westside Campaign Against Hunger (Manhattan).

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Hunger Action Network of New York State
www.hungeractionnys.org

275 State St., Albany NY 12207 – 518 434-7371
75 Varick St., Ste. 1404, NY NY 10013 – 212 741-8192

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Executive Summary

This report examines how well NY has been able to utilize the new federal Temporary Assistance to Needy Families to assist individuals in moving from welfare to work and to becoming economically independent.

Unfortunately, New York has done a poor job with its welfare to work efforts, as has been documented in study after study, including by government agencies. Even the federal government evaluates the overall effectiveness of the state’s welfare to work effort as one of the worst in the country. Like many states, New York’s elected officials have sought to evaluate success primarily by looking at the reduction in welfare caseloads rather than in reduction in poverty. Individuals who have left welfare for work in New York have not escaped poverty due to low wages and limited hours and benefits. Many welfare participants had hoped that federal welfare reform would help them obtain employment that enabled them to support their families.

New York needs to transform its welfare to work programs to address the fact that most people presently receiving welfare benefits have multiple barriers to employment. This requires more investment in education and job training to help participants become employable. New York instead relies heavily on workfare, much more so than other states. Numerous studies show that workfare has a poor track record in helping individuals become employable. It is particularly ineffective for individuals with multiple barriers to employment. The failure of NY’s welfare to work program is now driving up costs for local districts as individuals use up their five year’s of eligibility for federal benefits and then transfer to the state-local financed safety net program.

Over the last year New York has taken some promising steps to expand transitional jobs programs and to increase access to job training and education. However, these steps are too limited and need to be expanded. Much such stronger state leadership is needed in monitoring the performance of local districts. New York needs to undertake a more comprehensive cost benefit analysis of its welfare to work programs. This includes doing a multi-year analysis of programs. Programs such as transitional jobs require a higher up front investment but appear to reduce overall costs in a short period of time.

New York’s Jobs First approach to welfare reform has impeded the effort to make welfare participants economically independent and needs to be formally rejected. State and local officials argue that it is most effective to place participants in any jobs, no matter how dead end or low paying, and then provide them with the education and training needed to help them become more employable. It is true that the most effective programs are those that combine a real job with education and training. Unfortunately Jobs First fails to do so because the state and local districts do not have effective programs to provide participants with needed training and education once they obtain employment.

Hunger Action surveyed former and present welfare participants about their experiences with welfare to work. Participants cite the need for more jobs and more education. They usually find jobs on their own, not through DSS / HRA. They want more vocational training related to computers and to degree / certification programs such as nursing. Local districts fail to provide comprehensive assessments to identify barriers to employment and to help individuals develop plans to overcome such barriers.

New York needs to invest in creating jobs targeted to welfare participants and other disadvantaged New Yorkers. Addressing the problems of poverty needs to be part of the Governor’s Economic Security Cabinet. Local districts need to focus on identifying sustainable employment opportunities in their community and to assist welfare participants in obtaining the training needed for such positions. New York needs to be realistic about the employability of many individuals receiving public assistance and provide a stronger safety net.
Findings

Summary of Findings

Welfare reform has been ineffective in improving the employability and income of most participants.

Welfare participants today are more likely to have multiple barriers to employment than a decade ago. To make such individuals employable require an increased investment in programs to assist such participants in overcoming such barriers.

Subsidized employments (e.g., wage subsidies, transitional jobs) are the most effective welfare to work programs in moving participants into jobs, as well as keeping them there.

New York State has a poor record in providing education and job training to welfare participants, thus failing to help them become more employable. Access to education has become more of a priority during the Spitzer / Paterson administration.

New York has made significant investments in increasing work supports, such as increasing the state supplement for the Earned Income Tax Credit. It raised the state minimum wage, though unfortunately it failed to index it to inflation. It has made it easier for working households to access food stamps. It has supported an expansion of child care subsidies, though the demand for child care assistance continues to exceed the resources provided.

The state’s poor track record with welfare to work is shifting more costs onto local counties / NYC as only a handful of TANF participants find jobs; five times as many merely shift into the county-state funded Safety Net program.

The State’s welfare to work program has a particularly negative impact upon people of color and women.

The state fails to help welfare participants find jobs that enable them to escape poverty. Those leaving welfare generally end up in the lowest-paying industries with little opportunity for advancement or wage increases over time, having acquired few new jobs skills, and often shortly return to welfare. The average wage earned is $8.50 an hour.

The state’s “jobs first” approach negatively affects participants. Pushing participants into low-wage dead end jobs has a negative impact on their long term income. Participants who begin working at higher paying jobs are more likely to secure wage increases.

There is little evidence that workfare increases the likelihood of finding a job. In fact, it can impede finding a job. Workfare is least effective for individuals with multiple barriers to work – which is now the dominant welfare population in NYS.

Welfare cycling or churning – moving on and off of welfare – has increased under TANF.

The percentage of eligible poor New Yorkers receiving welfare has been cut in half since TANF was implemented. Yet while the welfare caseload has been cut 60%, the number of applications has actually increased. During the present economic recession, welfare caseloads have remained relatively stable while the number of food stamp participants has soared to an all time high.
Welfare reform has had little to no impact upon the official rate of poverty. The demand for emergency food has soared since TANF was implemented.

OTDA data is often suspect and incomplete. For some issues local districts enter data not based on what is most accurate but on what the easiest way to get the computer system to accept the input. OTDA often changes its data collection methodologies and terminology, making it difficult to compare data over time.

Findings

A number of problems with the State’s welfare to work program were highlighted by the Assembly Social Services Committee in its call for a November 2008 hearing on welfare to work:

A 2006 report by the federal Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) indicated that New York ranked 45 out of 50 states in work-related measures, including job entry, job retention, earnings gain and success in the workplace.  

New York does not take full advantage of the training, education and work experience options allowable under TANF. It relies almost exclusively on unsubsidized employment, work experience, and community service to meet the federal work participation rate. The number of public assistance (PA) recipients participating in many of the activities that relate to education and training for advancement—such as vocational education, on-the-job training, and job skills training—is quite low. While federal law allows 30% of the public assistance caseload to be engaged in vocational education training, statewide, as of September 2007, only 14% of public assistance recipients were engaged in education and/or training activities (i.e. vocational education, job skills training, and educational training).

Moreover, performance data available on the Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance’s (OTDA) Web site offers little encouragement that PA recipients are able to secure or retain employment. For example, data on New York State's Bridge program, whose activities include job readiness/job search activities, academic services, and short-term skills training, showed that as of July 29, 2008, of the 4,106 participants enrolled, 1,073 (26%) were placed and only 635 (15%) had a 90-day job retention rate.

The Assembly Social Services committee also pointed out New York State spends more than $1.8 billion each year on social services programs funded by Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF). Of that amount, less than $100 million of the $1.8 billion of TANF “surplus” funds allocated by the state is year is used by the state to directly fund employment, training, and work support programs. Actual work programs (those programs that provide necessary skills, education, training, and/or job placement services) receive less than $12 million. Note: OTDA contends that in 2007 more than $76 million of local funds (e.g., Flexible Family Fund block grant) were spent on employment programs and that total statewide expenditures on employment activities was $430 million.

3 OTDA and some national advocates believe the ranking system used by HHS to evaluate welfare to work programs makes New York look somewhat worse than it really is. National advocates estimate that New York would rank in the bottom third to quarter among all the states. It is not that other states are doing exemplary jobs in helping participants move into gainful employment.
At the Assembly hearing, the NYS Legal Aid Society stated that based on their representation of thousands of clients in NYC, the most pressing problems are:

First, public assistance application rules interfere with clients’ ability to secure jobs and keep them;
Second, clients who make it through the application process suffer an unacceptable number of sanctions which affect their ability to leave welfare by disrupting child care, educational activities and exacerbating housing instability;
Third, clients have difficulty accessing education and training necessary to meet their needs;
Fourth, clients who find work suffer unnecessary case closings which prevent them from making a smooth transition from welfare to work and adversely affect the State’s TANF participation rate; and
Fifth, households that do find full time employment are losing out on the opportunity to receive federally-subsidized “transitional benefits.”

When New York and the country “toughened” up the welfare system in 1996, districts in NY made it both harder to apply and qualify for welfare, changing the demographics of those receiving assistance. Instead of a large majority who were largely job ready and used welfare as a short-term transitional program, the majority of adults on the caseload now remain on welfare for an extended period of time and have multiple barriers to employment. Individuals with multiple barriers require stronger job training, job experience and education programs.

Many if not most individuals on welfare are not going to be employable, especially in the near term. In light of this, OTDA should make it a bigger priority to improve and increase the services it provides to participants. A substantial and growing number of cases are child only, with either the parent on disability or the child being raised by grandparents. Children remain the majority of participants. Many other participants suffer from physical, mental and other disabilities and should be receiving disability benefits. The state has taken steps to assist more clients in qualifying for SSI, but many more still need to be classified as such, especially in smaller upstate counties.

It is more difficult for individuals to transition into work when the low level of benefits force households into constant crisis as they scramble to pay landlords and utility companies, feed their families and look for work.

New York has failed to evaluate which programs are most effective in moving individuals into jobs, especially ones that enable households to support themselves. Programs such as on the job training, grant diversion and wage subsidy have a much higher success rate in placing individuals in employment. While a potential argument is that such programs are “too costly,” the state has failed to do any cost-benefit analysis to determine whether such higher up front costs are offset by diminishing costs in a few years as people leave the caseload. A recent study of transitional jobs by the Fiscal Policy Institute shows that they would be cost-effective for the state.

Local DSS officials, especially outside of NYC, are often overwhelmed by providing an array of services to clients who often in emergencies. This includes child and adult protective services. These demands contribute to a reduced investment in and attention to employment programs by the local districts.
Findings from 2008 SNAPSHOT Survey

In the fall of 2008, Hunger Action surveyed 128 present and former participants about their experiences with welfare to work (wtw). Unfortunately, we found many of the same problems as our prior workfare and wtw surveys in 1997 and 2001.

Only 11.5% of survey respondents rated the assessment done by DSS / HRA as good or very good. Almost half can’t remember actually having their barriers to employment assessed.

The two biggest reasons why welfare participants say they are not employed are a lack of jobs (36.7%) and the need for more education (35.2%). Others major barriers cited include the need for more work experience (27.3%), transportation problems (25.8%), wages too low (23.4%) and child care (18.8%).

Compared to prior surveys, individuals were less satisfied with their job training, though slightly more found it led to a job. Less than a quarter (22.7%) reported that training provided by DSS / HRA led to a job. (In a related question, only 24.7% reported that DSS / HRA had helped them become more employable.) Only about one third (33.3%) found the job preparation useful, down from 48% in 2001. Of the limited number of individuals reporting they had found a job, less than 20% (18.5%) said it was due to efforts by DSS / HRA, with most (70.4%) saying that it didn’t pay enough to get them off of welfare.

When asked what job skills had they obtained from DSS / HRA, 25.8% cited resume writing; 24.2% job interview skills, 21.9% job readiness / job preparation skills; 19.5% computer training / typing; and 16.4% for job skills training. A very small percentage cited vocational training (5.5%) or job certification programs such as nursing or home health aide (5.5%).

Almost 2/3 thirds of the respondents (65.2%) cited the need for job training, skills or education to make them employable. 42.8% cited the need for technological training such as computers, with 35.3% citing the need for vocational training (carpentry, nursing, etc.) and 32.5% for education. Similar responses were reported in a related question: 53.8% cited need for technological training; 33.8% for education and 38.4% for vocational skills.

Less than a quarter of the respondents (21%) said that DSS/HRA had given them an opportunity to meet their work requirements by going to school instead of workfare, etc.

Of those individuals asking for education but being rejected by DSS / HRA, the most frequent reason (45.8%) was that they were told they had to work instead. 25% were told that education programs were not available.

Workfare is Ineffective in Helping Participants Obtain Employment, Especially in Living Wage Jobs

Workfare was not an effective program in helping participants become employable before TANF was implemented. It remains ineffective today. (See studies in appendix to this section)

Other DSS / HRA Performance Problems Restricting Access to Jobs

Many welfare participants continue to experience problems in applying and maintaining benefits. These problems make it more difficult for households to focus of finding employment.
A November 2008 report by the NYC Public Advocate’s Office (Barriers to Benefits: A Survey of Clients at New York City Human Resources Administration Job Centers) found long wait times at offices, multiple visits, misplaced and local documents by HRA staff, lack of clear information and knowledge about rules, and nonworking computers.

A 2008 report by Brennan Center Strategic Fund, Inc., (Improving New York City’s Public Benefits System: A Key Role for Help Desks), highlights the many obstacles clients face at HRA Job Centers in NYC. “Confusion among caseworkers and clients about the procedures, deadlines, and timelines associated with public benefit programs” is a major problem. Miscommunication between eligibility and job opportunity specialists and clients about the rules for receiving public benefits can result in the termination or reduction of client’s benefits, particularly when clients are unaware that they have failed to comply with an HRA requirement. The Brennan Center report identifies long wait times as a problem that can be particularly challenging for families with young children. Clients waiting all day at Job Centers are often forced to leave to attend to childcare duties and are then unfairly sanctioned for missing an appointment.4

OTDA data shows a significant increase in the rate of denials and withdrawals of applications.5 While the number of individuals receiving public assistance in NYS declined dramatically during the first decade under TANF - leveling off recently with the downturn in the economy - the number of applications actually increased. However, the number of applications that are denied or withdrawn has increased dramatically. The number of applications went from 410,518 in 1999 to 554,307 in 2007. The rate of denial of applications has increased significantly in NYS after welfare reform, going from 26% in 1999 to 42% in 2007. The denial rate has been considerably higher outside of NYC, increasing from 34% in 1999 to 55% in 2007.6

OTDA claims however that their data overstates the problem since they changed their data reporting with respect to denials and applications – though they admit this has begun to rise.

A related issue is that case closings or churning remains a problem post-welfare reform. Churning refers to welfare participants being cycled on or off welfare with repeated openings and closings of the cases. This can be due to imposing increased administrative burdens on clients (e.g., increased work requirements for individuals to remain eligible for public assistance).

4 The diversionary tactics of the welfare system has been challenged in the courts, primarily in NYC. A lawsuit filed against NYC by the Legal Aid Society (Reynolds v. Giuliani) resulted in a 2005 permanent injunction against some of these activities.

5 According to data compiled by the Federation of Protestant Welfare Agencies, the percent of applications being withdrawn has increased from 7 percent in 1999 to 19 percent in 2007 outside of NYC and from 13% in NYC in 1999 to 17% in 2007. Withdrawals peaked in NYC at 32% in 2004. The denial rate for welfare applications has increased from 26% in 1999 to 42% in 2007. From July 2006 to June 2007, there were 323,841 applications approved while 118,765 were withdrawn and 236,466 were denied. According to OTDA’s 2007 Statistical report, the main reasons for application denials were failure to comply with application requirements, such as failure to appear for interviews or failure to provide documentation (114,061 or 49.5%). 10.9% were denied for financial issues (income or resources) and 4% due to residency issues. OTDA can’t determine the reason for the other 25% of denials due to how they were coded by the caseworker.(p. 6 of 2007 OTDA Statistical Report)

During this time frame, the most common reason for cases closings (328,438) were failure to comply with program requirements (42%), such as failure to recertify; financial issues (21.2%) such as increased earnings or other income; and failure to comply with employment requirements (18.5%)

requirements, recertification). Additionally, people could leave welfare for a short period of time due to earnings but soon find themselves unable to support their households and/or losing employment. According to the Federation of Protestant Welfare Agency’s 2009 report 7, from 2003 to 2008, 21 to 30% of public assistance cases were individuals who had closed their case for greater than one month and then returned.

Sanctioning

Sanction are penalties (e.g., suspension of benefits for a period of time) that are imposed when participants fail to comply with TANF or Safety Net requirements. Reduction of already inadequate benefits pushes such households deeper into poverty and impedes their ability to find employment.

New York has an excessive rate of sanctioning of welfare participants. From July 2006 to June 2007, on a monthly basis there were 32,714 individuals in sanctions, about 14.5% of the adult caseload. (2007 Statistical Report of the Operations of NY Temporary Assistance Program, NYS OTDA, p. 6). This was an increase from 26,800 sanctioned recipients in 1998, a 22% increase in the number of sanctions even though the caseload had been cut by more than half. (The caseload declined 61% between July 1997 and July 2008.) As of February 2009, a quarter of NYC’s engageable caseload was either sanctioned or go through the sanction process. 8

OTDA contends that the rate of sanctioning is overstated due to changes in its reporting methodology. There is consensus however among legal aid attorneys and welfare advocates that sanctioning is a major problem in New York.

Numerous studies have found that the ultimate effect of the sanction process is not to move the most challenged families into the workforce, but to penalize the most challenged TANF families until they are no longer on the welfare caseload. It disproportionately impacts households of color and those with multiple barriers. The sanction is often due to administrative error.

If someone misses a work appointment their benefits can be reduced or terminated for several months even if there is a valid explanation for the incident. In many cases the failure was on the part of HRA or the local districts to properly record the appointment in the first place. Advocates complain that many districts often fail to work with the participant to correct problems (e.g., if you child gets sick, you need to develop an emergency plan for child care). Such sanctioning policy does nothing to assist the individual in becoming more employable.

OTDA contends that many districts do try to work with participants to correct such problems. Further study and corrective action is needed.

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Appendix


- Workfare has a deterrent effect which stops people claiming or encourages them to leave welfare before the workfare phase.
- There is little evidence that workfare increases the likelihood of finding work. It can even reduce employment chances by limiting the time available for job search and by failing to provide the skills and experience valued by employers.
- Subsidized (‘transitional’) job schemes that pay a wage can be more effective in raising employment levels than ‘work for benefit’ programs.
- Workfare is least effective in getting people into jobs in weak labor markets where unemployment is high.
- Workfare is least effective for individuals with multiple barriers to work (i.e., the dominant population in NYS now).
- Welfare recipients with multiple barriers often find it difficult to meet obligations to take part in unpaid work. This can lead to sanctions and, in the most extreme cases, the complete withdrawal of benefits that leaves some individuals with no work and no income.

The Manpower Development Corporation, often hired by governments to evaluate their welfare programs, largely came to the same conclusions. Welfare-to-Work Program Benefits and Costs A Synthesis of Research (David Greenberg, Victoria Deitch, and Gayle Hamilton, Feb. 2009) looked at 28 benefit-cost studies of welfare-to-work programs by MDC (though apparently not transitional jobs programs). Their findings include:

- If a chief goal is to reduce government expenditures, then programs that require individuals to look for jobs immediately and that assign other activities if work is not found are relevant strategies. These programs tended to be beneficial for the government budget but result either in small benefits or in net costs for participants. (Note: this has largely been the NYS model)

- Some mandatory work experience programs — which assign individuals to unpaid jobs, often following a period of job search — resulted in limited benefits for participants but did provide valuable goods and services for the general public. They did not consistently reduce government costs, however.

- If the chief goal is to increase participants’ income, then programs that provide individuals with financial incentives or earnings supplements intended to encourage work appear to best achieve this goal.

- If a chief goal is to balance reducing welfare expenditures with increasing participants’ income, then programs that require individuals to participate initially either in an education or training activity or in a job search activity can meet this goal.

- Mandatory programs that require individuals to participate in General Educational Development (GED) completion and Adult Basic Education prior to job search do not appear to achieve the goal of increasing the income of participants. Nor do they achieve the goal of saving government money.
RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

New York should significantly increase the number of participants engaged in on the job training, wage subsidy, subsidized employment, grant diversion and transitional jobs. 9

New York – and particularly New York City - should reduce reliance upon workfare (WEP) programs, especially with so many present welfare participants having multiple barriers to employment.

The state should formally state that the key goal of welfare to work is to enable participants to become employable in jobs that allow them and their families to become economically self-sufficient.

The state should conduct a cost-benefit and performance analysis of its various welfare to work programs.

The state should expressly reject the Jobs First approach (namely, that any job, no matter how low the pay and benefits or lack of career advancement, is always the best solution) for one that promotes sustainable jobs and requires more upfront access to job training and education.

New York should substantially reduce the rate of sanctioning of welfare to work participants.

The state needs to increase oversight of local districts’ performance in welfare to work. The best and most cost-effective solution would be state take over off administration of welfare and food stamps.

The State should continue to expand the Career Pathways program.10

The State should increase work incentives for welfare participants, including earnings supplements, a higher Earned Income Disregard, Individual Development Accounts, and a higher minimum wage and Earned Income Tax Credit.

New York should increase access to transitional benefits, including child care.

New York should strengthen its job creation efforts, with clear target goals for low-income employment.

New York should work with advocates and other states to reform the federal TANF program to make it supportive of helping participants finding sustainable employment and reducing poverty.

General Recommendations

Hunger Action has long articulated a detailed agenda on how to improve the performance of OTDA. We repeat the recommendations included in our December 2006 report, Improving TANF in New York State. A number of recommendations that related to strengthening access to education and training have

9 The new federal economic stimulus package plus recently released TANF contingency funds provides hundreds of millions of dollars in funding for these activities. Lawmakers did allocate nearly $30 million in funding for various transitional jobs and other job initiatives for welfare participants in the 2009-10 state budget. Stimulus funding may not be available for next year’s state budget however.

10 Increased funding was included in the final 2009-10 state budget, though well short of the $50 million recommended by advocates last year.
been at least partially implemented by OTDA. Much more needs to be done, including expanding access to college for those who would benefit; studies have found that only welfare participants with college find employment at wages above the poverty level.

All local districts should be required to develop a specific plan to increase participation in jobs programs such as wage subsidy, transitional jobs, on the job training, etc. We endorse the recommendations made by Community Voices Heard to improve the Parks Opportunity Program in NYC / HRA, including expanding the city agencies that will provide job placements.

New York should reward work and promote economic self-sufficiency by implementing measures to help TANF clients retain jobs, advance in the workplace, and move toward economic self-sufficiency.\textsuperscript{11} By helping low-income working parents gain the skills necessary to advance beyond low-wage employment, state TANF programs reduce the likelihood of these families returning to cash assistance. In addition, work incentives afford states opportunities to bolster their work participation rates by retaining in the work participation calculation families that have entered the workforce and no longer receive TANF cash assistance.

**OTDA should publish an annual welfare to work progress report.**

OTDA should provide an annual report to the State Legislature detailing the number of participants in each of the welfare to work programs, and what percentage actually moved into unsubsidized employment during a year. This would be similar to the annual report that was required during the Cuomo administration for the JOBS (Jobs Opportunity and Basic Skills) program.

**Strengthen state oversight of local districts. Best solution is state takeover.**

New York is unusual in that it requires the counties (and NYC) to pay roughly half of the state’s share. The counties “demand” administrative control so they can control their fiscal outlays by controlling the number of individuals receiving benefits. This results in 58 districts implementing their own version of TANF and its work rules, subject to oversight by the state. The state has failed to adequately monitor the counties and NYC to ensure compliance with federal and state laws and regulations, preferring a “soft sell” approach to improving local district performance.

Even though the state allows for county / NYC administration of welfare programs, it is still legally required to operate as a single state agency. In light of the consistently poor performance by local districts in assisting participants become employable, the state needs to enact far more stringent requirements with respect to the services and programs that counties offer as part of their welfare to work efforts. This include substantially curtailing if not eliminating the Flexible Family Fund Program provided to the counties to ensure that there is sufficient funding of job and training programs.

More than two decades ago the NYS Bar Association did a report analyzing the fair hearings of various state agencies. When it came to DSS, the Bar concluded that local districts are “abusing the system and causing serious harm to the needy and to the system itself.” The report found:

> “Local agencies are simply not following the governing law in a substantial percentage of the cases. In large numbers, clients have their benefits erroneously denied, reduced or terminated. The same errors occur repeatedly…Some local agencies, particularly NYC, appear to have made a cynical, cruel choice: decisions are allowed to be made wrongfully to deny, reduce or terminate

\textsuperscript{11} The Center for Budget and Policy Priorities reports success in other states using this approach.
benefits, knowing that many decisions will not be challenged, and therefore, money will be saved (NYS Bar, Report of the Task Force on Administrative Adjudication, pp. 176-178, July 1988).

There is little evidence that the problems found by the Bar Association with local Departments of Social Services have been significantly reluctant.

Hunger Action has long favored the state takeover of the administration of TANF and other federal programs from the counties and NYC. This would ensure uniformity of services across the state rather than having 58 different districts running their own program. It would save tax dollars by eliminating duplicative layers of administrative bureaucracy while improving training and data collection.

**Strengthen State Data Collection for Local Districts**

Too often the data collected by OTADA is of limited value due to the failure to standardize how information is reported. Too often data is entered into the system in a particular way because a local district caseworker can make the computer easily accept the information, or the counties code various activities in different manners. Hunger Action has been routinely informed for more than 2 decades that the various data we have sought from OTDA is not accurate due to such coding problems. There needs to be improved coordination of data collection, use and analysis among local, state and federal authorities. This will require improving HRA’s data collection and management systems in particular.

**Lower NY’s Work Participation Hours to Comply with Federal Standards**

Currently many counties require recipients to participate in work activities for more than 30 hours a week, despite their right, under Federal and State law, to get full participation credit once they have participated for twenty hours (if the household has a child under six) or thirty hours (for all other households). By reducing the hourly requirements to the lower federal level, individuals will be better able to balance schooling and training with work and parenting, thus increasing their likelihood of developing employable job skills.

**Expand and Strengthen the Career Ladder Program**

OTDA has begun to implement the Career Ladder program that various advocacy groups, including Hunger Action, convinced the State Assembly to fund in the 2008-09 state budget. We had recommended $50 million in initial funding. We estimated (based on return-on-investment methodologies developed in Michigan with the TANF population) that the proposed $50 million investment would generate more than $200 million in benefits to state taxpayers, including reductions in welfare assistance and increases in tax revenues related to increases in earnings for participants.

The legislature appropriated $2.5 million (by reducing funding for various basic education programs) and the NYS Department of Labor matched that with WIA (Workforce Investment Act) funds. Funding for the program was eliminated in the proposed State Budget but the final version increased funding to $10 million.

**Strive to Get 30% of Welfare Participants into Vocational Education as Federal Law Permits**

Hunger Action appreciates OTDA’s recent efforts to expand access to education, as well as state lawmakers providing funding for the Career Pathways program. We would go much further. Under federal TANF regulations, New York can count 30 percent of its welfare participants as meeting work
requirements when engaged in education and training activities. Counties should be directed to reach that goal.

State policy directives on education and training options should be displayed at local social services offices so people receiving welfare can know the regulations.

New York State should make the Work-Study, Internship and Externship Law permanent rather than requiring the legislature to renew it every two years. This law counts the hours students spend in work-study, internship and externship programs towards the welfare work requirements.

**Expand Access to Education and Training**

New York State should take full advantage of recent federal changes by the Bush administration to education and the federal work rules for TANF that were issued in February 2008. Changes that should be made include:

1. Ensuring that a fair evaluation be provided to anyone expressing an interest in education and training and that no such request be unreasonably denied. This language is necessary to ensure that clients’ right to education and training are upheld and protected in Social Services Law. Advocates have too often seen cases where denials were made inconsistently and without clear standards or criteria. This measure protects against an arbitrary denial of access to education and training and would be incorporated into the work-study and internship provisions of the law.

2. Explicitly including hours spent on homework expected or required by an educational program as an allowable work activity, as such hours are considered countable under the Final TANF Rule. OTDA has already authorized districts to do this, but legislation is still needed. First, making this a statutory provision would make it less subject to changing administrations and political tides. Second, it is hard to conceive of a reason why the counting of these hours should not be mandatory.

3. Including 4-year colleges in the existing list of college programs that welfare participants are allowed to attend for up to one year as a countable work activity.

**Place Welfare Participants in Sustainable Wage Jobs**

Social Service districts should be required to consider nontraditional education, training and employment opportunities for sustainable wage jobs in their public assistance employment programs. The state should pay particular attention to assisting women in obtaining non-traditional employment. Studies have found that women, including those with a history of welfare receipt, work longer and more consistently when they find jobs that pay higher starting wages. Research has shown that for both low-wage workers and public assistance recipients alike, those employed in certain industries – such as business services, health services and special trade contractors including plumbers and electricians – are more likely to escape low-wage status as they gain experience in the industry.

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12 A 1827 by Assembly Chair Keith Wright incorporates theses provisions.

13 Hunger Action Network of NYS supported legislation on this issue by Senator Montgomery and Assembly Member Millman (S.3201/A.3366) that passed both Houses in 2007. OTDA and Mayor Bloomberg opposed it as undercutting the Jobs First approach to welfare to work. Governor Spitzer vetoed the bill.
Improve Assessment and Employability Plans

The state must improve its efforts to adequately assess each TANF applicant’s real life barriers to employment and to develop work plans designed to meet those specific barriers. The State needs to require stronger and more comprehensive assessment by local districts. The assessment that is conducted for each recipient should review the highest level of education he or she has achieved, basic skills and literacy proficiency, employment-related or other advanced skills, and career interests and goals. During the assessment process, caseworkers should make significant efforts to develop a list of education and training programs that would prepare the recipient to achieve his or her career goals.

For the barrier removal process to work effectively, service providers must first determine the type and severity of barriers that impede clients’ transition to work, making assessment an important first step. Several states have placed an increased emphasis on the assessment process and have developed programs to help current or prospective TANF clients address employment barriers and participate in countable work activities. These states conducted more up-front and thorough assessment to identify barriers and determine job readiness, and provided more staff training on the appropriate use of screening and assessment tools.

In several cases, these changes included the development of self-assessments and Web-based, automated tools.

The state should take steps to improve the individual’s Employability Plan. The state’s TANF plan should make clear that there is a preference for participation in vocational education and training in all cases where the assessment indicates that the recipient would benefit from these programs. All participants should be directly informed by caseworkers about education and training programs that could count as “vocational educational training” or “on-the-job training” as a core activity and “job skills training or education related to employment” or “satisfactory school/GED attendance” as a non-core activity. At this stage, participants should also receive assistance in enrolling in an approved education or training program and setting up a manageable work and academic schedule.

Establish a Comprehensive Self-Sufficiency Plan for Each Participant

This policy should be enacted for each district as well as for individual participants. Each individual plan would include a detailed strategy for helping the TANF recipient achieve gradual career advancement with regular wage increases. Specifically, the plan would include: 1) career and salary goals with gradual interim benchmarks, 2) a step-by-step plan for the client to follow to achieve those goals, including a means for the client to obtain needed transportation and child care, along with

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14 Davila v. Eggleston. This class action lawsuit vs. HRA in NYC was filed in 1996, seeking to ensure that single parents with children who receive public assistance obtain the education and training they need to transition from welfare to economic security. The 2003 settlement requires the City to conduct appropriate employability assessments and to honor, to the extent possible, a parent’s preference for attending school to satisfy the work requirement. http://www.urbanjustice.org/pdf/litigation/DavilaSummary.pdf

15 For example, Michigan described a Web-based, self-directed screening tool that uses 50 questions to identify client barriers. Arizona described a similar tool—called the Self-Sufficiency Matrix composed of 17 self-sufficiency domains—completed jointly by the family and a case manager. Several states reported introducing assessment tools earlier in the intake process, sometimes at the initial interview. Some states also created assessment tools that evaluate attributes such as educational aptitude and assess potential employment barriers such as substance abuse and domestic violence. Given the new timeframes for calculating caseload reduction credits and the resulting increased work participation rates, assessment and barrier removal take on added significance.
participation in education and/or training to enhance job skills, and 3) responsibilities of participant, employer and social services agency. As part of the process of designing the self-sufficiency plan, the local district would conduct a comprehensive assessment to identify any and all barriers to employment and a means for overcoming those barriers.

For all clients, a minimum goal of achieving an earned income level that puts them above the Federal Poverty Level would be established. OTDA would be required to maintain oversight of local districts' completion of these self-sufficiency plans, which would also satisfy the employability plan requirements set forth in Social Services Law for all program participants.

**Increase Work Incentives for Welfare Participants**

(see the chapter on worker supplements for more details)

**Implement Earnings Supplements.**

The Center for Budget and Policy Priorities reports that some of the initiatives that states have developed to help TANF clients successfully transition off the rolls rely on earnings supplements or other financial incentives. In addition to direct benefits for clients, earnings supplements can have indirect benefits for states seeking to meet federal work participation requirements. Specifically, most clients eligible for the supplements are working at least 30 hours per week, and earnings supplements that meet the federal criteria for assistance can be funded using TANF or MOE dollars. This enables working clients to be counted in the state’s work participation rate calculation.

Wage supplements are cash payments given on top of earnings from wages, usually intended to raise a participant’s income to a certain level (such as 135% of the federal poverty line). Supplements can be a flat amount to all participants, or they can vary based on work hours, number of family members, or other criteria. In a wage supplement program, the participant keeps all of his or her earnings from wages and receives the supplement on top of that amount.

More information on wage supplement programs can be found in Hunger Action’s December 2006 report, Improving TANF in NYS.

**Make Work Pay by Strengthening the Earned Income Disregard**

a. Abolish The 185% Cap on Earnings

When New York State passed its welfare reform initiative in 1997, working families on public assistance were promised that they could earn their way up to poverty level with the state’s increased earned income regard. Participants in general lose $1 of benefits for every $ 1 of earnings. The EID allows them to exclude part of their earnings from this calculation. However, because the Social Services Law makes families with incomes over 185% of the standard of need ineligible for assistance, many working families become ineligible for assistance before they ever earn up to the poverty level.

The Standard of Need is defined as the level of benefits provided, which in general have not been raised in 18 years. The increase in this basic grant in the 2009-2010 will slightly alleviate but not eliminate the problem. The poverty level is adjusted upward every year, and as a result, the poverty level is significantly higher than 185% of the standard of need in every county. Recipients become ineligible

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16 See Assembly Bill 1296 of 2009-10.
17 Social Services Law §131-a(8)(a)(iii).
for assistance at 185% of their district’s standard of need before they every reach the poverty level. In no county of the state is a public assistance household of three with wages allowed to reach the poverty level. In fact, the 185% cap results in most families losing public assistance eligibility when they are $300 - 400 under the poverty level.

b. Increase the Earned Income Disregard

All earned income should be disregarded until a family’s income is equal to the federal poverty guidelines for its family size. Above that point, 50% of income should be disregarded until families reach 135% of the federal poverty guidelines. Childless public assistance recipients should be given the same earned income disregard as households with children.

The Connecticut Jobs First program adopted an enhanced EID that allowed welfare recipients to keep the full amount of their earnings as well as their cash assistance up to the Federal Poverty Level for up to 21 months in addition to their full welfare and Food Stamp grant, leading to increased employment, earnings and income.

Increase Other Work Incentives such as the State Minimum Wage, Earned Income Tax Credit, Child Care Subsidies

The details on such incentives are beyond the scope of this report. Yet more must be done to raise the living standards of all New Yorkers, including those moving from welfare to work. Since access to child care and transportation remains a major barrier to low-income individuals seeking working, public funding for these programs should be increase. We support restoring the state purchasing power of the minimum wage to $10/hour and indexing it for inflation to prevent future erosion.

Add a Job Training Component to the Wheels to Work Program

Hunger Action Network is pleased that New York and many districts have implemented Wheels to Work to provide welfare participants seeking employment with assistance in obtaining a low-cost car. Having a car can increase initial salaries by several dollars an hour. However, districts have failed to implement the second part of our Wheels to Work proposal, which was to use the program to provide training to participants as auto mechanics. Mechanics receive a good starting wage, and the industry has job opening and it will to provide job training. A better long term solution is a massive improvement in the quality of our mass transit system.

Provide State Funding for Individual Development Accounts

IDAs are dedicated savings accounts similar in structure to IRAs. Generally, the account holder chooses to save toward one of three goals: purchasing a first home, continuing education or job training, or starting or expanding a small business.

The Governor and the Legislature should allocate $5 million in economic development funds to foster the promotion and creation of IDAs. These funds should be used for a pilot project to provide funding to existing IDA programs and to create new programs.

New York State currently allows individuals to open IDA accounts, but the State does not provide funding. New York continues to lag behind many other states is the support of Individual Development Accounts.
Increase Access to Transitional Benefits

OTDA and the local districts have been supportive of providing individuals leaving public assistance for employment with access to transitional benefits, including Food Stamps, Medicaid and child care subsidies. More still needs to be done. The process should be made as automatic as possible.

Local districts should be required to provide information to all public assistance recipients prior to leaving welfare about the opportunity to receive such benefits. The information should clearly explain to all individuals that these benefits will be provided for a specified period of time after they go off public assistance, along with a summary of eligibility requirements. Local districts would be required to ensure automatic enrollment for all available transitional benefits for which a family is eligible. OTDA would be required to produce publicly available statewide data documenting how many individuals receive transitional benefits once they leave public assistance. This information should be released monthly, with statistics showing participation levels by county and statewide. Finally, local districts would be prohibited from denying transitional Food Stamp benefits to those leaving public assistance solely on the basis of their missing a recertification appointment. Maximizing access to federal benefits such as food stamps (now SNAP) has the advantages of drawing funds into the state and low-income neighborhoods, strengthening the local economies.

Substantially reduce the use of sanctioning

Sanctioning should be viewed as a tool to assist individuals in becoming employable, rather than a punishment inflicted at the first sign of trouble. Steps must be taken to eliminate sanctions due to administrative errors by local districts, or miscommunication between districts and clients.

A high rate of sanctioning is an indication that the local district and state are performing poorly in helping participants move into employment. Corrective action should be triggered to improve local district performance. While penalties may need to be imposed on districts with high rates of sanctioning, the state should also provide training and assistance to help districts reduce their rate of sanctioning.

The State should adopt policies that reduce the adverse effect sanctions have on moving people from welfare to work:

• Eliminate incremental, durational sanctions. Follow the lead of other states which have rejected punitive, durational sanctions and instead have adopted sanctions that last only until an individual complies with program requirements.
• Short of eliminating durational sanctions, revive the “clean slate” policy, so that periodically clients have the opportunity to re-set the sanction clock and start over.
• Require local departments of social services such as HRA to address underlying operational problems that lead to excessive sanctions. Specifically, HRA should be required to eliminate autoposting and should address mailing problems.

Sanctioned families should be viewed as families in need of services and support to transition into the workforce. The state has already begun to provide intensive case management services to help address this problem. Case management services should include home visits, specialized health and mental health assessments, increased support with job search and job retention activities, and assistance with obtaining quality child care.

18 Amend SSL Section 342.
Job Creation

A separate report is needed on how to improve the state’s job creation efforts, especially as it relates to low-income residents and neighborhoods. Many upstate cities do produce jobs for individuals that live outside of the city, contributing to a vast array of social and economic problems.

Green jobs is one area that has been cited as needing to be targeted to low-income individuals, people of color, since they are the individuals who live in the communities with the highest rate of pollution and environmental problems. Hunger Action Network supports the proposal developed by the Center for Working Families to help energy retrofit up to one million homes in NYS. This would create up to 30,000 new jobs that could help provide entry level employment for welfare participants and others.

New York Should Strengthen Its Job Creation efforts Targeted to Low-Income New Yorkers

Economic development subsidies provided by the state, county and municipal governments should require that a certain percentage of the jobs created or retained be provided to low-income and local residents. Hiring goals for low-income people should be instituted for our government funded projects (e.g., federal transportation dollars).

We applaud the legislature for including funding for a green jobs corps for welfare participants in the state budget. We support the proposal to create 30,000 green jobs by energy retrofitting one million homes in New York State over the next five years.19

Hunger Action has long supported overhauling the state’s multi-billion dollar economic development programs at the state and county levels. There is little accountability for this enormous expenditure of billions of dollars and no strategical plan for job creation. Performance standards should be required and clawback provisions enacted to recover a proportionate share of the public subsidy if the project fails to achieve its agreed upon job creation or retention goals. We need an open and participatory process to adopt a formal job creation strategy for New York State and local regions. The public should democratically decide what public investments we should make to create jobs. We support passage of the Industrial Development Agency Accountability legislation.20

We support the proposal to establish a new working group within the Governor’s Economic Security Cabinet to directly deal with poverty and welfare. This would include job creation and workforce development initiatives targeting welfare participants and other disadvantaged workers.

Job Creation through Microenterprise Development

NY should initiate a $20 million statewide microenterprises technical assistance and lending development fund to support microenterprise training, TA and lending. This fund should be made available to all microenterprise development organizations through a statewide RFP. Regionally based training focused and lending focused organizations should work together to develop collaborative partnerships to meet the needs of local entrepreneurs. This program should replace the Entrepreneurial Assistance Program as the primary funding source for microenterprise development organizations in NYS. The EAP program, while extremely effective, has been underfunded since its inception and has severely limited the number of organizations that have access to the funding. Based on past research on the efficacy of EAP and other microenterprise development programs

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20 Assembly bill 3659 / S1241
Change the National TANF Program to Improve Welfare to Work

America’s safety net often fails to meet basic needs, reward work, or strengthen families and communities. Too many working families earn low wages, leaving them unable to support their households. Today’s job market is filled with poor quality jobs, many offering little opportunity for advancement. We need to improve the skills and incomes of low-income youth and adults, and build pathways to reconnect our more vulnerable individuals. We need to create more equitable labor markets, not only with respect to wages but also with respect to work schedules, leave and sick pay.

The TANF program is up for reauthorization again in 2010. Anti-poverty advocates will seek to revisit some of the basic premises and goals of the program (e.g., poverty reduction, strength of safety net, job creation). Broader goals may be proposed such as a reduction of poverty by 50% within ten years or the creation of a children’s allowance as many other industrial countries already have. There will also be many recommendations with respect to work participation quotas; what is defined as work, including what education and training counts; what exemptions should be provided; size of the block grant; provision of services such as child care and other transitional benefits; etc.

A recent paper by the Center for Law and Policy outlined some recommendations to be addressed as part of TANF reauthorization. Several are included below.

Improve Workforce Education and Training Programs

Congress should align adult education, job training, and higher education policies to create pathways to the postsecondary educational credentials that are increasingly the door to the middle class, and stable employment in jobs that pay family sustaining wages. Workforce development, economic development, and community development should also be aligned. Workforce Investment Act, English as a Second Language (ESL) and GED-oriented adult education programs should be refocused on promoting transitions to postsecondary education and training; and workforce investment programs that currently emphasize rapid labor market attachment should be refocused on developing education and training pathways from low-wage to high-skilled jobs and implementing holistic programs such as transitional jobs programs that help individuals address barriers to employment and get connected to jobs.

Improve TANF and other safety net programs so that all families have necessary works supports and TANF focuses on positive outcomes for families and reducing poverty.

Since TANF started in 1996, the share of single mothers who are employed has increased dramatically, but they have joined a labor market full of low-wage jobs that do not provide enough income to make ends meet, jobs that often force workers to choose between their jobs and their responsibilities as parents. The next TANF reauthorization should give states more flexibility to develop welfare-to-work programs that meet the needs of a diverse group of recipients, engage participants in skill-building activities, and shift the focus from work participation rates to outcomes and poverty reduction.

States should have flexibility to exempt from time limits those who comply with program requirements but still need help to meet family needs. This includes people in education and training programs that require extra time for completion. States should also have increased flexibility to exempt part of their caseloads from time limits on the basis of special needs, such as multiple barriers to work, including care giving responsibilities. Time limits on transitional benefits should also be extended since many workers fail to obtain them from their employer after only the first year of employment.

21 CLASP Federal Policy Recommendations for 2009 and Beyond
OTDA Employment & Training Initiatives

For this report, OTDA provided us with a list of their welfare to work programs. We have supplemented that with additional information, including information about initiatives by local districts, primarily HRA in NYC.

State Allocation of TANF Surplus Funding for Employment

The state has increasingly used the TANF surplus from the block grant to provide fiscal relief to the state, counties and NYC rather than funding welfare to work programs or raising benefits to participants (as many other states have done). The state’s annual billion dollar plus TANF block grant surplus has primarily been used to pay for existing programs (e.g., in child welfare), tax credits (EITC) and a rapidly increasing block grant to the counties (FFS or Flexible Fund for Family Services) rather than employment programs. According to data compiled by the Fiscal Policy Institute, state funding for TANF employment initiative, services and statewide contact through the block grant decreased from $322 million in 2000-01 to $158 million in 2007-08. The FFFS does provide some of its funding for these programs. OTDA told Hunger Action that for fiscal year 2007, total local spending on employment services (including local spending, contracts and summer youth) exceeded $430 million; we have requested documentation of this figure.

In 2005, New York reported using less than one-tenth of one percent of its total TANF non-assistance funding—about $1.6 million—on education and training. (Calculated from data from the Administration for Children and Families by TWA’s STEPS Clearinghouse. The total includes federal, state maintenance of effort, and separate state program funds.)

Proposed direct funding for employment in the 2009-10 state budget was $45.5 million, with $30 million of that for employment services. There was $10 million for homeless services, and $6.2 million for transportation. Direct education funding was basically eliminated. FFFS was proposed at $1.32 billion, with $356 million for child care rolled in. The $2.5 million provided in 2008-09 state budget for the Career Pathways Initiative was accompanied by a similar cut in funding for various basic literacy and ESL programs.

2009-2010 State Budget

The recently passed state budget including a significant increase in funding for transitional jobs, job creation, wage subsidy and Career Pathways.

- Wage Subsidy/Transitional Jobs: The enacted budget increases funding for this program by $10 million in TANF, to $14 million.
- Career Pathways: TANF funding is increased by $7.5 million, to $10 million.
- Each of the following new programs will be established using a blend of TANF and General Fund monies.
  - Green Jobs Corps Program: $5 million TANF, $2 million state
  - Health Care Jobs Program: $5 million TANF, $2 million state
- In addition, these two new programs rely on TANF exclusively:
  - Transitional Jobs Program: $5 million
  - Nurse-Family Partnership Program: $5 million
- There is a new General Fund appropriation of $1.5 million for employment, training, and work-readiness initiatives, which targets low income parents in the support of their children.
Wage Subsidy Program (WSP) with Transitional Jobs

Since 2001 not-for-profit community based organizations (CBO) have operated Wage Subsidy Programs (WSP) to place public assistance recipients and other low-income individuals with employment barriers into jobs. Using a pool of funds to subsidize wages, WSP providers recruit and enroll participants, develop jobs with employers, and provide ongoing services to ensure successful entry into unsubsidized employment. During the subsidy period, which averages three months, representatives from the CBO work with the participant and the employer to address any issues that could impact the transition to unsubsidized employment.

This was an initiative that Hunger Action Network and others had promoted as transitional jobs. Unfortunately, the legislators decided to appropriate $25 million through budget language rather than passing the Empire State Transitional Jobs Bill which detailed how the program should be operated. The Department of Labor under the Pataki administration then went in a different direction (e.g., more wage subsidies, including for the private sector, rather than creating transitional jobs that incorporate more extensive education and training). At the request of Hunger Action Network and others, OTDA did allocate one million of this year’s $4 million RFP for transitional employment. (TE).

The most recent reporting data from OTDA shows that in NYC, $16 million was expended for wage subsidies. The target goal for the number of people placed in unsubsidized employment was 1732; 1297 were so placed. For the rest-of-state (i.e., outside of NYC), the expenditure was $6 million. The goal was to transition 590 individuals to unsubsidized employment; the programs placed 547.

Transitional Employment. Like the WSP, TE places individuals in time-limited wage paying jobs. Participants learn the customs and routines of work, acquire work skills, and establish an employment record that improves their competitiveness in private sector employment. Unlike WSP, the TE position is temporary and serves only as a vehicle to finding permanent employment. There is no expectation of the employer to retain the employee at the conclusion of the subsidy period. The goal is to provide the participants with learning opportunities, pay, and the support necessary to transition to full-time, permanent employment. Similar to how a temporary staffing agency operates, the TE model allows for the same worksites to be used again and again, establishing a reusable employment training ground.

For both programs, Job Readiness Training (JRT) is required. The WSP or TE agency is asked to provide JRT for individuals who need help improving job search and job retention skills. OTDA seeks programs that can engage participants into employment quickly, and do not expect JRT to extend beyond 3 weeks. JRT is normally conducted in a structured group setting and includes instruction in completing employment applications, resume writing, job interviewing techniques and life skills. JRT programs improve job placement and retention success by improving self-confidence and promoting personal responsibility. The WSP agency must educate participants concerning eligibility for State and federal Earned Income Tax Credits and assist them in the application process.

The job must provide an average of 30 hours of work per week over a 30-day period. For wage subsidy, it must pay at least $8.00 or minimum wage, which ever is more. For transitional employment, the pay must be at least minimum wage.

Contractors in both programs assist participants in arranging needed support services and document all service needs and efforts made in the participant file. Services include referrals to child care, career counseling, referrals to other services and assistance with transportation.
Wage Subsidy Requirements

a. Post-Employment Services

WSP agencies must maintain regular contact with participants once they start working to foster their successful transition to the world of work. Newly employed participants benefit from job coaches or case managers who provide support, advocacy, motivation and training in areas such as life skills and workplace survival skills. The WSP contractor must design a systematic case management process for case managers or job coaches to follow to assess client needs and ensure client access to needed services. All barriers, service needs, and services provided must be clearly documented in the participant file. Post-employment services include:

- Tracking and monitoring the progress of the employee which includes observing the participant on the job and meeting with the site supervisor;
- Providing a written evaluation of the participant’s job knowledge, skills and abilities;
- Coordinating the receipt of transitional benefits and/or other available programs with the local DSS;
- Developing a transition plan that moves the participant from subsidized to unsubsidized work;
- Developing linkages with work-based education and training providers to connect WSP participants with the services to improve job performance and to promote advancement.

Transitional Jobs requirements

a. Site Development

Transitional Employment (TE) contract agencies must develop job sites within their own organization or with non-profit, public or private employers. The TE contract agency may serve as the employer during the subsidy period and/or the organization serving as the worksite may hire the participant themselves and receive reimbursement for the wages paid to the employee during the subsidy period from the TE contract agency. The sites must assign a mentor to work with the participant and the contract agency’s case manager on work performance and workplace issues. Contract agencies should develop sites that can serve as a reusable resource to place and train participants on a continuing basis.

b. Post-Employment Services

While the participant is active in the TE subsidized work experience, the TE agency must work with the client to search for and procure unsubsidized employment. The developed Employability Plan must be amended to an Individualized Transition Plan to reflect the completion of the subsidy period and transition to unsubsidized employment. TE agencies must maintain regular contact with participants and the assigned mentor based on need once they start working to foster their successful transition to the world of work. Newly employed participants must be provided with the support, advocacy, motivation and training in areas such as life skills and workplace survival skills. The TE contractor must design a systematic case management process for case managers or job coaches to follow to assess client needs and ensure client access to needed services. All barriers, service needs, and services provided must be clearly documented in the participant file.
Post-employment services include:

- Tracking and monitoring the progress of the employee which includes observing the participant on the job and meeting with the site supervisor;
- Providing a written evaluation of the participant’s job knowledge, skills and abilities;
- Coordinating the receipt of transitional benefits and/or other available programs with the local DSS;
- Developing a transition plan that moves the participant from subsidized to unsubsidized work;
- Developing linkages with work-based education and training providers to connect TE participants with the services to improve job performance and to promote advancement.

d. Worksite Partnership Agreement (TE)

OTDA will provide each TE agency with a Worksite Partnership Agreement that must be completed with each participating employer to ensure that the employer agrees to:

- Provide a mentor to work with the participant and the TE agency’s case manager on work performance and workplace issues;
- Provide a description of job responsibilities for each person assigned;
- Provide enough work to engage the participant for the required hours of participation; and
- Provide a written evaluation of the participant’s job performance.

HIV/AIDS Welfare to Work Program (HIV/WTW)

The HIV/WTW Program was developed in partnership with New York State Department of Health’s AIDS Institute to provide a wide range of employment related supports and services to individuals with HIV/AIDS that are interested in entering/reentering the workforce. Participants receive an array of services including intensive case management and job placement/job retention services, are connected to necessary training, and provided with coordinative services on an individualized basis that will lead to employment and long-term job retention. An annual appropriation of $1.4M currently supports 7 projects.

The performance summary provided by OTDA showed that 125 were enrolled in the program, with 51 being placed in a job. The average reported wage was $9.91 an hour.

Built on Pride (BOP)

Built on Pride offers pre-apprenticeship, apprenticeship and self-sufficiency training to prepare public assistance recipients for employment opportunities in the skilled trades. The Building & Construction Trades Council of Nassau and Suffolk Counties, the BOP contract agency, has developed a connection with union(s) to provide job opportunities for successful BOP graduates. BOP serves primarily adults from welfare or other low-income families, but certain BOP programs have incorporated the pre-apprenticeship phase into the high school curriculum for seniors wishing to pursue these careers. Contracts are performance based and contractors earn reimbursement as participants reach training completion and job retention benchmarks. This two year project is funded with an appropriation of $1M.
The report provided by OTDA showed a $2 million funding level. The goal was to have 300 enrolled in pre-apprentice program, 197 did. The goal was to have 220 complete the program, 146 did. Retention rate was low. Goal was to 150 complete a 90 day retention, 39 did.

OTDA eliminated funding for this program in 2009-10.

**Education for Gainful Employment (EDGE)**

The EDGE program was designed to provide TANF eligible individuals with the education and training services needed to obtain and retain employment. Instruction is provided to individuals who are not working as a means of improving their employability, and to those currently employed as a means of improving job performance, retention and advancement. Contractors are reimbursed on a performance basis and earn award funds as participants make educational gains and obtain and/or retain employment.

For 2008, in the rest of state, the program had a goal of 1,770 job placements. It placed 783 full time and 133 part time. Its expenditure was $13.3 million. For NYC, it had a goal of 1505 job placements, placing 474 full-time and 43 part-time, with expenditures of $11.4 million.

**Transportation Initiatives**

**Wheels for Work**- The Wheels for Work (WfW) program is designed to assist TANF eligible individuals with obtaining personal vehicles which are necessary for transportation to and from employment. Services include: affordable auto loans; car donation programs; car repair assistance; car insurance and assistance with license and registration fees; driver education; financial counseling; basic car maintenance classes; and child safety seats.

This was an initiative promoted by Hunger Action Network and SENSES based on a model from Burlington Vermont. Unfortunately, the state has not yet implemented the second part of the model, which was to use the program to provide job training for welfare participants as auto mechanics. There are a lot of job openings for auto mechanics and the industry is willing to help pay for training. Entry level wages are also significantly higher than the average wage that welfare participants obtain. Hunger Action continues to request that the second part of this program be implemented.

**Community Solutions for Transportation**- The Community Solutions for Transportation program (CST) is designed to encourage counties and regional areas to collaborate efforts to develop transportation solutions that meet the needs of TANF-eligible families as they transition to work and retain employment. CST may include vanpool and carpool programs; transit pass programs; donated car or auto loan programs; modified public transportation services; drivers training and/or defensive driving instruction and guaranteed ride programs. In addition, $2 million was awarded to Rochester-Genesee Regional Transportation Authority (R-GRTA) to provide bus passes and transportation-related services to seven local districts. Centro of Oneida was awarded $125,000 to provide transportation related services to TANF eligible individuals in Oneida County.

Unfortunately, transportation remains a major barrier for welfare participants seeking employment.

The 2009-10 state budget increased funding for the Wheels for Work project by $3 million to $7 million.

**Educational Resources for Adult and Family Literacy (ER)**

The ER program focuses on improved literacy as a first step towards the acquisition of job-related skills and employment. To achieve this goal, providers may offer adult literacy programs (adult basic
education, English as a Second Language, GED preparation), workplace literacy programs (basic literacy and technical skills workers need to retain jobs, advance in their careers or increase productivity), and/or family literacy programs designed to engage children in age-appropriate educational programs while helping parents build the educational and related skills necessary to successfully assume their role as parents, workers and community members.

The NYC program had a goal of 1209 job placements. It placed 279 full-time and 61 part-time, for expenditure of $4.2 million. Rest of State had a goal of 730 and placed 198 full-time and 48 part time, for expenditure of $2.4 million.

**Local Interagency VESID Employment Services (LIVES)**

The LIVES program addresses the employment related needs of the individuals with physical and/or mental health issues by developing the steps these individuals need to take to overcome barriers, and connecting participants with the required programs, activities and services. LIVES targets services of specialized agencies to conduct assessments to identify and address the employment-related needs of individuals with significant barriers to employment. The program provides intensive case management and supports to engage clients in the most appropriate range of services to help them prepare for and successfully participate in employment. Currently, 11 agencies operate the LIVES program throughout New York State.

In the most recent report, for rest of state, had goal of 706 individuals with plan of employment, 242 did it. For NYC, goal of 757, 258 did it.

**BRIDGE**

The Bridge Program assists local social services districts in meeting work participation and job placements goals by providing TANF-eligible individuals with the skills needed to gain employment. In 2008 $6.533M was made available to support Bridge. The University Center for Academic and Workforce Development (UCAWD) of SUNY is responsible for Bridge, which operates at each Educational Opportunity Center, at certain community colleges, and other selected sites throughout the State. There are currently 21 Bridge projects in place providing services to 31 counties.

The Bridge 2008 Program performance statistics showed enrollment of 3,466, with 714 placements and 399 first retentions.

**Advanced Technology Training and Information Networking (ATTAIN)**

ATTAIN is administered by the State of New York University Center for Academic and Workforce Development (UCAWD). ATTAIN is a system of technology laboratories located in economically disadvantaged communities that are designed to increase academic and employability skills of TANF eligible participants.

**Workforce Development Institute Community College Program**

The AFL-CIO’s Workforce Development Institute (WDI) offers this program through their existing relationship with three New York State Community Colleges (Hudson Valley CC, Niagara CC and Adirondack CC). The WDI works with local social services departments in counties served by these community colleges to identify individuals with disabilities determine their specific barriers to employment and connect participants to existing support systems. Services provided include education
and/or job training, as well as individualized services or supports targeted to helping clients overcome the barriers associated with their disability and engage in, and maintain, gainful employment.

Funding for this was eliminated in 2009-2010 state budget.

**Welfare to Careers Metropolitan College**

Metropolitan College’s Welfare to Careers Consortium Program is a collaboration among three major higher educational institutions in New York City (Metropolitan College, Medgar Evers College, and Pace University). The goal of the project is to develop and implement a welfare-to-work project that links educational opportunities to internships and job placements. The Consortium affords participants the opportunity to earn their two-year degree or a baccalaureate degree, thereby greatly increasing their chances of gaining permanent, full-time employment at a sustainable salary level. Their approach is also geared to assisting low-income head of households in changing their lives on a permanent basis by providing a wide support system, including education, employment, social services and family support. This project is supported with an annual appropriation of $500,000.

The program provides a full array of support services, including tuition assistance, individualized case management, academic support, referrals to external agencies, and unlimited Metrocards that allow participants to stay in school and remain on the job. It prepares participants for economically sustaining careers through extensive career counseling and job development for up to two years after graduation. Students participating in the Welfare to Careers Project need supportive services to go above and beyond those generally provided to college students to ensure completion.

Support staff work with students in two major areas – case management and job related support. The case manager performs the initial screening intake and assessment interviews and continues to work with the students by providing individual assistance in helping them succeed in the program. They assess the needs of students on a monthly basis, and refer students to additional services that will help remove any barriers that could prevent them from succeeding in college.

According to testimony submitted at the Nov. 2008 Assembly hearing on welfare to work, the completion and retention rate has been 70 percent. WTCP has had 113 graduates, 10 with Associates and 103 with a Bachelor’s Degree. Of the 103 bachelor degree graduates, 30 percent found new employment with higher salaries, 16 percent have received a pay increase at their present employer, 10 percent are attending graduate school, and three percent received a promotion with higher salary. Forty percent of the employed graduates are living above 200 percent the poverty guidelines. Only two percent are unemployed

**Hamilton College ACCESS Project**

The ACCESS Project at Hamilton College is a demonstration educational, social service, and career program that assists profoundly low-income parents in central New York in their efforts to move from welfare and low-wage work to meaningful and secure career employment through the pathway of higher education. The project provides an intensive and fully supported introduction to liberal arts education, coupled with comprehensive social service, family, and career support. This initiative has been supported with an annual appropriation of $500,000
Summer Youth Employment Program (SYEP)

For the 2008 summer program $35 million will be used to help provide a summer employment opportunity for youth to help them acquire work skills, gain income and participate in activities that support career goals.

Eligible participants include youth aged 14-20 who are members of families in receipt of public assistance, or members of non-public assistance families with an income below 200% of the federal poverty level. More than 26,000 youth are expected to participate in the 2008 program.

Career Pathways Program (new)

This was an initiative advanced by Hunger Action and other human service and workforce advocates. State lawmakers provided $2.5 million to OTDA for the program in 2009-09. The Department of Labor is matching it with $2.5 million in federal Workforce Investment Act funds. Funding of $10 million is provided in the 2009-10 budget.

This "Welfare to Career" program is designed to strengthen job skills, including education, for welfare participants, along with progressively increasing wages through career advancement. Career Pathways links basic education to occupational training and connects educational programs with integrated support services, enabling participants to combine education and training with work and advance over time to higher levels of education and training and to living-wage jobs in targeted industry sectors.

Agencies funded by the program can use funds for a number of activities, including convening partners and planning strategies, paying tuition for trainees, funding training organizations, financing supportive services (such as soft skills, case management, mentoring, and work supports), and paying for stipends, internships or work release time for trainees.

The program targets specific occupations and industries that offer employees the greatest opportunity to earn a living wage and obtain wage increases, including skilled trades, computer science and technological fields. In order to make employment of public assistance recipients an attractive option for private employers, the local district or contractor would assume some of the overhead costs associated with employment of public assistance recipients. They would also assist the private employer in obtaining any tax credits for hiring public assistance recipients.

Programs are required to offer an array of career pathways aimed at providing participants with job placements that will meet both employer and worker skill needs and worker career advancement needs. Some key elements include:

- Industry Engagement – employers from the targeted sector need to be involved in the development and ongoing support of the pathway. Need to obtain details on jobs in local companies, the skills that are needed, working conditions, wages and benefits, and changes/trends in the industry.

- Instruction - The choice of targeted industries and occupations is based on local and regional labor market demand, and where a gap exists between the number of qualified workers versus the number of job openings. There needs to be a call for higher-skilled workers and evidence that good employment opportunities are available for individuals who increase their skills. The Career Pathway curriculum is organized as a sequence of steps, each of which is associated with a specific credential or job advancement opportunity. The program must enable participants to make educational gains and increase job skills in manageable increments.
c. Participant Supports - a case management approach is used to ensure that participants receive timely coordinated services and that resources are used in order to maintain an individual’s ability to pursue career path goals. The case manager can also serve as the mentor/career counselor to help participants problem-solve, plan for future events and remained focused on program completion.

d. Job Placement – programs must focus on placing all participants in employment in targeted industries and/or occupations at the conclusion of the program.

(New) Food Stamp Employment and Training (FSET)

OTDA is presently developing a RFP for this. This initiative will leverage private resources to match federal FSET funds and will support an expansion of work-focused education and training services for low-income households receiving food stamps in New York State, including households without children who are not eligible for TANF funded services.

LOCAL WELFARE TO WORK PROGRAMS

Back to Work program (NYC)²²

According to HRA, individuals applying for cash assistance may be referred to Back to Work during the application period. If they are not able to find a job in that time, they may continue receiving Back to Work services two days weekly and participate in a work experience assignment three days weekly. Back to Work services are provided by organizations such as FEGS, Goodwill and America Works. The services include job search or training in fields like security or health care. According to HRA, in the two plus years these programs have been operating, they have produced nearly 30,000 job placements, with an average wage rate of over $9 an hour. Nine months after being placed in jobs, nearly 70 percent of the cash assistance recipients have not returned to welfare, strongly indicating they are continuing to work.

Outside groups however have a more negative assessment of the Back to Work program.

Community Voices Heard, a NYC-based welfare rights organization started by Hunger Action Network, recently released “Missing the Mark: An Examination of NYC’s Back to Work (BTW) Programs and Its Effectiveness in Meeting Employment Goals for Welfare Participants.” The report found that that only 9% of the clients who begin BTW get jobs through the program, a rate worse than the city’s previous Employment Services and Placement (ESP) program. BTW participants are channeled towards jobs with low wages and little opportunity for career advancement. HRA statistics showed that three out of every four BTW participants lose their job after six months. Over 60% of the BTW clients surveyed said that...

²² From 1999 to 2006 employment services were through HRA’s Employment Services and Placement (ESP) Program. A report released in July 2005 by Community Voices Heard, The Revolving Door, called into question the effectiveness of these programs.

- While the primary goal of the ESP System was to move people into jobs and off of welfare, less than 1 in 10 (only 8%) welfare recipients referred to the system were placed in jobs within six months. Within another six months, almost 1 in 3 of those individuals return to public assistance.
- Even though a lack of education and training was identified as a major barrier for a vast majority of ESP clients, only 18% of clients were able to access education and training programs; 1 in 3 clients did not know that education and training might satisfy a portion of their work requirements or that vouchers were available to cover the costs of these programs.
- The large majority of those referred to the system never receive the services intended: 30% Fail to Report, 14% are sent back to HRA each month due to a wrong initial referral, and 46% end up in receipt of a Failure to Comply (FTC).
job retention services were poor, bad or not provided. Within 9 months of leaving the program for employment, 50% of former BTW participants are back on public assistance and must re-start the BTW program. Only 1.7% of HRA’s engageable cash assistance recipients are enrolled in education and training programs. BTW clients have multiple challenges to finding jobs and the BTW program is not helping clients to address these barriers.

The report concluded that while HRA recognizes the high level of barriers to employment facing Back to Work clients, vendors are encouraged to quickly place participants in any job they can get, without taking the time to address or even assess a person’s barriers to employment. Accordingly, the majority of those who do find jobs through BWP lose them within six months and wind up back where they started. The report also concluded that sole reliance on performance-based contracting for employment services hurts clients and vendors alike.

The Independent Budget Office of NYC reviewed the program at the request of city Councilmember Bill de Blasio. In a letter dated April 23, 2009, the IBO stated “While the Back to Work vendors have largely achieved the agency’s initial employment goals, the data indicate a significant drop-off in employment retention over time. The number of clients reaching the 30-day employment milestone in 2008 represented about 28 percent of the number of clients who completed employment plans. By the 90-day milestone the retention rate decreased to 14 percent, and by the 180-day milestone it further decreased to 9 percent of completed employment plans…(R)oughly two-thirds of clients who were placed in unsubsidized positions through Back to Work and retained those jobs for 30 days are no longer in the same jobs five months later.”

BEGIN (HRA)

BEGIN offers intensive literacy and English for speakers of other languages services through a curriculum that focuses on vocational skill development and job readiness. With about 2,000 participants at any given time, BEGIN has a similar three day work experience, two day education, training and job search service format. This program offers a variety of literacy and vocational training programs aimed at those at low literacy levels.

BEGIN has three industry specific programs that provide work experience, certified training, and job placement in high growth industries. They include: personal care attendants, commercial drivers license training, and culinary arts. BEGIN’s Culinary Arts Assistance Program has been successful in training participants to be cooks. They learn basic literacy, cooking skills from a certified chef and work in a kitchen at a not-for-profit organization.

Parks Opportunity Program (POP)

The City’s park program, with approximately 2,500 participants23 at any time, combines paid employment with training. Participants in the Parks program work in paid employment for the City’s Department of Parks and Recreation24 for four days weekly. On the fifth day, they participate in paid training and job search designed to help them find employment at the end of the six month program.

This program grew out of a campaign by CVH and others (which HANNYS supported) to pass a City Council Law in 2001. The Transitional Jobs Law called on HRA to create a paid transitional job

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23 FPWA points out that in August 2008 there were 84,714 welfare participants in NYC who were not work exempt, so only about 3% are participating in POPs. *The State of NY’s Social Safety Net for Today’s Hard Times*, p. 45
24 POPS recently was made part of a Job Training Participant program that also includes a few positions in the Sanitation Department.
program, wherein welfare recipients could receive paychecks, job titles, supervisors, and pursue educational and training in order to gain real job experience, stabilize their finances, and build themselves up for better marketability in the job market.

For additional analysis, see page 70.

**COPE - College Opportunity to Prepare for Employment**

HRA has a $4.6 million contract with the City University of New York for the COPE program. COPE assists welfare participants in CUNY by providing tutoring, academic advisement and job placement services. A portion of the program also pays for CUNY to gather the attendance information needed to be in compliance with state and federal participation requirements. COPE counselors ensure college students are meeting participation requirements through a combination of class time, work study, internships and employment. At the present time there are 1,048 cash assistance recipients enrolled in CUNY and receiving assistance in an effort to gain employment.

It should be noted however that before TANF, as many as 30,000 welfare participants were enrolled in colleges, especially CUNY. In addition, there have ongoing complaints that HRA has failed to comply with state law to make it take it the need of participants attending college classes when scheduling workfare assignments. Hunger Action and others such as the Welfare Rights Initiative in NYC worked to pass state legislation to count internships and work study as countable work activities. Unfortunately, this law has not yet been made permanent.

**PIVOT – Placing Individuals in Vital Opportunity Training (Erie County)**

The Erie County Department of Social Services implemented a wage subsidy initiative in August 2000. This program provides quality job opportunities for the employable TANF population while serving as a resource for the hiring needs of local employers.

DSS staff match employable TANF clients with companies looking to fill existing positions. All candidates are pre-screened for job compatibility to reduce interviewing and processing time.

Employers are provided with a six month wage subsidy, receiving a three month advance when the client is first hired. They must sign a contract covering employment before the client is hired. They must be willing to hire clients with barriers to employment and be willing to work with a DSS case manager regarding work issues. Employers are involved in the interviewing process and are able to select from multiple candidates.

The program has a 75% employment retention. There is continued contact with the client to provide supportive services. The county has developed job contacts that assist them in making unsubsidized job placements for participants. DSS assists the worked with daycare and transportation.

Since the program began in August 2000, over 1600 clients have been placed. About 75% of the individuals have remained employed after 18 months.
THE EFFECTIVENESS OF NEW YORK’S WELFARE TO WORK EFFORTS

One of the goals of this report was to compare 2008 data on job placement from welfare to work program with the data in Hunger Action’s 1996 report Does Workfare Work? An Update on NYS DSS Data Analyzing Effectiveness of Workfare in Moving Participants to Work vs. Workfare as a Sanctioning Tool25 (Hunger Action Network, 10/1996). Much of the job data in this report was from the NYS DSS Employment Job Opportunities and Basic Skills Report to the Legislature of the State of New York (Fifth Annual Report, October 1, 1994 to September 30, 1995.) When New York began to re-emphasize workfare in the early 90s, the State Legislature required the state Department of Social Services to generate an annual report to document how well the various state programs were doing in moving people from welfare to work.

Unfortunately, once the federal government repealed ADC and replaced it with TANF, the state legislature no longer required a “jobs” related report to be sent to the state legislature. While there is a lot of data submitted by OTDA by the state legislature and Health and Human Services by OTDA, there is less analysis of the employment related data. In addition, how OTDA’s data is classified and recorded, along with time frames, also changes over time, making it difficult to make comparison. The reliability of the data can also be question, since some data is reported differently by individual counties and caseworkers, often by figuring out which way is fastest to make the “computer” accept the input.

For six months HANNYS submitted FOI requests to OTDA and had numerous meetings to try the generate the data we wanted. Ultimately we were unsuccessful. In addition, OTDA also questioned the reliability of some its own data that we presented in this report due to changes in methodology.

We have included various charts utilizing OTDA and Health and Human Services data at the end of this chapter. This includes reports from OTDA about several of the welfare to work programs.

However, as the Director of OTDA’s welfare to work program explained, programs that have a jobs component – such as wage subsidy or on the job training – are going to have a higher “success” rate in “placing” participants into jobs. Left unanswered is why more effort hasn’t been placed into putting participants into those successful programs. One potential argument could be its transitional jobs and other subsidized employment programs are too expensive. NYS has not done a cost benefit analysis of its various welfare to work programs.

But researchers such as the Fiscal Policy Institute have found that investments in such programs like Transitional Jobs are cost effective within a few years.

An example of problems with OTDA’s job placement data is that it shows about 85% of the participants finding jobs through the “assessment” process. This doesn’t make much sense, since individuals are normally in assessment for a relatively short period of time. In addition, many observers have criticized the state’s assessment process as inadequate. Too often local districts utilize a perfunctory, cookie cutter approach to this process. OTDA officials admitted that they didn’t really know what the high “assessment” numbers for job placement meant. OTDA did say that the assessment “code” appeared to be the easiest way for a local district worker to “code” a job placement into the computer system.

25 For instance, the report included data on the percentage of participants in various programs that had found employment: 85% for On the Job Training; 20% for Job Readiness Training; 8% for Workfare; and 14% for Job Search. We were especially interested in comparing the rate of job entry today for these programs. Surprisingly, in both 1994 and 1995, the major JOB activities for Aid to Dependent Children participants was not work experience (ranked number 4), but educational training (twice as much as work experience), followed by job skills and then post secondary education. For Home Relief participants, as expected and as today, by far the most number of participants were engaged in work experience.
A review of the data did show that subsidized employment remained the “most” consistently successful in job placements. In the 2008 period (10/07 to 9/08), the number of job placements for subsidized employment was 3.3 times the average monthly participation. (OTDA was unable to give us an unduplicated count of participants for the year.) For 2005, the success rate was 2.5.

But other numbers provided to us by OTDA on job placement were wildly erratic, raising serious questions about their reliability. The chart (number 2) on Jobs Entry by Activity illustrates this problem. For instance, for one time period for safety net (Non MOE/Maintenance of Efforts), average participation for Education Training/Secondary School was 97 a month (equal to 1164 a year if each month had a completely new set of participants). Yet 2,239 individuals were recorded as having successfully found a job (though the time periods did not entirely overlap.) Job search also saw similar wide fluctuations.

Examining data from the federal Health and Human Services (chart number 1) shows that NY hardly puts any TANF participants into subsidized employment. For Fiscal Year 1998, NY had 1.0% in subsidized employment (about the national average); by 2006, it had only grown 3.3%, though that was better than the national average of 1.2%. NY was below the measly national average in both education related to employment (0.0%) and job skills training (0.2%). NY also has hardly any TANF recipients in on the job training, even worse than the rest of the country (a grand total of 1,153 nationally).

OTDA’s own data for education paints an equally grim picture for education. (see education chart). The most recent data provided showsonly 9.2% of the state caseload engaged in vocational education activities (11.7% in NYC). 2.6% were engaged in job skills training (3.2% in NYC) and 2.2% in educational training (0.8%).

New York has consistently fallen way below the national average for the number of TANF case closings due to employment. In 2008, New York reported that 13.8% of its cases were closed due to employment, well below the national average of 20.9%. This was only a slight improvement over 1998, with 11% of case closings due to employment, compared to 21.7% nationally. It is noteworthy that the biggest reasons for case closings in NYS remains “other”, now 50.4% of the cases. Most of this would presumably be due to individuals being transferred into the state safety net program after reaching their five year time limit.26

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26 An additional explanation may be the some workers choose other as the quickest way to enter data.
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Fas Welfare Reform Moved Participants into Jobs and Out of Poverty?

A central promise of welfare reform in 1996 was that by making welfare (TANF) more work focused, more individuals would find jobs and become economically self-sufficient.

Many state officials, particularly during the tenure of Governor Pataki, cite the decline in caseload as evidence of success. Under TANF, caseloads have been cut by more than half - a 61% decline from July 1987 to July 2008. It should be noted however that caseloads were dropping sharply in the years before TANF was enacted.

Other indicators of economic well-being have not fared as well as caseload reductions.

The drop in welfare caseloads has been accompanied by a steady increase in the demand for emergency food from food pantries and soup kitchens. Well over 2 million New Yorkers now use EFPs annually. Since TANF was enacted, EFPs have reported annual increases of 5 to 15% in the number of individuals served. Service levels increased by 30% in 2008 as the recession worsened.

The percentage of poor children in NYS receiving assistance from welfare has dropped dramatically – almost in half – from about 2/3 of those eligible to 1/3 (SCAA). From 1996, the year when TANF replaced AFDC, to 2004, the share of eligible families receiving assistance from the program fell by half, from 84 percent to 42 percent. (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services 2005). TANF, like the AFDC it replaced, is designed as the major federal safety net for poor children. The need for assistance has not decreased; rather the number of children being helped has declined.

While the growing economic recession over the last year has pushed the number of food stamp enrollees to an all time high, the number of participants in welfare has remained stable. Yet the number of applications for welfare assistance has increased under TANF. Advocates contend that the failure of caseloads to rise sharply during the recession shows how welfare assistance has become disconnected from the level of real need. OTDA response is that the intakes out the welfare caseload often lags behind downturns in the economy because people use unemployment benefits first, and then the application process can take several months.

The state’s poverty rate has remained relatively unchanged since TANF was enacted, fluctuating depending upon the overall status of the economy. The state’s poverty rate of 14.5% in 2007 was basically the same as the 1987 poverty rate of 14.3%.

Income of Former Welfare Participants

The State’s welfare to work program fails to move people out of poverty.

At the November 20, 2008 Assembly hearing on welfare to work, OTDA Commissioner David Hansell said that average starting wages at job placement are approximately $8.50 an hour, which he cited as the fourth highest in the country. Yet since the average welfare household is slightly over three persons, this falls short of the $10.19 poverty level wage for a full-time worker in a household with four people ($21,200 poverty level). The poverty wage for a full time worker with a family of three is $8.46). In addition, few of these workers are likely to be getting 40 hours a week of employment; studies indicate they get between 30 to 34 hours a weeks (at 34 hours a week, $8.50 an hour provides an annual income
of $15,028.). However, these workers may receive the Earned Income Tax credit, and transitional benefits such as Medicaid and food stamps, which does help boost their income.

According to a recent report by FPWA, NYC wage data from HRA is similar. The average wage for job placements in NYC in 2007 was $8.30 an hour, though the average wage in the four largest job categories (child care, fast food, home care and sales) was only $6.99.

It is noteworthy that there is so little data and/or studies presently being generated about the economic status of those who leave welfare. A number of studies, with findings that were not particularly positive, were done shortly after the adoption of the federal TANF program. Since then, the academic researchers have largely moved on.

**Welfare Leavers Studies**

In 2003, Action for a Better Community, Inc. partnered with Monroe County Department of Human Services to study the status of former welfare families a year after their case had closed. The report found that the majority of the families did not earn enough to put their household income above the federal poverty level (FPL); and whether above, at or below the FPL, the welfare leavers' family situations were relatively similar. The average respondent had three children, worked 34 hours a week at a low-wage job that paid on average $9.80 an hour. Earnings averaged about $17,327 a year. Nearly two-fifths of the respondents (37.3 percent) reported their household income between $10,000 and $19,999. Nearly two-fifths (36 percent) placed their household income at less than $10,000. Slightly over a quarter (26.7 percent) of the respondents reported incomes over $20,000.

While a high percentage of families had health insurance, a lower percentage received Food Stamps. The study found that, after a year without cash aid, most families struggled to support themselves through low-wage employment. A majority of the families continued to rely on some form of public assistance, suggesting that a year of transitional benefits may not be enough time to move families to self-sufficiency. The study found former welfare recipients at all income levels in the same situation when it came to making ends meet. The study found that 68% of the respondents had difficulty paying utility; 49.3% had problems with rent or housing bills; and 40% had an inability to buy food.

Other studies have found that the most disadvantaged Americans — those living in dire poverty — became even poorer after TANF implementation. Although the dire poor increased their work participation rate by nearly 50 percent, their monthly income declined, most notably among those with the youngest children. The poorest families found themselves significantly worse off under welfare reform (Lyter, Sills, Oh, and Jones-DeWeever 2004).

The New York State Assembly’s 2006 report on welfare reform compiled information from a series of studies on those who leave welfare. Several of the studies are summarized below.

"A Profile of Families Cycling On and Off Welfare." (Richburg-Hayes, L. 2004., Manpower Demonstration Research Project. [http://www.mdrc.org/publications/396/full.pdf](http://www.mdrc.org/publications/396/full.pdf)) looked at welfare "cyclers," defined as those who received welfare benefits during three or more discrete periods during a four-year observation period. The report found that welfare cycling increased after the passage of federal welfare reform. Cyclers tend to have children earlier, to be younger, and to lack a high school diploma or GED, showing that economic downturns and stricter welfare work rules have a more negative effect on those families that are more prone to need assistance. The typical pattern for a welfare cycler is to obtain employment, but to then return to assistance several times due to a range of factors. Factors included an inability to secure reliable child care, limited access to support from other household members, low earnings or loss of employment.

Welfare leavers’ annual earnings are typically low and only grow modestly over time, largely due to their low skill levels and lack of educational credentials. The skills most highly demanded by employers are not seen in many of those receiving welfare, which creates one of the most significant barriers to success. Welfare leavers are more likely to be found in the lowest-paying industries with little opportunity for advancement or wage increases over time. More than 40 percent of the jobs held by welfare recipients were in service occupations and 17 percent were in administrative or clerical positions, which are traditionally low-paying fields. For women, the dilemma is even worse, since occupations such as machinist, equipment repairer, and truck driver, offering workers with lower educational credentials the greatest wage potential, are most often held by men.

Wages were more likely to increase for former welfare recipients who began working in higher paying jobs, as opposed to those in the lowest paying fields. The average wages of those in the bottom fourth of the wage distribution did not increase at all over a five year time period, as opposed to those in the top fourth whose wages grew significantly over the same period. Those welfare recipients who were not working at all were found to have significantly lower education levels compared to those who were working.

One study found that 60 percent of all welfare recipients and 81 percent of those without recent work experience had low basic skills, substantially higher than the general population of full-time employed individuals. The report indicates that the educational attainment of mothers receiving welfare is well below average. In general, welfare recipients were found to have lower skills than other adults with the same level of formal education.

The report also highlighted that barriers still exist for many even after leaving welfare, especially among those who leave without finding employment. These barriers increase the risk that individuals will return to the welfare rolls at some point in the future.

"Before and After Welfare Reform: The Work and Well-Being of Low-Income Single Parent Families." (Institute for Women's Policy Research, Fact Sheet #D459, June 2003, http://www.iwpr.org/pdf/ D454.pdf). This report examined the first three years of TANF. Fewer recipients had access to health insurance, fewer had acquired at least some college education, and more were concentrated in urban areas. The caseload was increasingly made up of people of color, as whites appear to have experienced greater welfare-transitioning success. While there have been significant changes in income sources for low-income single parent families, improvements to economic well-being were nominal. Further, despite the increased employment participation of low-income single parents, earnings and wages remained low as employment was concentrated in low-wage occupations and industries.

Although non-Hispanic whites constituted the largest share of low-income single parent household heads in both time periods (45 percent pre-PRWORA and 42 percent post-PRWORA), the share of non-Hispanic white welfare recipients declined significantly (34 vs. 24 percent post-PRWORA). The proportion of Hispanic welfare recipients increased significantly (20 vs. 30 percent post-PRWORA).

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27 This was the impetus behind the sustainable wage bill for welfare to work passed in 2007 by the State Legislature but vetoed by Governor Spitzer.

28 45 percent of the mothers who received TANF benefits in 1999 had completed high school or received a GED in comparison to 87 percent of all American women.
Interestingly, while the representation of blacks among welfare recipients remains stable over this time period (at roughly 43 percent), they were the only racial group to experience an increase in the percentage of non-welfare recipients who remained low-income between the two time periods (29 vs. 34 percent post-PRWORA). These findings are consistent with concerns that white single parents may be more able to move out of the low-income population than single parents from racial/ethnic minority groups.

**Impact of Welfare Reform upon Poverty**

Advocates believe that one of the goals of welfare should be a reduction in the rate of poverty. This however has yet to be formally listed as a specific goal of TANF.

Welfare reform does not appear to have any significant impact upon the poverty rates in NYS. The state’s poverty rate of 14.5% in 2007 was basically the same as the 1987 poverty rate of 14.3%. In general, the state’s poverty rate has reflected changes in the overall economy rather than implementation of TANF.

Poverty declined every year between 1993 and 2000 (reaching its lowest level ever for black children), but then increased during the recession year of 2001 as well as in 2002, 2003, and 2004. The rate then declined slightly in both 2005 and 2006. Despite several years of moderate economic growth, New York did not gain any ground in the areas of poverty and family incomes, with New Yorkers just as likely to be poor in 2007 as they were during the last recession in 2001.

In 2007, New York had a higher poverty rate than the nation as a whole (12.4 percent) and the highest poverty rate of all the northern states. Poverty rates in upstate cities far exceeded the poverty rates in New York City and the rest of the state. In Syracuse, almost 40,000 people (31 percent of the population) lived in families with incomes below the official poverty thresholds. Poverty rates for Rochester and Buffalo were just below 30 percent.

New York also continues to lead the country in income disparity between the rich and the poor. (Center for Budget and Policy Priorities. [http://www.cbpp.org/4-9-08sfp.htm](http://www.cbpp.org/4-9-08sfp.htm))

The economic status of welfare participants in NYS has gotten worse since TANF has been implemented since the basic grant has not been increased. There has been a slight adjustment in the shelter allowance for children as of a two decades old lawsuit, though most of the relief was provided to NYC and the three counties that were sued rather than statewide.

As the Fiscal Policy Institute (FPI) has pointed out, getting a job still isn't enough to lift families out of poverty. The number of working families who are poor is much higher today than it was in 1990, despite a greater number of poor people who are working. The percentage of people in working families who are poor rose up from six percent in 1990 to ten percent in 2005; some 800,000 New Yorkers from working families live in poverty. A third of all children in working families in New York State (nearly half, 47 percent, of those in New York City) live in families with incomes less than twice the poverty level.

As noted earlier, few welfare participants escape poverty when they find employment. The situation is actually worse since the official poverty level significantly understates the real minimal level of income needed to survive. The poverty rate is calculated based on a food budget, assuming that families spend one third of their income on food. Since housing now takes up a much bigger percentage of household
income, especially for lower income families, while food costs have dropped to about 1/6 of family income, the poverty rate needs to be seriously overhauled.29

A June 2008 report from the Fiscal Policy Institute found that thirty percent of New Yorkers in working families can’t cover basic needs with their wages. Public programs such as food stamps, Child Health Plus and the Earned Income Tax Credit are intended to help these working families. These public “work support” programs do cover 41 percent of the gap. But even after adding in the value of the work support programs to median income, most economically insecure families still can’t make ends meet. In New York, the hardship gap—the difference between the median monthly income of economically insecure families and the basic family budget standard—is $1,079.

TANF Has Continued Economic Discrimination Against Women

Most adult welfare participants are women, especially in TANF. The state’s welfare to work programs continue the practice of pushing participants into jobs traditionally held by women that fail to pay a living wage. More women live in poverty today in NY than when TANF was implemented. The poverty rate for women in NYS is 15.2%, more than 2 points higher than the national average.

This problem was highlighted by Legal Momentum Advancing Women’s Right (Formerly NOW Legal Defense and Education Fund) in their testimony to the November 2008 Assembly Hearing on welfare to work.

“The Working First Working Poor study found a pattern of gender segregation in client referrals to job training programs. Many working mothers were shunted into unstable low-paying jobs that did not sustain their families and held little opportunity for advancement. Both the women and caseworkers were unaware of what non-traditional occupations were available in their area and the advantage that non-traditional jobs might offer them.

“One of the reasons that women in NY earn only 78% of what men earn is that women are largely excluded from non-traditional jobs that offer high wages, good benefits and career growth. Compared to most service-sector jobs, non-traditional jobs – in construction, building and other skilled trades, law enforcement, firefighting and information technologies – provide much higher salaries and much better benefits. In NYS, hairdressers earn $30,930 including tips while carpenters earn $66,660.”

According to the NY Women’s Foundation (June 2008), the lowest paying occupation for Latina women working full-time and year-round is child care, which pays $11,200. Latino men, on the other hand, have median annual earnings of $18,500 for their lowest paying job of textile, apparel, and furnishing work.

In 2005, while white women earned an average of 73% of white men, Hispanic women earned only 52% of white men and African-American women 63%.


29 One of the problems with the federal poverty level is that it does not take into account variations in the costs of living among or within states. In contrast, the basic family budget standard varies with the local cost of living. In New York, the basic budgets according to FPI range from just over $41,000 for a four-person family in rural areas to over $60,000 in Nassau and Suffolk counties. Mayor Bloomberg changed the official “NYC” poverty calculation of a four person household family to $26,318 rather than the federal level of $20,444 (in 2008). This raised that the poverty rate in NYC to 23% from 18.9%
Demonstration Research Project. http://www.mdrc.org/publications/74/full.pdf ) researchers conducted interviews with 3,900 individuals who were receiving public assistance and living in high poverty neighborhoods in four major U.S. cities (Cleveland, Los Angeles, Miami, Philadelphia). The majority of respondents had worked in the past two years, and approximately half were working at the time of the interview.

Their primary findings include: 1) the majority of currently employed women had strong employment stability; 2) full-time employment was the norm, regardless of employment stability; 3) the majority of women were working in low-wage jobs with earnings that would not put them above the federal poverty level; 4) significant number of workers were employed in positions that offered no benefits; and 5) additional benefits such as Food Stamps, Medicaid, housing assistance, and child care subsidies were not used by the majority of women interviewed.

The majority of women interviewed were employed in low-skill service sector jobs such as house cleaner, cashier, nursing aide, child care worker, food preparation, secretary, office clerk or guard. Many of these industries require workers to maintain rotating shifts which made it even more difficult for them to fulfill family responsibilities. Non-traditional schedules posed particular hardships upon working mothers who found it difficult to arrange child care or perform other family responsibilities such as scheduling doctor visits.

**Economic Impact Upon Children Under Welfare Reform**

Children were by far the largest recipients of aid under the old ADC program and still remain a majority under TANF. ADC / TANF has been the principal anti-poverty program for children. It has failed to end poverty among children, with childhood poverty rates almost double in the U.S. compared to other industrial countries.

At a 2006 hearing by the Assembly Social Services Committee, Maria Toro Fenton of the Citizens Committee pointed out that there has not been a decline in the number of children being born into poverty. Between September 1997 and May 2005 the caseload in New York City declined by 46 percent and the percentage of children living in poverty declined from 34.3 percent to 28.8 percent. However, the rate of children born into poor families (185% of FPL) remained relatively stable, hovering at just over 50 percent in 2002 and increasing by 15 percent since 1990.

Child poverty rates have declined slightly in NYS since TANF was implemented. The child poverty rate in NYS in 1999 was 22%. In 2007 child poverty was 19.4%, with the poverty rate for black children 33.7% and for Latino children 33.3%. 9.2% of children still lived in extreme poverty.
ADDITIONAL PROBLEMS WITH NY’S WELFARE TO WORK EFFORT

Most Welfare Participants today have Multiple Barriers to Employment – and NY has been slow to adapt

As New York’s welfare caseload has dropped, the percentage of participants with multiple barriers to employment has increased. Even if New York’s welfare to work efforts had been successful over the last decade, there would be a need to refocus it to address the changing demographics.

Commissioner Hansell, in his testimony to the State Assembly Welfare to Work hearing (November 2008), stating that of those now on welfare, “Many have low educational attainment, limited work experience, limited jobs skills and/or lack of English-language proficiency. Others have barriers that include substance abuse, mental and physical health issues.”

The 2002 National Survey of America’s Families found that while 51.3 percent of participants with no barriers were working, only 29.5 percent of participants with one barrier, and only 13.1 percent of those with two or more barriers were working.

The most employable welfare recipients have been pushed into low-wage jobs, many of which offer little or no on-the-job training or career advancement opportunities. Many of those who still receive benefits are “employable” but need more intensive services, including access to education and training, to make the leap to a living wage job.

A large portion of the people remaining on public assistance have work limitations, either because they are children, they are taking care of family members, or they have a disability. Of the 12,943 individuals classified as work-limited in June 2007, 31.8% were work-limited for 0-3 months, 30.8% were work-limited for 4-6 months, 19% were work-limited for 7-12 months, and 18.4% were work-limited for 13 or more months. (2007 OTDA Statistical Report). According to OTDA Commissioner Hansell, a full 43% of New York's TANF caseload is comprised of child-only cases. Child-only cases fall into three categories: (1) There is an adult, non-parent caregiver who is not on the case (kin care), (2) The parent is in receipt of SSI, and not on the public assistance case, or (3) The parent is not eligible for public assistance because of immigration status.

Studies have found that women on welfare have higher barriers to participation than women in general. In "Barriers to the Employment of Welfare Recipients." Poverty Research & Training Center, School of Social Work, University of Michigan. (Danziger, Sandra, et al. February 2000, revised version, http://www.jcpr.org/wpfiles/Danziger.barriers.update2-21-2000.PDF), the researchers found that women on welfare in Michigan were much less likely to have graduated from high school, and much more likely to have transportation problems, mental and physical health problems, child health problems, and severe physical abuse. They also discovered that the majority of welfare recipients did not suffer from a lack of knowledge in regard to workplace norms and expectations.

30 Hansell also pointed out that “many of those who have left public assistance have entered and remained in low-wage jobs, because they lack the skills to move up to sustainable-wage levels in the workforce.”

31 Common problems included: lack of access to a car or other form of transportation (about 50 percent); mental health problems such as major depression, post-traumatic stress disorder and generalized anxiety disorder; health problems (20 percent); and child health, learning or emotional problems (20 percent). Respondents were found to be twice as likely as the general population of adult women to report physical limitations, percent reported being severely physically abused by a husband or partner in the last year - a rate four to five times higher than the general population in national surveys, but similar to rates reported in other studies of welfare recipients.
Cursory Assessment and Employability Plans

The promise of welfare reform was that the government would treat each person as an individual, assessing their real barriers to employment and then working with them to develop an individualized plan on how to overcome these barriers. The needs and wants of the individual would be taken into account. For instance, since half of the state’s welfare population is illiterate, one would assume that an initial focus would be to help improve reading and writing skills so they could at least fill out a job application form. If the person had always been good with their hands, entry into a job training program for automobile mechanics or carpentry might be sought. Instead, all too often, the assessment and employability plan process is perfunctory, with little difference among individuals.

Limited access to education and training

According to the NYS Education Department, an estimated 40 percent of welfare participants read at less than an eighth grade level. According to OTDA, nearly 70% of adults receiving welfare do not have a high school diploma or General Educational Development (GED) degree. Yet since TANF was enacted, enrollment in adult literacy, English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL), high school equivalency classes, college, and vocational training has been drastically reduced due to welfare policies that limit access to education and training. For example, since 1995, the City University of New York (CUNY) has lost over 20,000 students who were receiving public assistance.

New York faces a widening skills gap. We are not currently training enough workers to meet the needs of employers in many industry sectors, and this problem will only worsen if current trends persist.

According to 2002-2012 occupational and employment projections, of the 20 occupations with either the largest projected growth or the largest projected number of job openings in the state, nearly two-thirds require significant training (moderate or long-term on-the-job training, licensure, or an associate’s degree). Other labor market trends, including impending retirements by the “Baby Boom” cohort, will likely exacerbate these needs. Yet nearly 40 percent of New Yorkers in the labor force in 2004 lacked any postsecondary education (ranking 25 out of 50 states and the District of Columbia), and one out of four young workers (ages 18-24) in the state has no high school diploma.

Public opinion supports access to education and training as a way to greater economic security. When asked what government benefit would most help poor families get ahead, a majority (89 percent) of moderate and high income New Yorkers and low income New Yorkers (68 percent) identified skills acquisition (training and higher education) as a first or second response. Basic education, including pursuit of a GED and English for Speakers of Other Languages also received significant support from both moderate and high income New Yorkers and low-income New Yorkers.

Excessive Rate of Sanctioning

Sanctioning is when individuals are penalized for failing to comply with some requirement of the welfare system, such as failing to attend an appointment or to do a work assignment.

New York has an excessive rate of sanctioning of welfare participants. From July 2006 to June 2007, on a monthly basis there were 32,714 individuals in sanctions. This was an increase from 26,800 sanctioned recipients in 1998, a 22% increase in the number of sanctions even though the caseload had been cut by


Calculated from 2004 American Community Survey data (Table B23006).
more than half. (The caseload declined 61% between July 1997 and July 2008.) In June 2007, there were 226,252 adults receiving public assistance. Thus 14.5% of the caseload had been sanctioned.

If a participant misses a work appointment they often find their benefits reduced or terminated for several months even if there is a valid explanation for the incident – and in many cases the failure was on the part of HRA or the local districts to properly record the appointment in the first place. Advocates complain that districts often fail to work with the participant to correct problems (e.g., if your child gets sick, you need to develop an emergency plan for child care). Such sanctioning policy does nothing to assist the individual in becoming more employable.

Several studies have found that the ultimate effect of the sanction process is not to move the most challenged families into the workforce, but to penalize the most challenged TANF families until they are no longer on the welfare caseload. It disproportionately impacts upon households of color and those with multiple barriers. The sanction is often due to administrative error.

In testimony to the Assembly Social Services Committee hearing on welfare reform in 2006, Don Friedman of Community Services Society testified that

“The imposition of sanctions has played a greater role in reshaping welfare recipients' day-to-day experiences than time limits. New York has imposed a punitive sanction-driven system, such that one missed appointment or rule that is not followed (or interpreted as not followed by the caseworker) initiates the sanction process. The notion that sanctions work as a "tool for pushing recipients toward independence" by enforcing compliance is not accurate, since a high percentage of those sanctioned have been identified as having a disability.

“In addition, a disproportionate number of those sanctioned face multiple barriers to self-sufficiency including that they are less likely to have earned a high school diploma or GED, to have worked recently, or to own a working phone or car. They are more likely to have health problems, to have recently sought assistance from a food pantry, to have a substance abuse problem or to live in substandard housing. TANF-receiving adults in sanctioned status are more likely to have dropped out of high school, and to have reported transportation, child care or health difficulties (March 2000 GAO study). Furthermore, sanctioned households are more likely to be African American, younger, and less educated, to have been in an abusive relationship within the past year, to have health problems or to have children with health problems, and to have higher levels of financial strain even before the sanction was imposed.”

At the same hearing, Heidi Siegfried of the Partnership for the Homeless stated:

“Sanctions are often imposed because the local district is not providing necessary supportive services. Sometimes participants are sanctioned because they do not receive notices of required meetings, either because the local district failed to send them or because of problems with mail in the neighborhoods in which low-income people live. Sanctions are likely to be applied arbitrarily and to people whose supportive service needs are not met and punish recipients with the most severe barriers to employment. Cases are often re-budgeted incorrectly once wages are reported. The loss of $230 (one third of the benefit of $691) to a family of three in New York

34 NYSOTDA contends that “districts routinely accept good cause reasons for noncompliance and often do not move to sanction even when the client does not have good causes for missing a required assignment.” They state that “each individual is provided several opportunities (conciliation, conference, fair hearing) to provide information regarding the reason for missing a required assignment.” OTDA also says that the high sanctioning rate reflects moving in 2005 to a “transaction-based approach to measuring sanctions, which would capture sanctions of very short duration or those applied retroactively, and may include duplicate sanctions.”
City is a significant loss in benefits and is a meaningful sanction for a parent who is not able to comply with work requirements.”

Jillynn Stevens of the Federation of Protestant Welfare Agencies reported:

- **Racial disparities:** 31 percent of whites and 56 percent of other racial groups sanctioned; 75 percent of whites reported that they were informed prior to imposition of sanction, but only 58 percent of Latinos and 53 percent of Blacks reported receiving notice of sanction status.
- **Most common reasons for sanction:** Missing appointment and failing to submit required paperwork; only 12 percent for work-related reasons. Sanctions were also imposed for failure to provide info about fathers and for behavioral problems.
- **Hardships:** Infants and toddlers in sanctioned families had 90 percent higher risk of being hospitalized and 50 percent higher risk of food insecurity. Families in sanctioned status were three times more likely to experience material hardship such as homelessness, eviction, hunger, or moving in with others. Forty five percent of sanctioned mothers experienced at least one material hardship, such as utility shutoff, economic hardship, and resorting to desperate measures like searching in trash cans for food or other basic necessities.

Similar to Mr. Friedman, Ms. Stevens noted that “mental health problems, less education, poor health, lower employment rates/earnings, transportation problems, poor housing conditions, greater financial difficulty, and substance abuse issues were all found to be strong predictors of families being in sanctioned status.”

**Appendix – Additional Reports on Sanctioning**


“While the PRWORA's main emphasis focused on placing public assistance recipients in work, sanctions have actually played a more significant role in the lives of most clients. Their findings are comparable to other data that shows sanctions disproportionately affect the most vulnerable families with the greatest barriers to employment and self-sufficiency…. In many cases, sanctions have been imposed on clients who do not understand the program rules or who have not received proper communication from the social services agency informing them of all requirements they are expected to fulfill. In other instances, clients who have good cause for non-compliance are unable to effectively demonstrate it to prevent the agency from imposing the sanction. Often, sanction notices sent to clients are confusing or inaccurate, assuming that notices are sent to the correct address and received early enough to provide adequate time for compliance.

“Overall, the authors found that sanctioned clients have lower levels of education and are more likely than non-sanctioned clients to face substantial barriers to employment such as physical and mental health problems. Also, sanctioned welfare leavers have lower employment rates and earnings compared to former welfare recipients who left for other reasons. In general, the report highlights the fact that although sanctions are effective for certain groups of recipients, such as those who are working "off the books," they usually do not provide motivation for clients facing multiple barriers to employment.”

system within Harlem and the Lower East Side in NYC. A significant portion of their findings addressed the impact of sanctions.

Welfare participants were frequently sanctioned due to administrative errors, which indicates that not all sanctions are imposed due to non-compliant behavior. Furthermore, the report emphasizes the fact that in nearly all cases, sanctions exacerbate the economic fragility of families who are already living below the federal poverty level. The report documents the swiftness with which benefits are reduced when a sanction is imposed as being incredibly problematic for families in their attempt to achieve self-sufficiency. The overall rate of sanctioning was very high among the general welfare caseload. Fifty four percent of the sample had their benefits cut within the previous year and 35 percent had been sanctioned. In addition, the researchers also found racial and gender differences in the rates of sanctioning, with higher rates of Blacks, Latinos and women receiving sanctions. Many participants in the study did not receive proper information from the social services agency in regard to the status of their case.
Over the last twenty years, Hunger Action Network has often surveyed participants about their experiences with the welfare system.

At the end of this section is a summary of three prior reports Hunger Action has done on New York’s welfare to work effort. Hunger Action did our first survey on workfare in 1997, before the TANF program was created. In 2001, we surveyed households about their experiences with workfare and welfare to work.

Hunger Action decided to do another welfare-to-work survey in 2008 of participants’ experience with the program. Several of the same questions from the 2001 survey were used to track changes over time.

**2008 Welfare to Work Survey**

Only individuals currently on cash assistance / welfare (TANF or Safety Net) or who had been on within the last three years were surveyed. We did not survey individuals who were only on food stamps, SSI, or Medicaid. We ended up with 128 valid surveys. The surveys were conducted from August to November 2008.

Individuals were surveyed at community based organizations, emergency food programs and welfare (HRA) offices. The survey sampling was not scientific (i.e., not a random selection of participants).

Hunger Action did not have a system to survey individuals who had been on welfare and had been able to find a job that paid them enough to escape both welfare and the need to utilize emergency food programs and community based organizations. However, other research studies indicate that only a small percentage, if any, of welfare participants find jobs that enable them to escape poverty. We note that the survey results indicate that respondents were better educated than the average welfare participant. (One explanation might be that the better educated felt more comfortable responding to a survey.)

The findings from the survey were similar both to Hunger Action’s prior survey on welfare to work and to other studies. However, the number of individuals saying that they had received jobs through the welfare to work program was so low that it fails to provide an adequate sample size for several of the follow-up questions.

Most of the respondents (32.9%) felt that the job preparation or readiness activities were not helpful in becoming more employable; in about a quarter of the cases (23.0%) it led to a paid job. Those who did find a job are still dependent upon welfare (69.2%) or community programs (64.0%) for help. The vast majority of participants who find employment find it on their own, not through the welfare to work program. The jobs did not pay enough to escape poverty and the need for additional assistance.

Access to education remains a problem, with more participants being denied access to education than being allowed to participate.

A small percentage of respondents felt that DSS / HRA helped them become more employable; a smaller percentage said that DSS/HRA had helped them get a job.
2008 SNAPSHOTT Survey Questions

1. What county do you live in?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>County</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bronx</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>16.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manhattan</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>18.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Queens</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brooklyn</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>12.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Long Island</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>9.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poughkeepsie</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Albany</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buffalo</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>14.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rochester</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>12.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Watertown/Jefferson</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schenectady</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>8.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>128</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. Shortly after you applied for welfare, did DSS/HRA (or an organization that you were referred to) conduct an assessment of your educational and job skill needs? **If yes**, can you describe the assessment?

**Explanation:** One of the promises of welfare reform (TANF) was that the welfare office would assess the barriers to employment that each individual applying for welfare had. Once the assessment was conducted, the welfare office would work with the individual to develop an employment plan to overcome these barriers and to help the person become employable. A long standing complaint among advocates is that the assessment process is often perfunctory, with many applicants receiving the same assessment and employability plan. Advocates contend that the assessment process is key to a successful welfare to work program.

Response: Slightly more than half reported that they went through an assessment process. This low response may reflect that it is so perfunctory that many participants don’t remember it. The percentage is higher since a number of respondents attributed job skills training as the assessment.

A very small number of respondents said that the assessment process was good or very good. Most thought it was fair, though a high percentage thought it was poor.
SNAPSHOT SURVEY TABLE 2 – Adequacy of Barrier Assessment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very good/asked lots of questions</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good/detailed</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fair</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>47.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor/asked few questions</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>34.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very poor/cookie cutter approach</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. If you are not currently working, what are the main reasons why? Please check all that apply.

SNAPSHOT SURVEY Table 3 – Reasons for Not Currently Working

35.2% Need more education  
27.3% Need more work experience  
12.5% Domestic violence problems  
36.7% Lack of Jobs  
13.1% Criminal record  
25.8% Transportation problems  
18.8% Finding/paying for child care  
5.5% Pregnant/maternity leave  
19.5% Own ill health/disability  
8.6% Own drinking/drug problem  
10.9% Other family responsibilities (i.e. health of children or other family members)  
8.6% In school or other training  
23.4% Wages too low  
11.7% Jobs don’t offer health benefits  
14.8% Other  
2.3% Don’t know

Explanation: This question is intended to help identify the major barriers to employment that welfare participants self-perceive. This information would be useful in helping to determine the barriers that the state’s welfare to work program should focus on helping to eliminate.

Responses. The lack of jobs was cited as the biggest barrier to employment. Unfortunately, job creation is something that wasn’t addressed by TANF, though TANF funds can be used for job creation

The second biggest barrier cited was the need for more education.

Other major barriers cited by respondents were: transportation barriers; wages too low; the need for more work experience; personal illness and/or disability; child care

4. In the last two years, has HRA/DSS required you to do:  Job preparation/job readiness activities (i.e. job search, resume drafting, etc):
### SNAPSHOT SURVEY Table 4 – Were you Required to do job preparation / job readiness

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Valid</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>57.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>40.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Sure</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Ans</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>128</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**If yes, for how long?**

### SNAPSHOT SURVEY Table 5 – How Long Participant were required to do job preparation / job readiness

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Valid</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1-4 Weeks</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>25.5</td>
<td>25.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-8 Weeks</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>14.5</td>
<td>40.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 weeks or longer</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>41.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-2 Months</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>14.5</td>
<td>56.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-4 Months</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>12.7</td>
<td>69.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 months or longer</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>30.9</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Ans</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>128</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A. Do you believe you received valuable job training or experience from this job preparation?

### SNAPSHOT SURVEY Table 6 – Was the Job Preparation Valuable?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Valid</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>33.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>58.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Sure</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Ans</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>128</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

B. Did this training lead to a paid job when completed? **(If no please skip to question 5)**
SNAPSHOT SURVEY Table 7 – Did training lead to a Paid Job?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Valid</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>22.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>75.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Sure</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Ans</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>128</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

C. If yes, then for what pay? ____________ Per hour or per year

SNAPSHOT SURVEY Table 8 – Pay Rate for Jobs from Job Preparation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Valid</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$7-$8/hr OR $20K-$30k/yr</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>33.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$8.01-$9/hr OR $30+K-$40K/yr</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>22.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$9.01-$10/hr OR $40+K/yr</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$10.01-$11/hr</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>16.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$11.01-$15/hr</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>11.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$15.01 or more/hr</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$6/hr</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Ans</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>128</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

D. How long are/were you employed at this job?

SNAPSHOT SURVEY Table 9 – Length of Employment at Jobs from job preparation / job readiness

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Valid</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-4 Weeks</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-8 Weeks</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 weeks or longer</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>11.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-4 Months</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 months or longer</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>72.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Ans</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>128</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

E. Did you get the job with the help of DSS/HRA or on your own?
SNAPSHOT SURVEY Table 10 – Did DSS/HRA help you get a job or did they get it on their own?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Help of DSS/HRA</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>18.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On my Own</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>81.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Ans</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>128</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

F. Did the job pay well enough to let you get off of welfare, or did you continue to receive assistance from welfare while working?

SNAPSHOT SURVEY Table 11 – Did Employment Enable Participants to Leave Welfare?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Paid well enough</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>29.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Still got welfare</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>70.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>128</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

G. If you got off welfare because of your job, did you still need to use food pantries or soup kitchens because your pay was too low?

SNAPSHOT SURVEY Table 12 – Did you still need to use EFP after finding a job through WtW?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>64.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>28.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Sure</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Ans</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>128</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

H. Did you make enough to support yourself? (i.e. pay rent, utilities, etc)
SNAPSHOT SURVEY Table 13 – Did Job Pay Enough to Support Yourself?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Valid</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>27.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>69.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Sure</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Ans</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>128</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Explanation:** This question seeks to evaluate the effectiveness of job skills or preparation provided by local districts. Many districts do provide some basic job preparation, such as how to prepare a resume, take supervision, look for a job, do a job interview, etc.

**Responses:** Slightly more than half reported that they had participated in job skills or preparation training in the last two years. Slightly more than half reported that it was not valuable; about a quarter found that it led to a job. Of the 17 respondents who found a job from job prep, three quarters made $10 an hour or less (though some of the respondents reported salaries from jobs even if it wasn’t from job prep.) A significant percentage reported that job prep lasted more than 5 months (the average time length of job prep is somewhat underreported since some respondents were still engaged in job prep.)

Respondents were far more likely to report that they found a job due to their own efforts than as a result of being assisted by DSS / HRA. Of those who found a job, a very small percentage were making enough to support themselves.

5. What job related skills have you obtained from DSS / HRA? Please check all that apply.

Explanation: This question seeks to determine what job related skills individuals have acquired through DSS / HRA? Respondents could cite as many skills as they had obtained.

Response: Interview skills and resume writing were cited by about one-quarter of the participants. Job readiness / prep skills, computer training, job skills training and punctuality were cited by about 20% of the respondents. It is noteworthy that a significant percentage were provided computer training, since this consistently ranked as among the greatest self-perceived need for training.
SNAPSHOT SURVEY Table 14 – What Job Skills Did You obtain from DSS / HRA?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answers</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Computer training/typing</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>19.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problem solving (child care emergency)</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>9.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job Skills-Supportive employment services (VESID)</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>8.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job Skills-Job skills training</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>16.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job Skills-Job certification pgm (nurse, home health aide)</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job Skills-Job readiness/job prep skills</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>22.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job Skills-Record keeping</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>7.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job Skills-Resume writing</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>25.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job Skills-Punctuality</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>16.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job Skills-Inter-personal skills</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>13.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job Skills-Vocational Training</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job Skills-Job interview skills</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>24.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job Skills-Customer Svc</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>14.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

HOW MANY CITED NONE

6. Are there particular job training, skills or education that you need to make you employable?

SNAPSHOT SURVEY Table 15 – Do you need Job Training, Skills or Education to be Employable?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Valid</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>65.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>31.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Sure</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If so, what are they? (open ended, no specific choices)

SNAPSHOT SURVEY Table 16 – What Jobs Skills, Education or Training is Needed?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answers</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Percent Of those saying yes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Technological training (computer, etc.)</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>25.8%</td>
<td>42.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>education</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>19.5%</td>
<td>32.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vocational training (carpentry, nursing, etc.)</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>23.1%</td>
<td>35.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Skills (punctuality, problem solving, etc.)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.9%</td>
<td>6.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Misc.</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>11.7%</td>
<td>19.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Explanation:** This question seeks to identify the jobs skills or education that individuals feel they need to become employable. This was an open ended question.

Response: Two-thirds of the respondents indicated that they needed additional skills. The biggest needs cited were technological training / computers, followed by vocational training (carpentry, nursing) and education.

7. In the last two years, did HRA/DSS give you the option of going to school full time instead of a workfare/job preparation assignment? (Please circle one – if no, or not sure, please skip to question 8)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SNAPSHOT SURVEY Table 16 – Did HRA / DSS Give Full Time Education as an Option?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Valid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Sure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No Ans</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>18.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>128</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

I. **If the education was approved**, what was the referral to? (Please check all that apply)

A. GED, High School, ABE or Literacy:
   1. For how long did you attend? ___ Weeks OR ___ Months
   2. Do you believe that this was: ___ Too Short ___ About Right ___ Too Long

B. English as a Second Language (ESL):
   1. For how long did you attend? ___ Weeks OR ___ Months
   2. Do you believe that this was: ___ Too Short ___ About Right ___ Too Long

C. College:
   1. For how long did you attend? ___ Weeks OR ___ Months
   2. Do you believe that this was: ___ Too Short ___ About Right ___ Too Long

**Note:** there were too few responses to these questions to be significant.

II. Were you able to go back to school?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SNAPSHOT SURVEY Table 17 – Were participants able to go to school?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>YES</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Valid</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>21.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>68.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Sure</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>10.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>128</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If no, then why not?
SNAPSHOT SURVEY Table 18 – Reasons for Not Being Able to Go to School

11.5% Trouble finding a school
7.7% Trouble proving enrollment/participation to DSS/HRA
15.3% Transportation issues
7.7% Own health problems
3.8% Health/substance/other problem with family member
19.2% Trouble finding/paying for child care
26.9% Trouble paying for school
15.3% Didn’t want to be in school
23.1% Other, please specify: ________________________________

Explanation: This question examines how well respondents felt that DSS / HRA had met their educational needs. A particular focus is whether they had been allowed to use education to meet with work participation requirements.

Responses: Less than 20% of respondents had been given the option of attending education full time, reflective of the low-percentage of welfare participants presently engaged in educational activities. An even smaller number actually participated in education. The low number of respondents resulted in very low responses to the additional questions. A number of respondents cited child care and the cost of schooling as barriers.

8. Did you ever ask for education and job training but were told by HRA /DSS that you couldn't participate?

SNAPSHOT SURVEY Table 19 – Did DSS/HRA Deny You Access to Education?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Never Asked</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>54.7</td>
<td>66.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asked but Turned Down</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>28.1</td>
<td>34.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>82.8</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Response</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>17.2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>128</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Almost a third (28.1%) of respondents said they were denied the right to education.

If rejected, what reason was given, if any? ________________________________
**SNAPSHOT SURVEY Table 20 – Reasons why DSS/HRA Denied Access to Education?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>HRA/DSS said to get job</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>8.6</td>
<td>45.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HRA/DSS said educ/job training pgms not available</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>25.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HRA/DSS didn't give reason</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.8</td>
<td>4.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (had to do WEP)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>12.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HRA/DSS said had a degree</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.8</td>
<td>4.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drug Addiction</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.8</td>
<td>4.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child care only for work, not educate</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.8</td>
<td>4.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>18.8</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Explanation:** This question sought to determine whether respondents were successful in having DSS / HRA respond to their request for access to education.

**Response:** The most common reasons for being denied education was that HRA / DSS said they had to get a job instead or that education was not available.

9. How much education have you received?
   ____ Did not get high school degree. (completed ____ grade)
   ____ Graduated from high school
   ____ Attended some college (how many years: ____ )
   ____ Obtained a college degree

**SNAPSHOT SURVEY Table 21 – Level of Education of respondents**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of Education</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Completed Elementary School</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Completed 7th Grade</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>5.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Completed 8th Grade</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>10.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Completed 9th Grade</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6.9</td>
<td>17.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Completed 10 Grade</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>21.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Completed 11 Grade</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>10.9</td>
<td>32.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduated High School (incl GED)</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>29.7</td>
<td>62.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 months or less of college</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>67.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 months to 1 yr of college</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>8.9</td>
<td>76.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 to 2 years of college</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>11.9</td>
<td>88.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 to 3 years of college</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>89.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 or more years of college</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>90.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Obtained college degree</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>9.9</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**No Ans** 0 27 128
**Explanation:** This question was designed to determine the education level of respondents.

**Response:** Nearly two thirds of the respondents indicated that they had at least finished high school or received their GED. 10% indicated they had received a college degree. This indicates that the respondents were better educated than the average welfare participant.

10. How would you rate your general reading and writing skills? Please circle one.

**SNAPSHOT SURVEY Table 22 – Self-evaluation of reading and writing skills**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Valid</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very Good</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>46.0</td>
<td>46.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>33.1</td>
<td>79.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fair</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>16.1</td>
<td>95.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>99.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very Poor</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.8</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>124</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>No Ans</strong></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>128</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Explanation:** respondents were asked to self-evaluate their reading and writing skills. This would provide some indication of their educational needs, especially for basic ed and literacy programs.

Response: Nearly three-quarters indicated that they had good or very good reading and writing skills. Prior studies indicate that nearly half of welfare participants are functionally illiterate (reading at or below a 9th grade level.)

11. Is English your first language? Please circle one.

**SNAPSHOT SURVEY Table 23 – Number of respondents with English as their first language**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Valid</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>82.0</td>
<td>85.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>14.1</td>
<td>14.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>123</td>
<td>96.1</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>No Ans</strong></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>128</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**If no,** did DSS / HRA offer you bilingual staff or interpreter services or translated versions of documents in your first language?
SNAPSHOT SURVEY Table 24 – If English was not first language, was bilingual services offered?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>31.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>62.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Sure</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If no, did DSS / HRA offer you ESL (English as a Second Language) or other help with reading and writing?

SNAPSHOT SURVEY Table 25– If English was not first language, was access to ESL provided?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>23.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>69.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Sure</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Explanation: These questions were meant to determine if the need for English as a Second Language was being met. (We did provide a Spanish version of the survey.)

Response. About one in six participants did not have English as their primary language. Only one third were offered translation assistance and one sixth were offered access to ESL.

12. Do you feel that DSS / HRA helped you become more employable? Please circle one.

SNAPSHOT SURVEY Table 26– Did DSS/ HRA Help You Become More Employable?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>18.8</td>
<td>24.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>52.3</td>
<td>69.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Sure</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>6.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>75.8</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Response: no. Only about ¼ found that they became more employable.

13. Did the training and/or education you received from HRA / DSS directly lead to obtaining a job?
SNAPSHOT SURVEY Table 27– Did DSS/HRA Training or education lead to a job?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Valid</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>9.4</td>
<td>14.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>50.8</td>
<td>79.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Sure</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>6.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>64.1</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Ans</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>35.9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>128</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Response: No.

14. Are there particular job training, skills or education that you need to make you employable?

SNAPSHOT SURVEY Table 28– Need Job Training, Skills or Education to Become Employable?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Valid</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>50.8</td>
<td>64.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>20.3</td>
<td>25.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Sure</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>7.8</td>
<td>9.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>78.9</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Ans</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>21.1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>128</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If yes, please explain. (open ended)

SNAPSHOT SURVEY Table 29- What Job Training, Skills or Education do You need to be Employable?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>% of ans ?</th>
<th>% of ans yes to ?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Technological training (computers)</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>34.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>21.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vocational training (carpentry, nursing, etc)</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>24.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Skills (punctuality, problem solving, etc)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Misc/</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>10.9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Response: More than half of the respondents cited the need for training or education to become employable. The biggest need cited was for more technical training (computers). The second highest needs were for education and vocational training. A number of respondents cited the need for help in obtaining various levels of nursing certification / license.

15. What could DSS / HRA do differently to help you and others find a good job

Many of the respondents cited the need for additional employment services, including post-employment services to help them keep their job. The second highest responses (about 25%) was the need for HRA / DSS to be more supportive of their situation (e.g., help them rather than sanction them, more respect)
and the need for more educational programs. Other issues were the need for more child care, and college education.

**SNAPSHOT SURVEY Table 3- What Can DSS/HRA do Differently to Help You Find a Job?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Requirement</th>
<th>Response</th>
</tr>
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<td>Be More Supportive</td>
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<td>Supportive employment services</td>
<td>38</td>
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<tr>
<td>(help clients find and keep jobs, etc)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Offer more educational opportunities</td>
<td>34</td>
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<tr>
<td>Be more personable</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improve access to domestic violence /</td>
<td>8</td>
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<tr>
<td>Substance abuse programs</td>
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<tr>
<td>Misc (e.g., child care)</td>
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<td>Avoid intimidation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Refrain from Judging</td>
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### Appendix - Hunger Action’s Prior Reports on Workfare

Hunger Action has done a series of reports over the last decade on the state’s welfare to work efforts. Unfortunately, the reports have documented similar problems over time: lack of access to training and education; failure of DSS / HRA to assist individuals in becoming more employable; failure to assist individuals in finding jobs; and, if jobs are found, they pass a poverty level wage or less.

Hunger Action’s first report on workfare - *Workfare: Workers Expect Paychecks, A Survey of the Performance of Workfare According to its Participants*, (Dec. 1997 by Pham, Dunlea and O’Connell) – was done before TANF was implemented in NY. NY had already been expanding workfare as part of the Jobs Opportunities and Basic Skills program.

The 1997 report recommended:

“That since workfare is among the least effective of the state’s welfare to work programs, workfare should be used as a last resort in meeting federal work participation requirements….In light of the much higher success rate of programs like grant diversion and on the job training in moving welfare participants into jobs, the state, New York City and counties should take advantage of every opportunity to create such opportunities for workfare participants. Jobs that provide a paycheck enable the participant to qualify for the federal and state Earned Income Tax Credit, supplement their income. The new state welfare law greatly expands New York City’s and the counties’ ability to utilize grant diversion.

“Government agencies and non-profits should treat any workfare assignment as a job. A job description should be prepared. Each participant should be given a handbook….Adequate supervision, training and equipment and support should be provided…Civil service laws should be amended to ensure that workfare experience counts as real work experience…Workfare participants who perform satisfactorily should be given preference in hiring for government funded jobs. Workfare participants who perform satisfactorily for three to six months should either be guaranteed a job or no longer be required to participate in workfare.”

The report also noted that Section 336(e) of NYS Social Services law states that participants can only be assigned to workfare “if sufficient private sector employment is not available.” Since local districts were
assigning individuals to workfare, this meant they had determined that there were not enough jobs available in the local economy. This was a key point since Governor Pataki and many other officials argued that there wasn’t a need for job creation. If this was true, there should have been enough private sector jobs to avoid the need for workfare. Hunger Action argued that job creation needed to be part of TANF, that merely imposing a five year limit on benefits would not be sufficient to move everyone into jobs if local districts had already legally determined that there was not sufficient private sector employment.

The report included a survey of workfare participants, primarily WEP in NYC.

The survey showed that the expansion of workfare had pushed many participants out of educational programs. One quarter (26%) of respondents had been in education/training programs prior to WEP. The largest number of participants had been enrolled in college (50%); the second largest program was GED (General Education Development or high school equivalency). Almost half of the students /trainees had to drop out of other education and training programs once called in for WEP. 51% of WEP workers who remained in school or training did so only with great difficulty.

Most WEP workers were not trained / instructed on basic safety precautions. WEP placements did not reflect participants’ prior work history and employment. Far more workfare participants (21.4%) were being forced off of welfare (e.g., sanctioned) than were finding jobs (8.3%). The most effective job placement programs were On the Job Training (67%) and TEAP (i.e. wage subsidy) (42.3%).

Two years after the implementation of TANF in NYS, HANNYS did a second report on workfare: Assessing the Effectiveness of Welfare-to-Work Programs in New York State: Recommendations for Economic Security (2001: Pham, Greenwood, Dunlea). 234 current and former welfare participants from 16 counties were surveyed between October and November of 2000.

48 percent of the participants believed they received valuable job training or experience from workfare/WEP, yet in only 14% of the cases did the assignment lead to a job. Of the 58% who had been required to do job preparation or job readiness activities, 60% believed it was valuable. 28% said this had led to a job, with an average pay of $7.18 an hour. They were in their jobs for an average of ten months.

The most common reasons cited by participants for not being able to work were: couldn’t find a job (20%), had no child care or couldn’t afford child care (11%); or had a mental or physical illness (11%).

85% were not given the option of going to school full time. For those given the option, on average they spent less than 3 months in education (1.3 months for English as a Second Language programs).

Over one half (52%) of respondents indicated they had a physical or mental health limitation. 45% indicated they had domestic violence issues in their lives but that HRA / DSS did not inquire about this.

A little over one third (36%) of respondents had been sanctioned for non-compliance with work requirements. The most frequently cited reason was a missed appointment (48%).

78% of the respondents indicated they had received a paycheck in the past two years; they made an average of $7.28 per hour and worked an average of 34 hours per week. This came to about $1,300 below the annual poverty rate. The vast majority (90%) indicated that they had not found their jobs through HRA or DSS; 70% found the jobs themselves. The jobs provided few benefits. Nearly half (44%) said they were no better off financially while employed than when they were receiving benefits.
In 2002, Hunger Action released *Access to Education and Training in the Empire State: Low-Income New Yorkers Need Increased Access*. The report provided research on the educational and skills characteristics of welfare recipients, the benefits of gaining additional schooling and training, the negative impact of welfare reform on access to these programs, and comparisons with other states that have chosen to make education and training a priority.

The report found that while many welfare participants had significant educational barriers to employment, NYS provided limited access to education and job training for welfare participants. The report found a clear relationship between education skills, employability and wages. The longer the person had been on welfare, the more likely they were to have low education and job skills. Welfare participants with a college education were far more likely to find employment which paid them enough to escape poverty.

As many as half of the TANF households in New York State had at least one member who had a physical or mental disability, including 44% of the parents. A similarly high percentage had learning disabilities. Despite the significant educational and job skill barriers confronting many welfare participants, less than 10% of welfare participants in the state (6%) were in education and training programs. Federal law, in defining work participation quotas, allowed up to 30% of the adult participants to be engaged in vocational education and training program.

A survey of a dozen counties found that none of them were utilizing post-employment training and education to assist welfare leavers in low-wage jobs to improve their skills and increase their earnings; this was in stark contrast to the rhetoric around the Jobs First approach to welfare reform. DSS officials argued that it was critical to get participants into any job, no matter how dead end, before they provided training and education. Yet they failed to have any programs to target / provide these services to welfare participants once employed. DSS officials did point out that such individuals were eligible for training and education programs that were available to any low-income worker.

The report found that college was particularly successful in helping participant’s transition off of welfare. One study found 75% of women receiving AFDC who complete at least one year of college are no longer dependent on welfare after two years. Other studies found that 87 percent of women who receive a two year degree never return to the welfare rolls, while welfare recipients who earn a bachelor's degree remain economically independent nearly 100 percent of time. It is estimated that hourly earnings increase by 19 to 24% for women earning an Associate's Degree and 28 to 33% for those earning a Bachelor's degree.
TRANSITIONAL JOBS (TJ)

Transitional jobs are time-limited, publicly subsidized jobs that combine real work, skill development, and support services to help participants overcome substantial barriers to employment and transition participants successfully into the labor market.

NYC HRA offers transitional jobs for welfare participants through its Parks Opportunity Program. OTDA allocated $1 million for transitional jobs as part of its recent Request for Proposals for the wage subsidy program. Transitional jobs in other states are moving long-term welfare recipients and other hard-to-employ adults into the workforce. The majority of program graduates—81 to 94 percent—go on to find unsubsidized employment averaging up to $10 per hour to start.

Research on welfare-to-work programs show the most effective programs adopt a “mixed strategy”—that is, programs that focus on employment but include significant use of education and training and other activities. Transitional jobs are particularly needed since most adults who remain on welfare in NYS have multiple barriers to employment; those who are more readily employable have already left for employment. These barriers include limited or no work history, little education, high rates of illiteracy (including non-English speaking), lack of hard and soft skills, and lack of transportation and child care

The Transitional Jobs model seeks to overcome these barriers by providing individuals with a wage-paying, short-term job that combines real work, skills development, and supportive services to successfully transition participants into the labor market.

Research on low-wage workers and on the job training programs suggests that programs will be more effective if: they target industries and occupations with relatively high earnings, employment growth, and opportunities for advancement; they are closely connected to employers to help TANF recipients gain access to better jobs than they could have gotten on their own; and caseworkers strive to match work activities and employment goals to individual recipients’ strengths, barriers, and interests.

Paid Transitional Employment can easily be incorporated into New York State’s TANF implementation strategy:

1. The time participants spent in subsidized employment (in the case of a government driven program) or unsubsidized employment (in the case of a business driven program) would count as core work activities. Participants need to engage in “core” work activities for a minimum of 20 hours.

2. Participants can engage in “non-core” activities for the remaining 10 hours of required work participation (for single parent households), including job skills training directly related to employment, education directly related to employment, and attendance in a secondary school or GED program.

A paycheck is by far the best evidence that work pays. A critical advantage of wage-based transitional jobs is that they provide participants with a clear connection between work and wages. NY instead relies primarily on workfare, which has drawn repeated complaints about “being make work”, lacks training in marketable skills, and lacks assistance in landing “real” jobs. But perhaps the biggest criticism is that unpaid work experience fails to give participants a stake in success. Workfare is an end in itself and not a transition to something better. Under a workfare-type program, participants aren’t working to earn their grants but to prevent losing them.

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Effectiveness of Transitional Jobs Program

2004 Comparison Study: An Evaluation that Compares Outcomes for a Multi-Site Transitional Jobs Program with Random Samples of Participants in the Minnesota Family Investment Program (Minnesota’s TANF Program)" compares a transitional jobs model (Advancement Plus) to random samples of participants in the Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP). This study provides overwhelming evidence that the transitional jobs strategy is successful for low wage workers including those who are ex-offenders, homeless, long term dependent on public assistance, refugees and immigrants. 48 percent of homeless participants who had been receiving welfare for 52 weeks before being placed in the transitional jobs program obtained unsubsidized employment at the conclusion of the program, compared to 34 percent of the homeless welfare recipients who were not in the transitional jobs program.

A 2002 review of six transitional jobs programs found that between 81 to 94% of the participants were employed, with a median hourly wage of $5.75 per hour to $9.00 per hour. Programs with well-defined job placement components had the highest rates of job placement.

An evaluation of Washington State’s Community Jobs program found strong positive impacts on employment and earnings. Even though participants had eight barriers to employment (the least work ready of state welfare recipients), 72% of the graduates had unsubsidized employment with an average wage increases of 60 percent. Participants earn and receive an average of $11,328 annually, nearly double the average of $6,552 received by those on TANF alone.

A 2002 Mid-America Institute on Poverty (MAIP) evaluation of the Catholic Charities Community Transitional Jobs program in Chicago found that six months after leaving the program, the Subsidized Job group’s average quarterly earnings of $2,407 was a 196 percent increase from the average earnings before entering the program. Earnings for the Subsidized Job group were 32 percent higher than the Limited Services group. Six months after program exit, 64.9 percent of the Subsidized Job group were employed in an unsubsidized job, compared to 47.2 percent of those in the Limited Services group.

Transitional Jobs are a Good Return on Investment

Community Voices Heard (CVH) worked with the Community Services Society to develop an updated transitional jobs program proposal for NY targeting welfare participants and ex-offenders. The groups had the Fiscal Policy Institute do a Return on Investment Study for the program. The study found that, while the program has a direct cost of $80 million to provide for an annual 4,000 subsidized transitional job slots, the net cost is only $49 million, and within three years the statewide initiative could pay for itself.

The analysis compares the cost of providing transitional jobs (including the cost of wage payments, training, supervision and other program administration) with the public savings that result when participants increase their likelihood of employment and therefore are more likely to stay out of jail or prison and get off public cash assistance rolls.

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39 http://www.cvhaction.org/proposals
4,000 publicly-financed transitional job “slots” would be provided over one year, with pay of $8.00 per hour for a 35-hour workweek. On average, participants would stay in the program for six months. Therefore the statewide initiative would enroll, over the course of 12 months, approximately 8,000 different individuals.

The analysis shows that a statewide TJ initiative in New York could pay for itself in just three years if it is able to increase employment rates by more than 26% for public assistance participants and by more than 35% for formerly incarcerated participants.

The actual public cost savings as a result of this initiative would likely be even greater because many additional savings have not been incorporated into this analysis. Take, for instance, the child support system. The formerly incarcerated participants would be expected to increase their child support payments to their families, which would result in lower public assistance payments to these families. Another example is in the area of justice system costs. This analysis includes only the cost of incarceration, but there would also be significant public cost savings for the entire judicial system with a reduction in recidivism. Furthermore, this is a conservative estimate of the return on investment because FPI did not include in the analysis any of the multiplier effects on the economy of the increased consumption capacity of the program participants.

The NYC POP’s Experience

The NYC City Council in 2002 enacted legislation for a transitional jobs program. After some litigation, the Mayor eventually agreed to the Parks Opportunity Program (POP). This program has had a mixed history.

According to the program’s website, POP is one of the nation’s largest transitional employment programs—with approximately 3,000 trainees working in New York City’s parks, playgrounds, and recreation centers. In preparation for private sector careers, POP participants gain transferable skills in fields such as security, horticulture, administration, maintenance, and customer service while receiving employment services and career counseling. The six-month training program has placed over 9,000 trainees into full-time positions since its inception in 1994. Groups such as CVH have been pushing the city to expand the POP model into other agencies.

In March of 2004 CVH released *Wages Work! An Examination of New York City’s Parks Opportunity Program (POP) and Its Participants*. The report showed that the first 3,500 POP workers, beginning March 2001, earned between $9.38 and $12.50 an hour, depending on job title, for 40 hours a week for 11 1/2 months (six months original placement followed by a citywide extension post 9/11). However, the report found that POP fell short of providing participants with the comprehensive supports that have made other transitional jobs programs successful.

Unfortunately, in 2003 the union titles of City Seasonal Aide (CSA), City Parks Worker (CPW), and Parks Enforcement Patrol (PEP) - that POP workers had previously been placed in - were combined into to a single non-union title of Job Training Participant (JTP). Wages were reduced to $7.50 per hour and sick leave and vacation accrual were taken away.

Following the releases of CVH’s 2004 report, the training and education division of POP was expanded. Individual Training Account (ITA) vouchers were provided to assist with educational opportunities. POP Phase II was developed to provide three months of extended unpaid job search time for a select group of JTP workers after completion of the six month paid work component. In the first month former workers are permitted to focus solely on continuing their job search with the Parks Department, and in the second and third months 3 days per week of WEP (unpaid work) are added to the schedule.
A followup survey of POP participants by CVH found strong dissatisfaction with the wage of $7.50 an hour. Most participants supported a wage of $9.50/hour, about the level of the wage that City Seasonal Aides (CSAs) receive; most POP participants saw CSAs doing the same work as they did. Participants also felt that on-the-job training opportunities decreased in POP phase two: Far fewer JTP workers felt that they learned new skills on the job as compared to participants in the earlier version of the program. Job search was identified by JTP workers as being the least helpful component of the program. Outside training programs offered by the parks department were highly rated, but not easily accessible for many participants. Training continues to be offered too late in the program, undermining the combined paid job with training principle of the program. Many JTP workers start their training late in the program cycle and then face the added challenge of trying to keep up with their training while they no longer have a paycheck coming in.

**An overview of Transitional Jobs Program**

Transitional jobs programs provide a bridge to unsubsidized employment by combining time-limited subsidized employment with a comprehensive set of services to help participants overcome barriers and build work-related skills. While these programs can be incorporated into a work-first approach, in that they aim to help participants begin work as quickly as possible, they offer a more nurturing work environment, additional training, and enhanced connections to other labor services that increase the success of a successful transition into unsubsidized job.

By working in a subsidized Transitional Job for three to twelve months, participants earn a paycheck, learn technical skills for higher wage jobs, obtain a work history, become eligible for the Earned Income Tax Credit (and Social Security, Unemployment, workers comp), and receive intensive mentoring and support. This reinforces the participant’s sense of ability and stability on the job and increases the participant’s job skills. Receiving a paycheck “makes work pay.” Earning wages can also lead to increased self-esteem and motivation to stay on the job.

Transitional jobs employers normally agree to assign a mentor (typically trained by the agency operating the Transitional Jobs program) who will also be the person reporting to the case manager on work performance and any workplace issues. Employers typically are nonprofits, but can be governmental agencies or for-profit employers. Private employers acting as Transitional Jobs employers usually contribute to the wages and either employ the participant post transitional job, or actively assist with placement activities.

Transitional jobs programs should include skill development as well as job placement. Participants are allowed to devote part of the required work hours to education and training related to the target job.

Participants work with job development staff in the search for unsubsidized employment. Based on assessed skill level, work experience, employment desires, and presence or lack of barriers, the job developer and case manager help the participant develop an individualized job. TJ programs typically offer job retention services for a minimum of 90 days.

Life skill classes and activities focus on skills needed to succeed in the transitional job as well as resolving challenges at work. Challenges include childcare, medical or drug treatment, parole or probation, other appointments, family problems, housing, and child support. These short-term, peer-to-

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40 This section draws heavily from www.transitionaljobs.net and Transitional Jobs: Helping TANF Recipients with Barriers to Employment Succeed in the Labor Market (CLASP, Allegra Baider and Abbey Frank, May 23, 2006)
peer classes address soft job skills, family support issues, and personal barriers. For most populations, but especially for persons with criminal records, classes should address anger management, stress reduction, conflict resolution, and other life skills.

Classes may include writing a resume, filling out an employment application, learning how to interview and conduct a job search, learning real wage expectations, learning how to dress on the job, displaying appropriate workplace behaviors, developing financial literacy, and engaging in career planning. Developing skills needed to retain employment starts with these classes and continues throughout participation in the Transitional Jobs program.

Other services typically provided include:

- Pre-placement assessments to identify barriers, develop short- and long-term employment and career goals, and match participants to work assignments that fit their interests, needs, and circumstances, identification of employment barriers is critical to the provision of appropriate work activities and services.

- Enhanced worksite supervision to help participants learn basic skills, acquire good work habits, ensure that they have significant job responsibilities, receive training, and make contributions to their employers;

- Connection to work supports, such as child care and transportation subsidies, which can be critical to job retention; and

- Unsubsidized job search and job placement activities.

Program funds are often used to provide assistance with transportation, clothing for work, tools for work, emergency food, and other emergency needs. For example, some programs provide participants with public transportation passes during orientation and throughout the Transitional Job phase.

Programs should be willing to tailor services to individuals with significant barriers. Some participants may require a more flexible and supportive work environment so that they can adjust to work, while simultaneously engaging in barrier removal activities (e.g., substance abuse treatment). Programs can gradually build up both the hours of work and the responsibilities of employees over time.

Case management in TJ programs is work focused, an ongoing activity that monitors progress toward short-term goals, and promotes progress toward unsubsidized employment. Case management can include:

- ongoing employment counseling during job readiness training, employability planning, and the Transitional Job assignment;
- evaluation and review of weekly performance on the job;
- weekly planning to improve workplace success through greater management of personal barriers and skill attainment;
- monitoring of participation in job search and interviewing with job leads; and
- linkage to other supports to gain unsubsidized employment while in a transitional job.

Incentives for program participants can serve as crucial program and job retention devices to encourage both mentors and participants to remain engaged with the program. These can be made available while the employee is in a Transitional Job or as incentives when milestones are reached in employment.
Transitional Jobs programs have used gym memberships, aerobics classes, computer class certificates, and other similar in-kind contributions.

Education and Training: Linkages to education (ABE, ESL, GED, college) and vocational training are strongly encouraged. Whenever possible, resources for education should be leveraged to couple the skill or educational credential gain with growing self-confidence in the workplace to move the participant toward higher wage employment. Training and education should be related to skills in demand in the local labor market, and targeted at industries that pay higher wages. Training should also be applicable to the worksite, and wherever possible lead to skill certifications or credentials.

**Transitional Jobs placements** vary, depending on the type of TJ program. There are three main program models: individual placement, work crews, and social enterprises. For each program model, program participants work with a mentor at the work site.

- **Individual placement**: Program staff members work with individual participants to place them in a Transitional Job. Types of placement sectors may include clerical, maintenance, food service, and childcare. There may be only one TJ participant working at a work site or there may be a few. This is the most common TJ model.

- **Work Crews**: Work crews of five to seven TJ participants under the direction of a supervisor are sent each day to work sites to perform a job. Jobs often include maintenance, repair, and sanitation jobs for parks, schools, and government facilities.

- **Social enterprises**: TJ participants work at a business run by the TJ program. Funding for the program comes from program funds as well as business revenue. Social enterprise TJ programs currently include a packaging plant, a manufacturing company that produces soap products, a bookstore, a moving company, and numerous retail cafes.

To meet the diverse needs of program participants, a variety of transitional jobs placements should be available in different industries and in different job types within industries. Job placements should provide workers with transferable skills that are in demand in the local labor market.

Adequate supervision at the worksite will help participants develop skills and address problems as they arise. Keeping the ratio of participants to supervisors small will ensure more intensive supervision. Programs may want to provide training for supervisors about how to effectively supervise transitional workers who may need more support than other employees.

Transitional jobs programs should develop strong job placement activities, to connect participants to high quality unsubsidized jobs. Retention activities help to ensure continued success after the transitional job placement ends, and can include case management, and financial and non-financial incentives. Retention services should also include connections to work supports such as the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC), childcare subsidies and transportation assistance.

Transitional jobs programs should use data systems to track client progress and employment outcomes, and make program improvements on an ongoing basis, based on the data collected.
Some Transitional Jobs Models

I. Transitional Work Corporation (TWC), Philadelphia.

Philadelphia’s transitional work program, Philadelphia@Work, is probably the largest and best-known transitional jobs program in the country. Serving about 1,500 individuals per year, its capacity is 750 clients at any given time. It serves clients who have received TANF funds for at least 24 months and is one of a number of allowable work activities. Participants receive an hourly wage, along with a full range of work supports, including food stamps, transportation, and child care assistance.

Clients who choose TWC typically have the following characteristics: low education levels, low basic skills, little to no prior work experience or a history of job cycling, a history of cycling through employment and training programs, a history of substance abuse, a history of mental health issues, a history of domestic violence, and, on average, three dependents.

Participants begin the program with a two-week mandatory orientation. In addition to acclimating the participant to the working world, the orientation includes soft skills training, resume development, interviewing for transitional employment, introductory computer training, and employment paperwork/tax assistance.

Participants are placed in subsidized jobs in public or nonprofit agencies by the end of orientation. The majority of transitional placements are in the clerical, custodial, child care, and health care arenas. Participants work for 25 hours per week and are supervised by both their TWC career advisor and an on-site “work partner.” Work partners, permanent staff of the work sites, serve as mentors and provide direct supervision to each TWC participant. All work partners receive extensive training by TWC and receive a stipend of $49 per month for their time commitment.

TWC models all of its programs after the corporate work environment. TWC is the employer for its participants and treats all participants as employees rather than clients. All participants are paid minimum wage ($6.25) an hour for 25 hours a week of subsidized employment. Additionally, they must participate in 10 hours a week of unpaid trainings that address employment-related skills, basic math and literacy skills, computer skills, and additional soft skills training. All employees are introduced to computers and basic computer software regardless of their employment focus.

Participants stay in transitional jobs for a maximum of 6 months. During this time, all participants receive supportive services (transportation, child care and clothing allowances). After participants have worked at a host site for 3-4 months, they undergo an assessment of hard skills, soft skills, and experience and a review of their certifications or licenses. Staff work with the participant to find permanent, unsubsidized employment. TWC permanent placements typically offer 35 hours of work a week and pay $7.50-$8.00 per hour. Most jobs offer benefits within 90 days of hire. (TWC does not target unsubsidized employers who offer less than 30 hours of work per week.)

Once employed in an unsubsidized job, participants are eligible for $800 in retention bonuses: $200 to be paid after two weeks of retention; $200 to be paid after three months of retention; and $400 to be paid after six months of retention. Additionally, participants are eligible for 26 weeks of transportation passes and additional advanced career training.

66.74% of those placed at least 180 days ago retained unsubsidized employment for two full quarters following placement.
II. Washington’s Community Jobs

Washington’s Community Jobs program started in 1997. It serves about 2,600 participants per year, with a maximum capacity of 1,500 participants at any given time. The program is open to participants who have failed job search and have been deemed to have significant multiple barriers to employment. Participants typically have the following characteristics: low education levels, low basic skills, little to no work experience or a history of job cycling, history of substance abuse, history of mental health issues, history of domestic violence, been in sanction for non-participation (40%), and an average of eight barriers to employment, not including transportation or child care.

The programs contracts with 14 community-based organizations and four tribes. The contracts are performance based. Participants are hired for 20 hours a week for up to nine months. CJ participants earn paychecks from their employers. These nonprofit CJ contractors develop CJ jobs, design career ladders, help participants access vocational training, and administer support such as reinstating driver’s licenses and negotiating debt reduction. Participants also receive child care and other work supports, training, education, and counseling. CJ removes obstacles to work and rebuilds self-confidence through work. Because of the Washington State’s minimum wage ($8.55 an hour) and eligibility for the Advanced Earned Income Tax Credit, CJ participants earn more than other Washington welfare participants.

The organizations are encouraged to tailor Community Jobs to region-specific circumstances. For example, in response to a shortage of bus drivers in the area, Community Jobs administrators in the Puget Sound area created a program to train and place school bus drivers in jobs with local school districts, Head Start, medical facilities, and corporate campuses. Many graduates of the bus driver training program later found unsubsidized positions paying from $8 to $15 an hour.

The majority of the participant's time is spent working at an employment site matching the participant's interests and skill goals. This is supported through additional training and intensive case management. The contractors try to pinpoint support services most appropriate to each participant.

CJ has expanded the model by providing private sector placement options to further support the career interests of participants. The program includes shorter enrollment in a subsidized positions, career ladder tracks, higher wages, benefits, and focused training for optimal skill development and growth in a workplace setting. Once employed in an unsubsidized job, CJ contractors provide up to four months of intensive job retention services for the participants. Other key initiatives include at-risk youth and pre-apprenticeship tracks.

Participant income increased during CJ due to the addition of wages and the Earned Income Tax Credit. Those employed one year after leaving CJ more than doubled their pre-CJ income. (www.eoionline.org) An evaluation by the University of Washington found that CJ increased participants’ likelihood of employment by 33% and raised participants’ post-CJ earnings an average of $792 per quarter. Of program participants, 65% obtain unsubsidized employment. 41

III. Community Service Employment (CSE) Program, Vermont

Vermont's Community Service Employment program was launched as part of an innovative welfare reform experiment, called the Welfare Restructuring Project (WRP), between 1991 and 1993. Two key WRP provisions were a state-imposed time limit leading to a work requirement and a publicly-funded job under the CSE program that offers wages in exchange for work to those who cannot meet their work requirement with an unsubsidized job.

In addition to child care assistance and other supports, participants receive a cash stipend (as a supplement to wages) to reimburse payroll taxes and other work-related expenses.

Welfare recipients who remained unemployed two months prior to the 30-month time limit were required to participate in job search activities for up to 20 hours per week. Those who found unsubsidized jobs providing at least 15 hours per week of work (or 30 hours in the case of a parent in a two-parent family) were deemed to have satisfied the state's work requirement. Those unsuccessful in their job search and who reached the time limit were placed in CSE positions.

CSE positions lasted a maximum of 10 months. Participants unable to find unsubsidized jobs during this period were required to perform an additional two months of job search, after which they can be reassigned to another CSE position if necessary. CSE participants can engage in education or training activities at any time by enrolling in the full Reach Up program. If a participant makes this choice, the family development plan is revised to specify a new employment goal, steps and services needed to achieve the goal, target dates for completion of each step, and support services which the state will provide. The case manager is permitted to scale back required hours of work to as few as five hours per week in order to enable those who enroll in Reach Up to participate in education, training, or other work preparation activities.

A wide range of jobs in public and non-profit agencies were developed for CSE participants. The most common jobs were clerical, maintenance, recreation and highway crew workers with local governments, public schools, and human service organizations (e.g., hospitals, food banks, community action agencies, and senior citizen centers). CSE participants also worked in local housing authorities, National Guard centers, colleges, public landfills, and the district offices of various state agencies. Initial orientation briefings on the CSE program held in each of the state's 12 welfare districts played an important role in publicizing the program and generating interest among agencies in serving as worksite providers.

A 2002 Analysis of Vermont's Community Service Employment Program by Manpower Corporation found that “though most CSE participants viewed their CSE experience positively, only slightly more than half saw their CSE job as a way out of welfare. CSE was credited with helping participants gain/improve the following types of employment qualifications: skills required for specific jobs; basic job skills; ability to use tools and machines; academic skills; soft skills; and good work habits. Supervisors generally considered CSE useful, but stated that they could have given participants more training had the CSE positions been full time.”

IV. Jobs Plus (Oregon).

The intent of JOBS Plus services is to enhance employability for clients unlikely to be hired at their current skill level for their short-term job goal. JOBS Plus placements are limited to six consecutive months. JOBS plus provides an incentive to clients and employers by converting FS, TANF, or UI (Unemployment Insurance).
To encourage participation by private employers, Oregon’s program reimburses employers for up to six months’ worth of wages, plus the employers’ share of payroll taxes, unemployment insurance, and workers’ compensation.

JOBS Plus services include paid work experience and mentoring, payment of at least minimum wage for the hours worked, and contribution of $1 per hour worked to an Individual Education Account (IEA) after 30 days of worksite participation. The participant can use the account after they have completed JOBS Plus and hold a full-time, unsubsidized job for at least 30 days. Participants receive child care benefits for work hours, plus other support services necessary for participation.

JOBS Plus placements must not require the participant to work over 40 hours per week, must not displace regular employees or positions, must not pay below the Oregon minimum wage, must offer Workers' Compensation, and must offer the same benefits given to other temporary employees, including paid leave time and group health insurance.

Participants may be required to complete one day of job search each week after their fourth month of placement; the employer treats this as paid time.

The participant may end a JOBS Plus worksite assignment if they contact DHS with a request to end after two weeks. They may end up to two assignments, with the third and subsequent requests subjected to good cause determination and possible disqualification if they do not cooperate. JOBS Plus employers may end the worksite assignment by contacting DHS with a request.

Oregon also has Jobs Work Supplement (see next chapter for additional information). The intent of work supplementation services is to provide a short-term wage supplement as an incentive for employers to train and hire welfare clients. DHS, the client and the employer develop a contract for up to six months of paid worksite training. DHS subsidizes the participant's wages by diverting up to $200 per month of the participant's welfare benefits to the employer. The employer must agree to hire the client permanently for the position they are trained for during the work supplementation placement. The wage should be sufficient to end cash benefits, or have the potential to end cash benefits.

Clients appropriate for work supplementation include those receiving welfare benefits who have no recent work experience, or lack the work experience that would enable them to reach their short-term job goal. Also appropriate are clients whose work history or current assessment shows a need for developing positive workplace skills in a structured setting with pay. These are clients who are unlikely to be hired without offering an incentive to the employer. Employed clients whose employers will create an upgraded training position for them if offered this supplement are also appropriate, if this leads to a permanent position with enhanced wages and/or benefits.
WORKER SUPPLEMENT PROGRAMS, IDAS, MICROENTERPRISE AND COLLEGE

This section summarizes a variety of approaches that New York could take to strengthen its efforts to move participants into living wage jobs.

Worker Supplements

Worker supplement programs provide additional income support to working families, keeping them on the TANF caseload longer than if the supplement had not been in place. From a federal perspective, participants in these programs are TANF recipients because they are funded with either TANF or TANF MOE dollars. However, from a state perspective, they often operate entirely separate from the state's regular TANF program. In some cases, these programs are delivered through mechanisms other than cash assistance and may include a broader range of services aimed at helping recipients stay employed and advance to better jobs. Nearly 20 states have implemented or will soon implement new worker support programs.

Primary benefits of these programs are that they help states achieve higher work participation rates by keeping working families on the TANF caseload longer and they provide extra cash and non-cash support to working families.

The worker supplement programs typically are targeted to TANF recipients who are meeting their TANF work participation requirement and become ineligible for TANF benefits because their earnings are too high. A few states also are planning to extend their TANF income supplements to working families with children receiving food stamps but not receiving TANF. In most states, eligible families receive a flat grant or a portion of their current TANF grant for a specified period.

Seven states reported a monthly earnings supplement program for working TANF clients, and another 10 states indicated they were considering such a program. Earnings supplements not only raise clients’ household incomes, but also have positive impacts on employment and contribute to better outcomes for children in client households. State earnings supplement programs vary widely: monthly benefits range from $10 to $150 and time limits on the receipt of benefits range from a three-month cap to no predetermined time limit.

States and localities, including Connecticut and Milwaukee, have designed programs in which those receiving wage supplements are still in the TANF program. The other programs require the individual to leave traditional TANF assistance entirely in order to receive the supplement. In the past, states have used federal TANF funding and state MOE funds to pay for wage supplement programs. Generally, these programs ran for short durations, usually paying supplements for 2-3 years before terminating.

In general, wage supplement programs have seen considerable success. A report by the Manpower Research Demonstration Corporation (MDRC) details three state programs and the Canadian program; according to the report these programs increased incomes, employment, and earnings of participants as much as 10-15% above that of traditional TANF participants. Some of the programs managed to achieve these results at a considerably lower cost for the state than traditional TANF assistance, the catch being that the benefits did not last beyond the duration of the supplement program.

Increases in Income, Earnings, and Employment: the MDRC research found that wage supplements typically increased earnings by about $200-$300 per month, and income by about $350-$500 per month, above traditional assistance. Note that this was the result even with the traditional welfare work control group receiving the earned income tax credit (EITC) incentive. Employment was also increased by between 10-15%. Importantly, this increase in employment was not only due to previously unemployed individuals getting jobs but also currently part-time employed persons increasing their work hours. For many program participants, this meant a switch from part-time to full-time work.

Most notably, the wage supplements had the most positive impacts for participants receiving welfare for more than 5 years and with one or more barriers to employment. They saw income increases of nearly $200 a month and employment increases of 7%. These modest improvements are impressive considering the multiple barriers often faced by these individuals.

Cost: depending on program design, a wage supplement program can be fairly modest, largely due to the fact that the payment structure for the supplements is more streamlined and administrative costs are much lower than traditional assistance programs. The Canadian program, for example, only costs $200 per participant per year, not including the costs of the supplements themselves. Other state programs were more expensive: the Minnesota program spent about $1,900 more per year for each family over and above what was spent on the control group. The costs came primarily from the program’s more generous earnings disregard and the ability of families to continue receiving Medicaid. The Milwaukee program was more costly because eligibility was expanded to include working poor families who would not have received welfare. The program spent about $4,000 per group member on its services and work supports (net of savings to various public assistance programs).

The programs states have created vary on several dimensions, including: (1) the amount of cash assistance provided, (2) the length of time for which assistance is provided, (3) whether any non-cash assistance or services are provided, and (4) the mechanism through which the additional income and other support is delivered. While states may have considered multiple factors in designing their programs, many of their final decisions have been driven by cost constraints. Below, to demonstrate the range of state approaches, we provide four examples of programs states have implemented or are planning to implement to increase their work participation rates by providing additional assistance to working families.

Arkansas Work Pays.

Families in Arkansas who have received TANF payments within the last six months are eligible to receive monthly cash assistance payments of $204 per month for up to 24 months through the Arkansas Work Pays program. The program was implemented in July 2006 and is limited to 3,000 participants. To be eligible, families must be working at least 24 hours per week, must be meeting the work participation requirement, and must have income under 100 percent of the federal poverty level.

Once in the program, families can continue to participate as long as their income is below 150 percent of the federal poverty level (up to the 24-month maximum). In addition to the monthly cash payment, participants are eligible to receive job retention and exit bonuses (received at the end of 24 months for meeting work requirements for 21 out of 24 months and for earnings exceeding the federal poverty level) totaling $3,000. They also receive case management services that focus on job retention and career advancement planning. While participants are working they may be eligible for help with educational and work-related expenses, and child care and transportation assistance. They also are eligible for other existing programs targeted to working families (for example, Individual Development Accounts and financial credit counseling).
In November 2007, Washington State created the Work First Career Services (WFCS) program to help employed families leaving TANF. The program is administered by the Employment Security Department, which is separate from the TANF agency, and is targeted to families working 30 hours or more per week in an unsubsidized job who have received TANF or a Diversion Cash Assistance (DCA) payment within the previous two months. Each adult in the family who meets the eligibility criteria may receive his/her own payment and services for up to six months. Program participants are eligible to receive up to $650 in cash payments and bonuses over the six-month period following the closing of their TANF cases or receipt of DCA. Recipients are eligible for a monthly payment of $50 (a total of $300 over six months); a $150 enrollment bonus; two bonuses, of $100 each, for completing a career services assessment (in month four) and an employment planning interview (in month six).

In addition to cash payments, the program provides wage progression services designed to help participants move to better jobs and job retention services designed to help them keep their current jobs. In order to maintain their eligibility for the full six months, participants must remain employed for 30 hours per week and not return to TANF.

**Utah Family Employment Program (FEP) Transitional Cash Assistance (TCA) and Extended Services**

In May 2007, Utah created TCA for FEP/TANF leavers who: (1) have received FEP benefits for at least one month, (2) are employed for an average of 30 hours a week per month, and (3) have verified their income and hours in the month following the closure of their FEP case. Self-employed individuals are eligible as long as their monthly earnings divided by the federal minimum wage equals at least an average of 30 hours per week per month. Two-parent families are also eligible as long as each parent meets the 30-hour work requirement. Eligible families receive their full TANF benefit ($474 for a family of three) for two months and 50 percent of their benefit in the third month. TCA eligibility is limited to once in a 24-month period. Since the program is funded with MOE dollars, the months of cash assistance covered by the TCA do not count toward the federal TANF or Utah lifetime limit. Families who receive a TCA benefit also may receive 24 months of case management and 6 months of transitional child care. In addition, they may be eligible for discretionary grants to cover specific work expenses (such as uniforms, tools, or car repairs).

**Vermont Reach Ahead.**

During the 2007-2008 session, the Vermont Legislature created Reach Ahead for employed former TANF recipients. The program assists TANF recipients who have recently become employed to maintain their employment and to promote greater family stability. To be eligible, recipients must have received TANF within the last six months, be meeting their TANF work requirement, meet the financial eligibility guidelines for the Vermont Health Access program (a health insurance program for uninsured individuals whose income is at or below 75 percent of the federal poverty line), and be a current recipient of food stamp benefits. The program was implemented for single-parent families on October 1, 2008. Subject to the appropriation of additional funds, the program will be expanded to two-parent families by April 1, 2009.

Program benefits are provided in the form of food assistance equal to $100 per month for the first six months of family eligibility and $50 per month for the seventh through the twelfth months. The additional state-funded food assistance money will be added to a participant's electronic benefit transfer (EBT) account. The food assistance may be used to purchase eligible food items as defined in the federal food stamp rules and is disregarded for purposes of determining food stamp eligibility and the amount of
food stamp benefits. Families who receive the assistance are not required to assign child support to the state and all child support received by the family is disregarded as income. If needed, participants can receive individualized case management services, support services, and referrals to assist them in maintaining self-sufficiency for the 12 months in which they are receiving the food assistance.

**Individual Development Accounts (IDAs)**

IDAs are dedicated savings accounts similar in structure to IRAs. Generally, the account holder chooses to save toward one of three goals: purchasing a first home, continuing education or job training, or starting or expanding a small business.

Many Americans work hard to get an education, purchase a home, or start a business. But they usually have help along the way from family, professional networks, and the myriad other opportunities that come with economic advantage. Even the federal government subsidizes asset accumulation for the non-poor via mortgage interest deductions, preferential capital gains, and pension fund exclusions. For the significant number of Americans who lack the resources to take advantage of those opportunities, basic goals like education, home ownership, and meaningful employment remain an elusive dream.

Community development organizations use funds from public and private sources to match the account holder’s deposits. Within a few years, the account holder can accumulate sufficient assets to invest in the chosen goal. In addition to matching funds, account holders receive credit counseling, help with budgeting, and economic literacy training.

IDA programs have varying levels of eligibility requirements. Some include households living at less than or equal to 150 percent or 200 percent of the federal poverty level, while others require that the account holder’s household income not exceed 80 percent of the area median income. Organizations also determine eligibility for IDA programs using household net worth. IDAs are designed to help individuals and families who have both low income and low assets. Funds from government appropriations and private sources match the account holder’s deposits at a rate ranging from 1:2 to 9:1. Programs place limits on the amount that will be matched each year.

Asset-building strategies represent an increased emphasis on developing self-sufficiency. Some IDA holders rely on public assistance. Traditional public assistance program address only income maintenance and consumption. Such programs do not support the transition to self-sufficiency, and strict asset limits for recipients of public assistance create a barrier to savings. Asset-building programs complement income maintenance programs by providing a realistic vehicle through which individuals and families can improve their economic well-being. Many of the IDA holders who participate in income maintenance programs will be able to move off public assistance.

A number of other states have made significant strides in developing IDA programs. Indiana has backed its IDAs with $6.5 million from the state general fund and another $500,000 annually in tax credits to contributors to an IDA program. Anyone who contributes to an Indiana IDA will receive a fifty percent tax credit on contributions between $1,000 and $50,000. The match rate is 6:1 total, composed of 3:1 by the state and 3:1 required of administering organizations. In Pennsylvania, the State has appropriated $1.25 million for a Family Savings Account program. North Carolina appropriated $300,000 a year for IDAs, along with $250,000 of Community Development Block Grant funds for home ownership IDAs. Iowa has allocated $50,000 to support a five-year demonstration known as the Family Investment Program. Other states give tax benefits to contributors to IDA programs. A total of more than forty community-based organizations and twelve states are running or supporting IDA programs.
At the federal level, Congress has passed the Assets for Independence Act. The Assets for Independence Act set up a national IDA demonstration project, funded over four years with $100 million. In order to access these funds states and local groups must provide a non-federal match.

**Job Creation through Microenterprise Development**

The Bangladeshi economist Muhammad Yunus and his Grameen Bank won the 2006 Nobel Peace Prize for pioneering a new category of banking known as micro-credit, which grants small loans to poor people who have no collateral and who do not qualify for conventional bank loans. The program has enabled millions of Bangladeshis, almost all women, to buy everything from cows to cell phones in order to start and run their own businesses. Similar micro-credit projects have helped millions around the world lift themselves out of poverty.

Similar efforts are needed in poor communities in the United States.

Microenterprise is a business with five or fewer employees requiring $35,000 or less in start up capital, and lacking access to the traditional commercial banking sector. By generating new economic activity, Microenterprise increases public tax revenues and private incomes, thereby reducing dependence on public assistance, which in turn helps to shrink public budgets. These significant social and economic benefits far outweigh the cost of public and private investment in Microenterprise development.

According to the U.S. Census, Microenterprises account for fully 88% of all businesses in NYS and employ approximately 20% of the state’s workforce. Sole proprietorships (a business without employees) account for 72% of all businesses in NYS and have had an average annual growth rate of 3.36% between 1997 and 2003 (equates to an average of 45,000 new businesses per year). There are currently 1.6 million microenterprises operating in New York generating approximately $58 billion in revenues annually. Microenterprise development should be viewed as an economic development priority not an afterthought. The emphasis of New York’s economic development policy is on attracting and retaining large businesses while small business development gets only a fraction of the resources.

Empire State Development Corporations Annual Report to the Legislature (2000) on the state funded Microenterprise development program reported that:

- State funded programs conservatively generate $2 in tax revenue for every state dollar invested in the program;
- Program costs the state only $1,585 per job created (Compared to the Jobs Now Program which averages $10,000 per job and the Job Development Authority that averages $35,000 per job);
- Programs should be expanded to areas of the state that currently lack coverage and grants to these training organizations should increase to maximize federal matching dollars.

**Increase Access to College for Welfare Participants**

New York State should increase the number of welfare participants in college, since college experience increases both earnings and employability. NY should take advantage of every federal provision to expand access to college. It should also look at other state models as to how to create state programs related to college.

A college degree or credential is one of the only resources consistently proven to lift low-income families out of poverty and off of TANF assistance. According to a study by the Community College Research Center, in 2001 individuals with an associate’s degree typically earned 25% more than those with only a high school degree, and had unemployment rates 1/3 lower. The earnings from bachelor’s
degrees were even more dramatic, 75% higher than high school degrees and unemployment rates 2/3 lower. As the value of a college education in the labor market increases every year, the differences in earnings are likely to be even more drastic now.

Ninety percent (90%) of adults receiving welfare were and still are women with children. Research showed that eighty-eight percent (88%) of women who attain a bachelor's degree move to jobs with a living wage and permanently out of poverty. A new report from the Institute for Women's Policy Research (IWPR) confirms, more than a dozen years later, that despite the challenging circumstances for low-income students to undertake a college education, higher education "provides the best opportunity--especially for women--to acquire good jobs, with good wages and good benefits." The most striking finding is the ripple effect that higher education creates "beyond the individual sitting in the classroom..." The report goes on to argue that children of college-educated parents show improved grades and study habits, and 80 percent of degree holders indicate increased involvement in their communities.

84 percent of adult Americans say that the federal government should play a significant role in higher education. 66 percent of those surveyed are willing to pay more taxes to increase financial support for college students and to colleges and universities (61 percent) and to increase tax credits for families sending their children to college (72 percent).

In addition to requiring districts to allow participants to maximize their attendance at college, the state should look at developing pilot programs to enable more participants to attend college.

NY has had a very limited pilot program assisting women on welfare to attend college. See Hamilton College ACCESS Project and Metropolitan College’s Welfare to Careers Consortium Program described earlier in this report.

The Kentucky’s Ready-to-Work (RTW) program has shown impressive results in education and training access for TANF participants. Ready-to-Work Program participants are Kentucky’s most successful welfare-to-work participants. They were placed in jobs 47% more than other TANF clients. 4 out of 5 became employed and remained employed after 4 consecutive quarters.

RTW is a bridge program developed by the Kentucky Community and Technical College System (KCTCS) and the Kentucky Cabinet for Health and Family Services (KCHFS). The program serves TANF participants who participate in any form of vocational education (degree, certificate, short-term) at community and technical colleges. The program gives students access to a coordinator, who provides students with a variety of services, including job skills, life skills, academic success training, counseling, mentoring, service referrals, and securing and retaining employment. The coordinator also helps the student secure transportation and child care subsidies, and serves as a liaison between the college, KCHFS, and the student’s caseworker.

The program also provides participants with work-study opportunities relevant to their fields of study in both private and nonprofit settings, which gives workers experience and income, and employers an opportunity to recruit students. Kentucky combines federal work-study funding with $2.2 million of TANF funds (half of their TANF grant funds) to fund the work-study positions.

Since 2001, 749 RTW participants and 200 former participants have graduated from KCTCS colleges, and 731 participants went on to four-year institutions. In 2004 the semester-to-semester retention rate for RTW participants was between 77 and 90 percent. In the fall semester, the overall GPA for RTW was 2.63 compared to 2.44, the average general GPA for the KCTCS colleges. One reason for the program’s
success has been the effort on the part of Kentucky DSS offices to aggressively advertise and encourage use of the program, and target TANF participants who were likely to benefit most.

A 2002 report on Maine’s Parent as Scholars program, which help welfare participants access college, concluded that:

- Parents As Scholars (PaS) graduates earn a median wage of $11.71 per hour after graduating, compared to a median of $8.00 per hour prior to entering college. This means that PaS graduates increased their wages by nearly 50% by obtaining a college education. In contrast, a recent survey determined that the median hourly wage of welfare leavers in Maine who have not obtained a post-secondary degree is $7.50.

- PaS graduates are more likely to be offered sound benefits packages than welfare leavers without a degree. 71.4% of PaS graduates take advantage of employer-sponsored health insurance. Only 56.1% of those who left welfare in Maine without a post-secondary degree are even offered employer-sponsored health insurance. 60.7% receive paid sick leave. Only 36.9% of those who left welfare in Maine without a post-

- PaS graduates leave welfare behind: Nearly 90% of working graduates have already left TANF. And indicators are strong that they have left welfare permanently.

The report stated that Maine’s Parents as Scholars program provides parents who are eligible for TANF with cash assistance and support services while they attend a two or four year post-secondary degree program. PaS participants receive the same cash benefits and access to support services as TANF recipients. Support services address a wide range of needs and are designed to provide PaS participants with the support critical to their success in school, such as child care, transportation, and car repairs. PaS does not provide tuition assistance except in limited circumstances. In those rare situations, tuition assistance is limited to $3,500 per academic year.

If a person is eligible for TANF, does not have a marketable bachelor’s degree, and has matriculated into an undergraduate two or four year degree program, the person will be admitted into PaS if an assessment determines the following: first, that the individual does not possess the necessary skills to obtain employment that will enable them to earn 85% of the state’s median wage for a family of the same size; second, that the post-secondary education sought will significantly improve the ability of the participant’s family to be self-supporting; and third, that the individual has the aptitude to successfully complete the proposed post-secondary program.

Once an individual is enrolled in PaS, for the first 24 months of participation she is expected to attend classes on a full-time basis unless there is good cause to limit attendance to less than full-time. Beyond 24 months, a participant must choose between adding 15 hours per week of work-site experience to her full-time school schedule or taking part in a total of 40 hours a week of class time, training, study, and work-site experience. For every hour that a participant spends in class, she is allotted 1.5 hours of countable study time. When a PaS participant enters her final semester, activities such as resume preparation, employment research, and interviewing count as participation. A PaS participant must make satisfactory academic progress by maintaining a 2.0 grade point average in order to continue in the program.
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