

Department of Health and Human Services

**OFFICE OF
INSPECTOR GENERAL**

**FUNCTIONAL IMPAIRMENTS
OF AFDC CLIENTS:
Case Studies**



**Richard P. Kusserow
INSPECTOR GENERAL**

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OEI-02-90-00401

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to present case studies of eight programs which appear to be helping functionally impaired clients of the Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) program.

BACKGROUND

AFDC aims to assist needy children and parents in moving from welfare dependency to self-sufficiency. It is administered by States, but funded jointly by the Federal and State governments. Several recent studies have highlighted the existence of functional impairments in the AFDC population.

The Family Support Act requires States to develop a Job Opportunity and Basic Skills (JOBS) program, an education, training and employment program intended to help AFDC clients avoid long-term dependence. Clients are assessed to determine their training needs and to develop an employability plan.

OIG Study

The case studies in this report result from a recent Office of Inspector General (OIG) inspection, entitled "Functional Impairments of AFDC Clients" (OEI-02-90-00400), which studied whether and how States with JOBS experience are systematically identifying and dealing with the functional impairments of AFDC clients. The study identified some programs that are making special efforts to help the functionally impaired. These programs are presented as case studies in this report.

METHODOLOGY

During the "Functional Impairments of AFDC Clients" inspection, managers of State welfare offices and JOBS program directors recommended programs they believed to be particularly effective in helping the functionally impaired. The inspection team chose eight from those cited for further study; four were visited and four were contacted by telephone. The programs were chosen because they demonstrate a broad range of program practices and philosophies.

Information for the case studies was derived from interviews with program managers, staff, and clients, from literature obtained from the programs, and from the team's own personal observations.

FOUR PROGRAMS VISITED

The Family Independence Program in Manchester, New Hampshire contracts with JOBS to provide intensive pre-vocational and vocational training to recipients who have been on AFDC for more than one year so they may sustain full-time employment. The program's key features include one-on-one attention, supportive environment, continuing follow-up and client support groups.

Key Education has its home office in Shrewsbury, New Jersey. It is a private test-development company that contracts with the State of Delaware to conduct JOBS client assessments. The company uses a computerized KEVAS (Key Education Vocational Assessment System) machine to measure skills, interests, and levels of functioning. The main features of Key Education are its thorough assessments, client profile reports and career counseling.

The goal of the **Literacy Program** in Bridgeton, New Jersey, is to have clients achieve their graduate equivalency degree (GED). The program is notable for its innovative teaching methods, individualized instruction, client support system and staff dedication. Clients feel the program is teaching them how to cope with their problems, gives them renewed confidence and will help them get jobs.

The **MOST/MRS Program** located in Mt. Pleasant, Michigan, works to reduce or eliminate dependency on the public welfare system by helping people to acquire skills to be competitive in the labor market and to earn a living wage. Intensive assessments, financial assistance, a holistic approach and excellent staff coordination are the major contributing factors to the program's success.

FOUR PROGRAMS TELEPHONED

The **Family Development Self-Sufficiency Program (FaDDS)** in Iowa has support groups, self-esteem workshops and GED classes to "enable families to achieve a level of self-sufficiency ... thus breaking the cycle of ADC [welfare] dependence from generation to generation."

Let's Help in Topeka, Kansas is an adult education program with the goal to "get everybody in Shawnee County work-ready, get everybody off of AFDC with love and kindness". It offers a special learning program where JOBS clients have an individualized schedule geared to achieving basic skills or a GED.

New Direction in Allegheny County, Pennsylvania tries to address a client's barriers to employment by working with the individual and the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation overcome functional impairments.

Project Resolve in Omaha, Nebraska chooses clients with problems and supports them in their efforts to leave welfare. One-to-one counseling and a personal plan are special to the program.

COMMENTS

The Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation commented on the draft report. These comments included a few specific questions about terms used. Appropriate changes have been made in this final report.

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INTRODUCTION

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to present case studies of eight programs which appear to be helping functionally impaired clients of the Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) program.

BACKGROUND

AFDC

When enacted in 1935, the AFDC program's intent was to allow widowed mothers to stay at home with their children. As indicated in Title IV of the Social Security Act (Part A, Section 401), it was set up to encourage "the care of dependent children in their own homes ... by enabling each State to furnish financial assistance and rehabilitation and other services to needy dependent children and the parents or relatives with whom they are living." Its philosophy shifted with the Family Support Act of 1988; it now aims to assist needy children and parents in moving from welfare dependency to self-sufficiency. The program is administered by States, but funded jointly by the Federal and State governments.

Several recent studies have highlighted the existence of functional impairments in the AFDC population. A 1988 study for the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation (ASPE) reported that nearly one in four women on AFDC under the age of 45 described themselves as functionally impaired, in contrast to only one in eleven non-AFDC women doing so. A study completed recently for ASPE by Child Trends, Inc. found that most AFDC mothers have a limited education, score below average on verbal and math skills tests, and have little work experience. Some of the mothers report health problems, alcohol abuse and depression. Half are long-term welfare recipients.

JOBS

To promote self-sufficiency, the Family Support Act requires States to develop a Job Opportunity and Basic Skills (JOBS) program, an education, training and employment program intended to help AFDC clients avoid long-term dependence. States are to have enrolled seven percent of the eligible population by 1991, rising to 20 percent by 1995. Clients are assessed to determine their training needs and to develop an employability plan. While all States have now implemented JOBS, some programs have been in operation longer than others. States and counties may contract out individual programs on a local level which provide training, education and other services for AFDC clients.

OIG Study

The case studies in this report result from a recent Office of Inspector General (OIG) inspection, entitled "Functional Impairments of AFDC Clients" (OEI-02-90-00400), which studied whether and how States with JOBS experience are systematically identifying and dealing with the functional impairments of AFDC clients. The study found that States recognize the existence of functional impairments, with learning disabilities and substance abuse being the most common. They do not, however, collect aggregate data on these impairments. Participation in JOBS increases the chances of clients having their functional impairments identified, but problems exist in dealing with these impairments. Finally, the study identified some local programs that are making special efforts to help the functionally impaired. These programs are presented as case studies in this report.

METHODOLOGY

During the "Functional Impairments of AFDC Clients" inspection, the team conducted telephone interviews with managers of State welfare offices and with JOBS program directors in the 25 States having a JOBS program in place since October 1989. When asked to recommend any programs they believed to be particularly effective or innovative in helping the functionally impaired, respondents cited 24 such programs. Eight were chosen for further study; four were visited and four were contacted by telephone. They were chosen because they reportedly exemplify some effective practices for identifying and/or serving AFDC clients with functional impairments and because they demonstrate a broad range of program practices and philosophies. All eight were found to be JOBS related.

Two of the visited programs are in New Jersey, one is in Michigan and the other is in New Hampshire. At each site, discussions were held with the program director and/or staff to learn about the operations of the programs. Additionally, seventeen program clients, selected either by the program manager or by the visiting team, were interviewed on-site to obtain their views. The number of clients spoken to at each program ranged from three to ten. In all, the team conducted 26 interviews onsite.

The four programs contacted by telephone are located in Pennsylvania, Iowa, Kansas and Nebraska. The team conducted a telephone interview with each program director but not with clients.

Information for the case studies was derived not only from the onsite and telephone interviews, but also from literature and other materials obtained from the programs, as well as the team's own personal observations.

Following are individual reports on the four programs visited on-site. These reports discuss each program's operation, goals, client profiles, key attributes and outcomes. Lastly, a summary of the four programs contacted by telephone follows the onsite

reports. It contains various descriptions of the various approaches taken by these programs to help the functionally impaired.

FAMILY INDEPENDENCE PROGRAM

Manchester, New Hampshire

Key Features

- ▶ One-on-one attention
- ▶ Supportive environment
- ▶ Continuing follow-up
- ▶ Client support group

Background

The Family Independence Program (FIP) is located in the largely rural State of New Hampshire. FIP is a Job Training and Partnership Act (JTPA) program which contracts with JOBS to provide intensive pre-vocational and vocational training to recipients who have been on AFDC for one continuous year or longer. It operates in several locations throughout New Hampshire to prepare AFDC recipients for jobs that pay wages adequate for long-term self-sufficiency. Participants are counseled and guided through the program toward a personal goal of independence and sustained full-time employment.

In existence since December 1985, the program currently has 207 clients Statewide, with approximately 120 new clients added each year. Between 10 and 15 clients are enrolled at each site.

Program Operation

Designed to serve the entire family, FIP is an individually tailored program which provides supportive services, such as counseling, day care, transportation and medical services, until the breadwinner maintains stability on a new job.

The State AFDC program refers lists of appropriate clients to FIP. During an interview with the client in her home, the FIP counselor describes the program, goes over the mission statement, and ascertains the commitment level of the client. The counselor also assesses the home situation and identifies possible barriers to self-sufficiency.

After the interview, clients go through an initial pre-employment preparation (PEP) phase which lasts for 10 weeks and runs six hours a day. It is an intensive effort to motivate participants and increase their personal and vocational awareness. During this phase, the participant develops his/her own family independence plan and, if barriers are discovered, obtains help. Graduation occurs when the family has successfully composed a plan that meets the criteria and standards set by the program administrators, the case management team and the family itself.

Additionally within the PEP cycle, academic remediation takes place to prepare participants for the work-related training in the next segment of the program. Here is where a learning disability might be discovered. Special help is given if necessary.

After PEP graduation, the client may participate in different kinds of training programs, such as on-the-job training, GED classes (if not completed during the PEP cycle), or a college program.

If barriers such as functional impairments are discovered during the initial home interview or at any other time, the client is referred to the most appropriate service for a full assessment. This might be vocational rehabilitation, sessions with a psychologist, a medical evaluation or treatment or a number of other services. The participant remains in FIP as the primary service and FIP works with the referral provider.

Program Goals

The FIP goals include: assisting a long-term welfare dependent family to achieve self-sufficiency through permanent employment; discovering the barriers that may hinder the participant's progress towards permanent employment and eliminating or modifying those barriers; and to providing a system of temporary support services. These goals are achieved by: motivating participants to change their life style; encouraging them to improve and strengthen positive attitudes towards themselves and work; assessing clients' basic academic level, occupational skills and interests; preparing participants through education and training with continued support; and helping to ensure permanent employment with continued support for up to three years following enrollment in FIP.

Client Profile

Clients in FIP have learning disabilities, substance abuse, hearing and visual impairments, physical problems such as low back pain, obesity, dental problems and emotional disorders. Many have multiple problems, often exacerbated by low self-esteem. One staff respondent estimates that 20 percent of clients have a learning disability which has never been addressed before. According to many respondents having either poor teeth or no teeth is a major barrier, since it makes it more difficult for them to find a job.

Program Attributes

Clients cite as special features that make this program work: the chance to meet other women in the program and have a support group, and the accessibility of the counselors, who "will go out on a limb for you" and are "nice and caring and make you feel good about yourself." Clients consider the follow-up essential - the feeling of someone being there. Program support continues for up to three years after graduation.

The staff feel that meeting program objectives and goals, within a supportive environment, and with constant one-to-one case counselor contact and continuing follow-up contributes to the success of this program.

Outcomes

Interviewed clients all agree that the program is helping them. One reflects the feelings of all of those interviewed when she says, "It turned my whole life around. I was doing nothing, going nowhere. Now I have a pretty exciting future ahead of me." Another states, "It was a perfect opportunity for me." She said she had no skills, no teeth, no transportation, and now she has all of them. Another client became pregnant during the beginning of the program so she would not have to continue, but then came back.

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KEY EDUCATION, INC.
Shrewsbury, New Jersey (home office)

Key Features

- ▶ Thorough assessments
- ▶ KEVAS machine
- ▶ Client profile reports
- ▶ Career counseling

Background

Key Education, a private test-development company, contracts with several State, county, and municipal agencies to conduct client assessments for different programs. It is currently assessing JOBS clients in Delaware. Their home office in Shrewsbury, New Jersey was visited in order to find out about their work with the Delaware JOBS clients.

In 1977, Key Education created KEVAS (Key Education Vocational Assessment System), a self-administered, computerized screening process which measures a variety of skills, interests, and levels of functioning. The company adapts its assessment system to the needs of the specific group being tested. It can tailor the tests for illiterate clients and for those who have never succeeded in an academic setting.

Depending on the contract, Key Education either provides certified examiners for the assessments or trains designated agency personnel to administer tests and interpret data.

Program Operation

The assessment process involves three parts: written tests, personal interviews, and the KEVAS machine, a special computer program. It takes clients about two to three hours to complete the assessment.

The written portion of the assessment evaluates the client's word knowledge, language usage skills, reading skills, and arithmetic and spacial problem solving skills.

The personal interview portion focuses on health and psychiatric history, education, work history and goals, barriers to employment, existing disabilities, social skills, interests and hobbies, and home life. Key Education trains its examiners to assess the reliability of the interview information because clients may lie or have misconceptions.

Examiners also look for signs, such as physical coordination problems or the wearing of too much perfume which might disguise the smell of alcohol, suggesting a possible substance abuse problem. If a client does not dress correctly for the weather, or has poor hygiene, it may indicate emotional problems.

The KEVAS machine, which lets the client work at her or his own pace, looks like an average typewriter but is computerized. It guides the client through a battery of exercises and tracks the results on a computer disk.

The tests are both language and non-language based and measure the following abilities: to retain information gathered through auditory channels; to learn through observation and then perform effectively; to perform repetitive manual tasks; to follow directions; and to lead. The system also tests for hearing impairments and color blindness.

Other KEVAS features include: a hand-strength test to indicate general physical well-being and development, and a test of the client's hand and foot response to light and sound to demonstrate upper and lower body functioning.

The results of the written tests and the personal interviews are input into to the KEVAS machine to be scored. Each score is compared with the norm and placed on a scale, ranging from superior to impaired performance, to generate a functional profile of the client.

Key Education researches the local labor situation to ascertain which companies are increasing staff, which employers are downsizing, and what jobs are in the local want ads. The data is input into the KEVAS machine. Then, taking interest and function into account, the machine tries to match the client profile to a job or a related work area. The staff at Key Education then suggest possible training if needed. If no match is found, the client is probably not ready for competitive employment.

When Key Education examiners identify an impairment, they inform the agency staff which handles it; Key Education does not itself refer clients or provide supportive services.

Program Goals

Key Education aims to successfully assess client strengths, weaknesses and level of functioning. Based on the assessments, it attempts to find the work environment to which the client is best suited.

Client Profile

The examiners at Key Education have identified many JOBS clients with impairments. One manager believes the most prevalent impairment in the JOBS population is learning disabilities. She adds that "a disability rarely marches on its own - it is the nature of learning disabled people to have self-esteem problems because they have always been told that they are not trying. This adds blame to the disability which compounds the problem." The KEVAS tests also have shown that many JOBS clients are physically weaker than the rest of the population.

Program Attributes

At the end of the contract year Key Education produces a summary report for the agency giving all the testing results. It also provides aggregate statistical information about the assessed population, and highlights the typical characteristics found. Key Education managers consider this data the most valuable part of their program because it allows agencies to better focus resources and to develop services which respond to the needs of its population. It also assists in the development of local norms and other statistical material showing trends and changes in the population.

Specific client profiles can be obtained from the data Key Education maintains. For example, an analysis of all clients who have been identified as substance abusers reveals a common functional profile different from the rest of the population. This profile may assist in identifying future clients with similar impairments.

Outcomes

Key Education has been successful in matching clients with jobs they are most suited for. It has identified those clients who are not ready to enter the job market and need further services. Also, it has provided aggregate data to help agencies better serve their client populations.

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LITERACY PROGRAM

Bridgeton, New Jersey

Key Features

- ▶ Innovative teaching methods
- ▶ Individualized instruction
- ▶ Client support system
- ▶ Staff dedication

Background

Bridgeton is a small town of several thousand in Cumberland County, a rural region of southern New Jersey. The Literacy Program in Bridgeton provides services under contract with the Job Training and Partnership Act (JTPA) agency. Funded jointly with JOBS and JTPA money, it has been in operation since March 1991. It currently has ten participants, all were chosen because they scored below a fifth-grade reading level during the JOBS assessment process.

Program Operation

Clients spend between 15 and 30 hours per week in a literacy class, where they will remain until they achieve their GED. The class uses several innovative techniques, including voice-activated computer instruction and a bar-code reading device which allows the student to hear what a word sounds like. In the morning clients take part in classroom instruction; in the afternoon they receive individual training and tutoring. Their homework includes reading three magazine articles per week and learning a required set of vocabulary words. Clients also meet with a counselor each week.

Program Goals

The primary goal of the Literacy Program is to have clients achieve their GED. They are encouraged to take pride in their achievements. The program also hopes to teach clients how to successfully handle their problems and how to depend on themselves. Upon attaining their GED, they are able to enroll in regular JTPA vocational training programs and, hopefully, find meaningful employment.

Client Profile

Most clients have some barrier, aside from their low reading level, preventing them from becoming self-sufficient. Several have learning disabilities, emotional problems or substance abuse problems or a combination of these. Others are victims of domestic violence. The classroom instructor cites their lack of self-esteem, self-motivation and coping mechanisms as additional barriers.

Presently, various means are used to deal with clients' functional impairments. Those with drug or alcohol problems are referred to substance abuse treatment programs. Clients with emotional problems receive counseling, and the learning impaired are given specialized classroom instruction. The program is considering sending clients to a local community college for formal learning disability testing in the future.

All of the women in the program appear highly motivated. They feel that when they were in school, the educational system did not accommodate their particular needs. Now, as the program director states, "We offer them an alternative."

Program Attributes

Both staff and clients believe the key factor contributing to the Literacy Program's success is the classroom instructor, who acts not only as teacher but also as confidante, resource person and friend. All her students have her home phone number and she often helps them with their problems.

They also attribute the program's success to innovative teaching methods, individualized instruction and staff dedication. Clients mention that they now have support from women in similar situations, and they find that very helpful.

Outcomes

All of the program's clients are very enthusiastic about the program. They feel that it is not only going to help them get a job, but also that it is teaching them how to cope with their problems and gives them renewed confidence. Several mention that they are setting a good role model for their children and can even help them with their schoolwork. One woman, who never finished school because of a learning disability, asserts, "This is a second opportunity for me. I'm not going to let it go." All of the clients have specific goals for their future: getting a GED and leaving welfare. Many want to become nurses.

While the Literacy Program has not yet graduated any clients, it has several women currently in the program who have particularly distinguished themselves. One has a laptop computer at home and puts in extra hours to complete her lessons and homework. She hopes to achieve her GED by the time her youngest child turns 18, when she is no longer eligible for AFDC and the Literacy Program.

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MOST/MRS PROGRAM *Mt. Pleasant, Michigan*

Key Features

- ▶ Intensive assessments
- ▶ Financial assistance
- ▶ Holistic approach
- ▶ Excellent staff coordination

Background

Isabella County is a largely rural area approximately 60 miles north of Lansing. The Isabella County Department of Social Services (DSS) administers AFDC and does the initial intake for the JOBS component, Michigan Opportunity and Skills Training (MOST). DSS also contracts with Michigan Rehabilitation Services (MRS) to refer clients who show signs of an impairment. These signs are identified either through the MOST orientation and assessment or through testing done in the local school system, to MRS. About 300 people have since been served; currently 35 welfare recipients are enrolled. The program is financed by a combination of local, State and Federal funds.

The DSS created the partnership with MRS when they realized that many of their MOST clients were not equipped to find and stay with permanent employment. Although aware of some general employment barriers and impairments which might be immediately apparent during intake, DSS staff felt they did not know the clients well enough to identify and treat the barriers and impairments on an individual basis, especially if the impairments were easily hidden.

To help identify impairments DSS developed a contract with area schools to evaluate clients' aptitude, reading and math achievement, and personality through tests such as APTICOM, TABE and 16PF. They discovered the most common impairment was emotional problems. Also, many clients had low intellectual functioning and learning disabilities. The DSS felt no community resource was adequately serving these clients because most agencies were "creaming" the best referrals, accepting only those with the greatest chance for success.

Program Operation

Clients referred to MRS go through another assessment so their impairments and strengths can be identified and an individual rehabilitation plan developed. This extensive assessment includes a face-to-face interview with a counselor regarding the client's personal, educational, medical, vocational and social history. They also discuss existing psychiatric history and disabilities, if any.

The client undergoes a general medical examination, a psychological exam, evaluations by specialists when indicated, and evaluations of current work skills and psychological and emotional stamina testing. One counselor describes the assessment as comprehensive and adds, "We don't leave anything unlooked at."

Program Goals

The program's goal is to reduce or eliminate dependency on the public welfare system by helping people to acquire skills to be competitive in the labor market and to earn a living wage. The staff feels that some individuals will never be totally off welfare and will always need some form of public assistance; they therefore try to "eliminate and reduce dependency." They also believe a program like theirs can foster an understanding of rehabilitation and habilitation in the welfare system because, contrary to common belief, the whole welfare population is not able-bodied.

Client Profile

The MRS program classifies client impairments into three groups: emotional (58 percent), physical handicaps (24 percent), and mental retardation (18 percent). Once their impairments are identified, the clients are referred to supportive services such as mental health counseling and work skills training. Isabella County benefits from being a small community in that coordination is tight, with no blind referrals or duplication of effort occurring.

Program Attributes

The MRS/MOST staff attribute their success to the belief that everyone has a right to work and looks for reasons both outside and within the client to see why they are not working. One counselor says, "We studied and researched to get an idea of the direction we had to go. It is too simplistic to just put welfare clients into job training programs. They are on welfare for certain reasons that must be identified and addressed before they can be put in jobs." Another staff member adds, "We invest the greatest amount of nurturing energy to this group with impairments."

Other reasons for the program's success are that the staff is close-knit, having ongoing, daily communication; it works closely with clients and takes a holistic approach to improving their quality of life. Also, the program addresses the total needs of clients such as housing, transportation, and child care, and deals with the individual in her or his unique situation.

The staff realizes there are no easy solutions and that the program's goals may only be achieved through long-term commitment, because some cases require effort over several fiscal years to be successful. Unfortunately, due to administrative and fiscal problems, this is the last year in which the special program between MOST and MRS will be operating.

Outcomes

For the most part, the clients who have gone through the MOST/MRS process feel it has helped them in some way. They especially appreciate the financial assistance they receive to defray transportation costs, babysitting expenses, and school loans. One client expresses the views of many in saying, "The program helped me get on my feet." Another reports, "It pulled me out of my depression and gave me confidence in myself." However, another feels that although the program helped her get a job and find housing, it is too superficial: it addresses current needs, but does not do enough to help clients maintain their confidence without the program's support.

The program's success stories include one about a client who came to his intake interview drunk but is now a counselor studying for his master's degree. Another is about a formerly homeless woman who completed college and achieved full-time employment.

The program has been effective in that clients have been trained, employed, and moved off public assistance. Also, staff report that as a result of the program's thorough assessment to reveal functional impairments, a substantial number of MOST clients have qualified for disability payments, particularly SSI.

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FOUR PROGRAMS TELEPHONED

We conducted telephone interviews with the directors of four additional programs as a way to learn about different approaches of helping functionally impaired clients. These approaches, highlighted below, are other examples of special initiatives for identifying and helping functionally impaired clients. These are: the Family Development Self-Sufficiency (FaDDS) Program in Iowa; Let's Help in Topeka, Kansas; New Direction in Allegheny County, Pennsylvania; and Project Resolve in Omaha, Nebraska. Each of the four programs is JOBS-related.

FAMILY DEVELOPMENT SELF-SUFFICIENCY PROGRAM (FaDDS)

Iowa

The FaDDS program works on the premise that training and employment opportunities are not sufficient for clients who come from dysfunctional families and who have functional impairments. They need additional help before they can avail themselves of these opportunities. The program manager states that the goal of the FaDDS program is to "enable families to achieve a level of self-sufficiency and family functioning [so that] they will remain independent from economic assistance for their lifetime, thus breaking the cycle of ADC [welfare] dependence from generation to generation."

The program is under contract with the Iowa Department of Human Rights, which in turn subcontracts with various non-profit organizations, community action agencies and county social services to run the program on a local level. The program targets long-term welfare recipients who have been on AFDC for two or more years. Once clients have undergone a thorough evaluation by a family development specialist in their homes, they may enroll in one or more program activities, including support groups, self-esteem workshops and GED classes. Participation in FaDDS ranges from three months to three years.

LET'S HELP

Topeka, Kansas

The goal in Let's Help is to "get everybody in Shawnee County work-ready, get everybody off of AFDC with love and kindness". The program manager states, "There must be a goal for these people. Learning to read will help to support the family."

Let's Help, an adult education program, gets its referrals from the Kansas JOBS program. Let's Help offers a special learning program where JOBS clients have an individualized schedule geared to achieving basic skills or a GED. During the program, clients may work with an individual tutor, usually a volunteer, on a one-to-one basis, or they may work independently if they prefer. During the whole process the JOBS worker and teacher coordinate closely with almost daily phone calls and with monthly reports. Participation in Let's Help lasts as long as it takes for clients to complete their goals.

NEW DIRECTION
Allegheny County, Pennsylvania

New Direction tries to address a client's barriers to employment before that client begins job training. It works with the individual to move him or her towards self-sufficiency. Strong coordination exists with OVR to accommodate clients with functional impairments.

New Direction, the JOBS program, is distinctive for its strong links with the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR). In New Direction, an OVR counselor is actually part of the JOBS assessment team. This counselor evaluates clients for learning disabilities, illiteracy, psychiatric problems and substance abuse. If a client has one of these impairments, he or she is referred to OVR for an additional in-depth assessment and is then given specialized training and other remedial services.

PROJECT RESOLVE
Omaha, Nebraska

Project Resolve aims to assist clients in becoming self-sufficient. The program manager states, "We teach them to advocate for themselves." Despite their impairments, clients are encouraged and supported in their efforts to leave welfare.

In Project Resolve, case managers choose AFDC clients with personal problems and/or without a high school diploma to participate in the program. Many are long-term welfare recipients. Clients enroll for 10 weeks, for an average of 16 to 18 hours per week. They participate in a variety of different activities including: GED classes; one-on-one counseling to develop a personal plan for their future; resource management, chemical dependency and domestic violence workshops; and emotional and physical health programs. Follow-up occurs at 30, 60 and 90 day intervals.

COMMENTS

The Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation commented on the draft report. These comments included a few specific questions about terms used. Appropriate changes have been made in this final report.