

Department of Health and Human Services

**OFFICE OF
INSPECTOR GENERAL**

**PARTICIPANTS RATE
THE JOBS PROGRAM**



SEPTEMBER 1993

OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL

The mission of the Office of Inspector General (OIG), as mandated by Public Law 95-452, as amended, is to protect the integrity of the Department of Health and Human Services' (HHS) programs as well as the health and welfare of beneficiaries served by those programs. This statutory mission is carried out through a nationwide network of audits, investigations, and inspections conducted by three OIG operating components: the Office of Audit Services, the Office of Investigations, and the Office of Evaluation and Inspections. The OIG also informs the Secretary of HHS of program, and management problems, and recommends courses to correct them.

OFFICE OF AUDIT SERVICES

The OIG's Office of Audit Services (OAS) provides all auditing services for HHS, either by conducting audits with its own audit resources or by overseeing audit work done by others. Audits examine the performance of HHS programs and/or its grantees and contractors in carrying out their respective responsibilities and are intended to provide independent assessments of HHS programs and operations in order to reduce waste, abuse, and mismanagement and to promote economy and efficiency throughout the Department.

OFFICE OF INVESTIGATIONS

The OIG's Office of Investigations (OI) conducts criminal, civil, and administrative investigations of allegations of wrongdoing in HHS programs or to HHS beneficiaries and of unjust enrichment by providers. The investigative efforts of OI lead to criminal convictions, administrative sanctions, or civil money penalties. The OI also oversees State Medicaid fraud control units which investigate and prosecute fraud and patient abuse in the Medicaid program.

OFFICE OF EVALUATION AND INSPECTIONS

The OIG's Office of Evaluation and Inspections (OEI) conducts short-term management and program evaluations (called inspections) that focus on issues of concern to the Department, the Congress, and the public. The findings and recommendations contained in these inspection reports generate rapid, accurate, and up-to-date information on the efficiency, vulnerability, and effectiveness of departmental programs. This report was prepared in the Dallas regional office under the direction of Ralph Tunnell, Regional Inspector General and Chester B. Slaughter, Deputy Regional Inspector General.
Project Staff:

REGION

Elsie A. Chaisson, Project Leader
Michelle J. Adams, Program Analyst
Leah K. Bostick, Program Analyst
Nancy J. Watts, Program Assistant

HEADQUARTERS

Ruth Folchman, Program Analyst

For additional copies of this report, please contact the Dallas Regional Office at (214) 767-3310.

Department of Health and Human Services

**OFFICE OF
INSPECTOR GENERAL**

**PARTICIPANTS RATE
THE JOBS PROGRAM**



OEI-06-90-00150

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

PURPOSE

This report provides information about the experiences, opinions and attitudes of Job Opportunities and Basic Skills Training (JOBS) program participants. Specifically, the report contains information about participants' (1) understanding of the program's services and requirements; (2) positive and negative experiences in the program; and (3) suggestions for program improvement. This report reflects early experiences with the JOBS program as seen from the unique perspective of the participants themselves.

BACKGROUND

The Family Support Act (P.L. 100-485) required all States to establish the Job Opportunities and Basic Skills Training (JOBS) program to assure that needy families with children obtain the education, training and employment that will help them avoid long-term welfare dependency. To accomplish this, the JOBS program is intended to: (1) encourage, assist and require applicants for and recipients of AFDC to fulfill their responsibilities to support their children by preparing for, accepting, and retaining employment; (2) provide individuals with the opportunity to acquire the education and the skills necessary to qualify for employment; (3) provide necessary support services, including transitional child care and medical assistance, so that individuals can participate in JOBS and accept employment; (4) promote coordination of services at all levels of government in order to make a wide range of services available, especially for individuals at risk of long-term welfare dependency; and (5) emphasize accountability for both participants and service providers. Where State resources permit, all AFDC recipients living in a subdivision covered by a JOBS program and for whom the State IV-A agency (i.e., welfare agency) has guaranteed child care (in accordance with the provisions of the child care laws and regulations) shall be required to participate in JOBS unless the recipient is exempt from participation.

Between October 1991 and February 1992, we completed a total of 232 telephone interviews with participants who were located at five sites: Denver, Colorado; Albuquerque, New Mexico; Florence, South Carolina; Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; and, Janesville, Wisconsin. We interviewed 67 JOBS program completers, 98 currently active participants and 67 dropouts.

FINDINGS

A MAJORITY OF PARTICIPANTS SURVEYED GAVE HIGH RATINGS TO THE OVERALL JOBS PROGRAM, ITS ACTIVITIES AND SUPPORT SERVICES.

- Almost three out of four respondents rated the overall JOBS program as good or very good.

- Significantly, 84 percent of respondents said they would recommend the program.
- Eighty-three percent of respondents believed the JOBS program would help them get off welfare.
- Eighty-two percent of respondents who had completed the program reported they were working at the time we interviewed them.
- About two-thirds of respondents rated the public assistance agency and its staff high for providing the support and services they needed to complete the program.
- Respondents graded high those JOBS program activities in which they participated.
- A majority of respondents who received support services gave them high marks.

NEVERTHELESS, A SIGNIFICANT NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS EXPERIENCED PROBLEMS AND/OR VOICED COMPLAINTS THAT MERIT THE ATTENTION OF PROGRAM MANAGERS.

- *Insufficient Information.* Some respondents said they were not told about or received insufficient explanations or information on the availability of specific program activities or services. For example, 46 percent of respondents said they were not told about transitional child care.
- *Lack of Support Services.* Ninety-eight respondents said there were certain services they needed but did not receive. For example, 47 of the 98 respondents reported they did not receive the child care they needed.
- *Deficient Case Manager Services and Attitudes.* Thirty-one percent of respondents noted problems with support and services provided by case managers. Some said case managers' condescending/negative attitudes also discouraged them.
- *Understanding Penalties.* While most respondents knew about possible non-compliance penalties and benefit reductions, some did not understand. Twenty-two respondents had their AFDC and/or Food Stamps benefits reduced, 12 as a result of receiving student educational loans.

EIGHTY-SIX PERCENT OF RESPONDENTS SHARED SPECIFIC SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVING THE JOBS PROGRAM.

- Emphasize education and training in order to achieve self-sufficiency.
- Improve support services such as child care and transportation.
- Strengthen case managers' performance of the orientation, service explanation, and assessment processes; and provide empathetic support to program participants.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	PAGE
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	i
INTRODUCTION	1
FINDINGS	4
Participants' Rating of The JOBS Program	4
Problems Experienced By Participants	8
Participants' Suggestions For Improving The JOBS Program	12
 APPENDICES	
A: Profile of Survey Respondents	A-1
B: Illustrative Profiles	B-1

INTRODUCTION

PURPOSE

This report provides information about the experiences, opinions, and attitudes of Job Opportunities and Basic Skills Training (JOBS) program participants. Specifically, the report contains information on participants' (1) understanding of the program's services and requirements; (2) positive and negative experiences in the program; and (3) suggestions for program improvement. This report reflects early experiences with the JOBS program as seen from the unique perspective of the participants themselves.

BACKGROUND

The Family Support Act (P.L. 100-485) required all States to establish the Job Opportunities and Basic Skills Training (JOBS) program to assure that needy families with children obtain the education, training and employment that will help them avoid long-term welfare dependency. To accomplish this, the JOBS program is intended to: (1) encourage, assist and require applicants for and recipients of AFDC to fulfill their responsibilities to support their children by preparing for, accepting, and retaining employment; (2) provide individuals with the opportunity to acquire the education and the skills necessary to qualify for employment; (3) provide necessary support services, including transitional child care and medical assistance, so that individuals can participate in JOBS and accept employment; (4) promote coordination of services at all levels of government in order to make a wide range of services available, especially for individuals at risk of long-term welfare dependency; and (5) emphasize accountability for both participants and service providers.

Where State resources permit, all AFDC recipients living in a subdivision covered by a JOBS program and for whom the State IV-A agency (i.e., welfare agency) has guaranteed child care (in accordance with the provisions of the child care laws and regulations) shall be required to participate in JOBS unless the recipient is exempt from participation.

Federal regulations provide that a State JOBS program must include the following four components: (1) educational activity (which shall include high school or high school equivalency training; basic and remedial education that will provide a literacy level equivalent to at least grade 8.9, and education in English proficiency; (2) job skills training; (3) job readiness activities; and, (4) job development/job placement. States are also required to include at least two of the following components: (1) on-the-job training, (2) work supplementation, (3) community work experience, (4) group and individual job search, or (5) additional education, as allowed by the State. Additionally, States are required to guarantee child care, and provide transportation and other support services if the State agency determines these services are necessary for an individual in the family to accept employment, remain employed or to participate in an education or training component.

METHODOLOGY

The focus of this study was a survey of the experiences and perceptions of JOBS program participants at selected sites in five States. Each site selected provided all of the optional JOBS program components in addition to the mandatory components. Two sites were non-urban and three sites were urban. We did not survey State or local JOBS program administrators. We did, however, interview local office managers to obtain a broad overview of program operations and to learn the terminology used to assist us to better communicate with the respondents about the program.

In order to learn more about the JOBS program and participants' attitudes about welfare, we performed the following steps.

First, we reviewed the JOBS program laws, regulations, State plans, and current literature pertaining to participant perspectives about JOBS and welfare programs in general.

Second, we talked with JOBS program experts and others who had completed participant perspectives studies.

Third, from the literature review and discussions with experts, we formulated issues for inclusion in a structured interview guide which focused on qualitative information, and was pretested at one site in Texas. The interview questions contained both closed and open-ended questions. The open-ended questions allowed the participants to elaborate on their experiences and opinions about the JOBS program.

Fourth, to maximize our learning from participants, we categorized participants in three groups: (1) JOBS program completers, (2) currently active participants participating in a JOBS component, and (3) dropouts (i.e., participants who dropped out before completing the program). For this study we used the following definitions. **Program Completers** include - (1) individuals who completed the JOBS program, are employed and are off welfare; (2) individuals who completed the JOBS program, are employed but continue to be on welfare because their wages are insufficient to make them ineligible for AFDC benefits; and (3) individuals who completed the JOBS program but are not employed - e.g., have not been able to find work. **Current Actives** were individuals actively participating in the JOBS program during the survey period. **Dropouts** were individuals who attended at a minimum the orientation session, then dropped out of the program at a subsequent stage.

We asked the State public assistance agencies to: (1) identify a site within our pre selected area; (2) identify all current and former JOBS participants having actual experience with the JOBS program in 1990 and 1991; and (3) stratify participants according to our broad groups (completers, currently actives and dropouts) and generate a related list.

Our target sample was 300, 100 each of completers, current actives and dropouts. We over-sampled to reach our target of 300. Thus, from each completed list the study team randomly selected a sample of 30 to 40 individuals from each group in each site

participating in the survey. See Appendix A for some general characteristics of survey respondents.

In September and November 1991 we visited each of the five sites. We interviewed JOBS program managers and conducted face-to-face interviews with two JOBS program completers and two dropouts at each site. See Appendix B for illustrative profiles.

Between October 1991 and February 1992, we completed a total of 232 telephone interviews in five sites: (1) Denver, Colorado; (2) Albuquerque, New Mexico, (3) Florence, South Carolina; (4) Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; and (5) Janesville, Wisconsin. We interviewed 67 completers, 98 currently active participants, and 67 dropouts. Eighty percent of the respondents were mandatory participants and 20 percent were volunteers.

We found JOBS participants were articulate and interested in speaking out about their experiences in the JOBS program.

Unless otherwise indicated, weighted averages, based on the number of respondents in each site, were used to calculate percentages in report findings. Although we selected our sample from the three categories of participants, we do not report responses by type of category. However in our analysis, we did consider participant category to help in understanding some responses. For example, we looked at categories of participants reporting not receiving or knowing about transitional child care or medical services. Not knowing about these services could have a greater impact on program completers than currently active participants and dropouts.

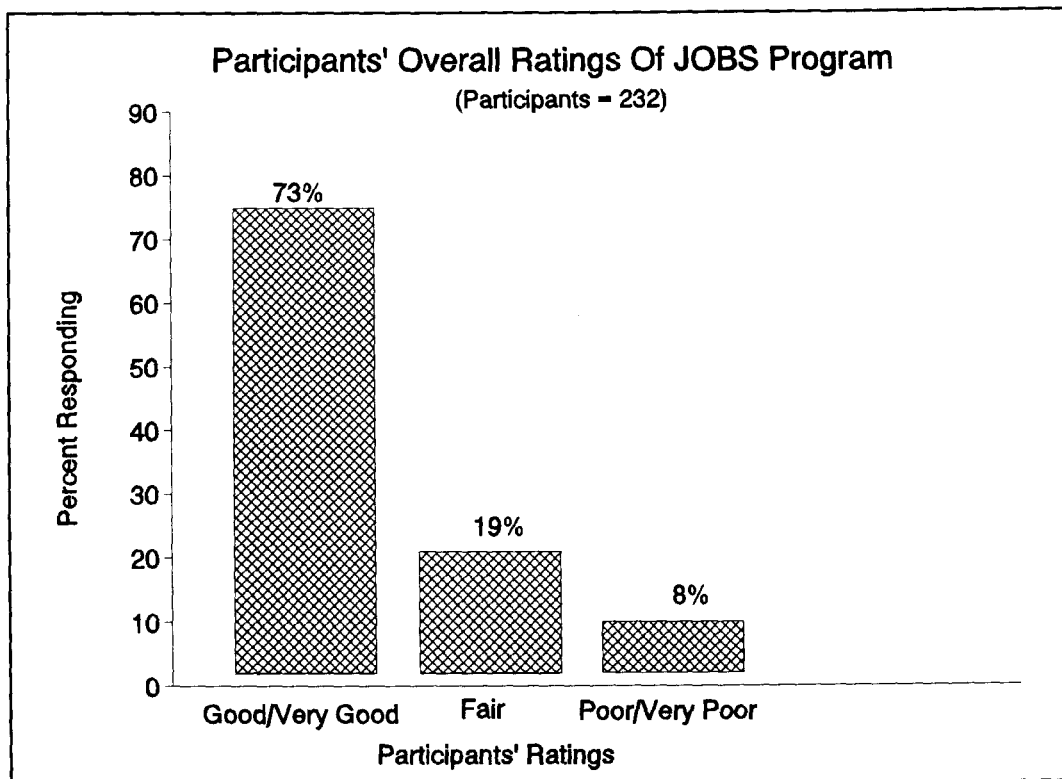
We conducted our review in accordance with the *Quality Standards for Inspections* issued by the President's Council on Integrity and Efficiency.

FINDINGS

A MAJORITY OF PARTICIPANTS SURVEYED GAVE HIGH RATINGS TO THE OVERALL JOBS PROGRAM, ITS ACTIVITIES AND SUPPORT SERVICES.

Almost three out of every four respondents gave the JOBS program good marks.

We asked JOBS program participants to give their overall rating of the JOBS program. Of the 232 respondents surveyed, 73 percent rated the JOBS program as good or very good, as shown below. Another 19 percent rated it fair, with only eight percent assessing the program as poor or very poor.



Significantly, 84 percent of the respondents said they would recommend the program to others.

Eighty-three percent of respondents believed the JOBS program would help them get off welfare.

Both mandatory and volunteer respondents frequently said they participated in the JOBS program to obtain an education or training. Many viewed education and training as tools to help them obtain employment paying above the minimum wage which, in turn, would allow them to get off welfare. This was often expressed as a strong motivation to

participate in the program. When asked what would cause a person to stay on public assistance after completing the JOBS program, 41 percent said low wages or no jobs in the community.

Since mandatory participants do not have a choice regarding participating in JOBS, we were interested in their attitudes about being required to participate. Many mandatory respondents expressed positive attitudes about participating in the program. In fact, one out of every two mandatory participants said they participated in the JOBS program, not only because this was required, but to obtain an education, training, or to get a job.

Eighty-two percent of respondents who had completed the JOBS program reported they were working.

Very promising is the fact that, among respondents who had completed the program, 82 percent reported they were employed and were either entirely off AFDC (64 percent) or receiving a reduced grant (18 percent) at the time we interviewed them.

About two-thirds of respondents rated the public assistance agency and its staff highly for providing the support and services they needed to complete the JOBS program.

Sixty-two percent of the respondents rated the performance of the public assistance agency and its staff as good or very good in helping them complete the program. Also, 68 percent gave good or very good ratings to the staff for arranging support services they needed to complete JOBS activities. Sixty-nine percent of the respondents said they were encouraged by their case manager who, in many instances, motivated them to enhance their education or obtain employment.

Respondents graded high those JOBS program activities in which they participated.

The first stage activities of the JOBS program are orientation, assessment and employability planning. Generally, almost all participants take part in these activities. The orientation is usually a group activity. The assessment can be a group or one-on-one activity. Participants are assigned to other JOBS program components as determined by the case manager and client after completing an assessment and an employability plan. Most respondents were assigned to either an education, job search, life skills training, job skills training, or job readiness component. Of the 232 respondents, few were assigned to job development/job placement (4); on-the-job training (11); work supplementation (4); community work experience (10); and/or other state education components (9). The critical first stage activities, orientation, assessment and employability planning, were rated fairly high by most participants, as shown in table 1. All other JOBS program activities, except job search, were also rated high.

Table 1: Respondents' Grading of JOBS Program Activities

JOBS Program Component	Rating or GRADE					Number of Respondents
	A	B	C	D	F	
	Percent	Percent	Percent	Percent	Percent	
Orientation	31%	36%	21%	10%	2%	232
Assessment	29%	37%	19%	10%	5%	198
Employability Plan	35%	32%	18%	9%	6%	189
Education	68%	22%	6%	2%	2%	86
Job Search	16%	33%	18%	14%	19%	64
Life Skills	72%	14%	7%	6%	1%	35
Job Skills	39%	21%	28%	8%	4%	25
Job Readiness	68%	13%	14%	5%		22

Orientation -- During the orientation sessions JOBS participants are informed about a variety of program activities (e.g., education, training, job readiness, job search) and support services (e.g., child care, transportation).

Ninety-eight percent of the participants surveyed said they were given general information about the JOBS program. A majority (67 percent) of participants were satisfied with the explanation of these services, grading it A or B. Further, 69 percent of the respondents said the orientation activities encouraged and motivated them to participate in the program.

Assessment -- Sixty-six percent of the respondents graded the assessment of their educational background, employment history, interests, and service needs as either an A or a B.

Employability Plan -- Generally, the employability plan includes information about JOBS participants employment, training, and education goals and support services an individual needs to participate in JOBS employment, education or training activities. Most respondents indicated their employability plan contained the following: 1) current education level (93 percent); 2) necessary support services (81 percent); 3) future education goals (85 percent); 4) employment goals (80 percent); and, 5) training needs (70 percent). Thirty-four out of 189 respondents said their employability plan included information about their personal interests. Eleven participants did not remember or did not know what was included in their employability plan.

Sixty-seven percent of 189 respondents graded their employability plan A or B. They generally agreed with the plan's contents and felt the plan could be changed if they wished.

Education -- Participants could receive high school course work, GED course work, vocational or technical training, junior college course-work, and college or university course-work.

Among the 86 participants receiving and rating education services, high satisfaction was evident, with 90 percent grading the service A or B. Fifteen respondents were especially satisfied with their education classes and the degree they received as a result of the JOBS program.

Job Search -- Participants were more critical of job search. Of the 64 participants that took part in this activity, only 49 percent graded it an A or a B.

A majority of JOBS participants who received support services gave the services high marks.

Participants in the JOBS program often brought with them multiple problems. For example, in addition to needing child care and transportation services, some respondents said they also needed sick child care and assistance with finding a house because many landlords did not want to rent to welfare recipients. One out of every three JOBS participants in our sample had two or more problems that impacted on their participation in the program. Sixty percent of them obtained services that assisted with solving their problems. As shown in table 2, participants receiving support services indicated their general satisfaction by giving most of the services fairly high grades.

Table 2: Respondents' Grading Of Support Services Received Through JOBS

Type Service	GRADE					Total Number of Respondents
	A	B	C	D	F	
	Percent	Percent	Percent	Percent	Percent	
Child Care	47%	27%	11%	3%	11%	98
Transportation to JOBS Component	40%	31%	20%	2%	7%	116
Transportation (child care)	39%	19%	36%		6%	19
Transitional Medical Services	51%	1%		24%	24%	13
Counseling	75%	25%				12
Other *	76%	16%	8%			27

* Other services received include dental, substance abuse treatment, supplies for school, tools for work, license fees, and clothing.

Child Care -- Seventy-four percent of the 98 respondents who reported receiving child care graded the service A or B. Respondents' feelings can be summed up as *"I was afraid I'd get stuck with something poor, yet I had a great, high quality care center for my child,"* and *"[The agency] provided on-site [child care] for those in class. We could go in and out and check on the kids...it was very good."*

Transportation -- Transportation service costs were usually covered through vouchers or reimbursements to participants. One State, in addition to vouchers and reimbursements, provided the transportation directly. Most JOBS participants gave high grades to transportation services received. Seventy-one percent of the participants graded the transportation for employment service A or B, while 58 percent graded transportation to child care A or B.

Transitional Services -- Eleven out of 13 respondents receiving transitional medical services graded them A or B. Six individuals received transitional child care, three out of the six graded the service A.

NEVERTHELESS, A SIGNIFICANT NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS EXPERIENCED PROBLEMS AND/OR VOICED COMPLAINTS THAT MERIT THE ATTENTION OF PROGRAM MANAGERS.

Insufficient Information -- While almost all participants said they were informed about the overall JOBS program, some said they were not told about, or received insufficient explanations or information on, the availability of specific services.

When asked what specific services they were told about, a significant number of participants said they were not told or do not remember being told about the availability of some JOBS program activities and support services, as shown in table 3. Many of these services are essential to gain and/or maintain employment or successfully complete a JOBS program activity.

Table 3: Percent of Respondents Who Said They Were Not Told About Required Activities And Support Services

Required Services	% of Participants Who Said They Were Not Told About The Service	Number of Respondents
Education: (e.g., education designed to prepare for high school equivalency certificate and Basic Education	22%	176
Education in English Proficiency	67%	72
Job Skills Training	22%	166
Job Readiness	32%	148
Child Care	11%	185
Transportation	16%	178
Transitional Child Care	46%	101
Transitional Medical Services	42%	114

The services respondents were not told about most often included: (1) education in English proficiency (67 percent); (2) transitional child care (46 percent); (3) transitional medical services (42 percent); and (4) job readiness (32 percent). Additionally, 11 percent reported they were not told about, or did not remember being told about, the availability of child care, and 16 percent said the same regarding transportation services. This might explain why some participants reported they did not receive needed services. The following statement sums up the attitudes of those participants who did not receive sufficient information about the JOBS program: *"The agency did not explain the program sufficiently. Some services I asked about, I did not know was [were] available. They would not discuss education or training."*

Problems with insufficient information were also evident in the low ratings which some respondents gave to their JOBS orientation. Of 232 respondents, 33 said they received insufficient information. Thirteen respondents felt the information given was not clear or on their level. The following is a composite of these respondents' comments: *"[The JOBS case managers] did not explain what they would do to help you. The workers did not explain well. [The JOBS case managers] said they would help, but explained the program in a sophisticated way using sophisticated words."* Also, a few participants reported the staff's explanation of the program and its services did not match their own needs.

Lack of Support Services - Almost half, 98 of 208, respondents reported there were certain services they needed but did not receive. When specifically asked which services were needed but not provided they indicated: child-care (47 of 98); transportation for employment (42 of 98); and transportation to the child-care facility (11 of 98). Other unmet service needs mentioned include: car repair (15 of 98); counseling (13 of 98); transitional child care (8 of 98); and transitional medical treatment (7 of 98).

As table 4 shows, participants gave various reasons for not receiving services they needed. Forty-nine and 40 percent, respectively, believed they did not receive child care or transportation services because the State did not provide the service. In one State, participants reported public transportation was not always available at the time needed to attend the JOBS activity. Another 20 and 27 percent reported they did not receive child care or transportation services because they were not included in the plan. Also, participants believed they did not receive car repair (59 percent), counseling (25 percent) or transportation to the child care facility (46 percent) because it was not included in their JOBS employability plan.

Table 4: Reasons Respondents Gave For Not Receiving Needed Services

Service Not Received	Reason for Not Receiving Service -- Percent Responding								Number of Respondents
	Case Manager Disinterest	State Did Not Provide	Did Not Know About Service	Don't Know	Did Not Ask	Not in Employability Plan	Not Available in Community	Other	
Child Care	10%	36%	3%	8%	3%	30%	10%		39
Transportation to JOBS component	13%	40%	1%	5%	9%	27%	5%		37
Transportation to Child Care Facility	3%	29%	3%	19%		46%			11
Car Repair	13%		1%			59%	5%	22%	15
Counseling	.4%	27.6%		17%	18%	25%		12%	13

The need for support services could surface at all stages of program participation . Some support services problems were expressed by respondents during comments about their employability plans. Seventeen participants said they received inadequate information about their plan, or said that services listed in the plan were not delivered as promised due to insufficient resources. Fourteen participants felt pressured by the JOBS staff to set different goals from what they preferred. For example, they were required to seek employment at their present skill level rather than participate in education or training.

Fifty-two percent of the respondents who said they did not receive services did not know they could, or believed they could not, change their employability plan to solve new problems or to change their education and employment goals. When we asked respondents if they helped to develop their employability plan, 43 out of 194 respondents reported they did not help. Six participants either did not have an employability plan or did not remember devising a plan.

Eight respondents needed but did not receive transitional child care services. Five of the eight needed both transitional child care and medical services. Seven were individuals who completed the JOBS program. They reported they did not receive the service primarily because it was not included in the plan. However, seven indicated they were not told that the services were available.

Deficient Case Manager Services and Attitudes - Thirty-one percent of respondents thought the agency should provide better screening/assessments, encouragement, case management, and follow-up of JOBS participants. Thirty-four percent of 198 respondents

were not fully satisfied with the assessment process, grading it C, D or F. Of these, 37 reported their assessment was inadequate and did not reflect their education, employment skills, experiences, and interests. Eight respondents indicated that a personal interview was not even conducted; another six respondents said the activity was merely a paperwork process. Twenty participants felt their assessment interview was incomplete, either excluding their full work and personal history or their long-term education and employment goals. Five respondents felt stigmatized by the assessment process. Twenty-one respondents reported they either felt coerced or humiliated or felt that the case managers were not helpful during their orientation.

In some cases, participants criticized what they believed were condescending attitudes and the inability of case managers and staff to provide more support. However, they recognized that there were staff shortages, and that staff needed more training. Of the 232 participants in the sample, 66 individuals reported they felt like dropping out of the program at some point, and 15 out of the 66 attributed this feeling to the case manager's condescending attitude. The following is a composite of the attitudes expressed by discouraged participants: *"The worker ... was not supportive... made me feel inferior and treated me like I was stupid. The worker acted as though she did not want me to attend school."*

Additionally, some participants expected more support than they received from the agency and its staff in identifying available jobs and in being prepared for interviews. For example, a few participants thought the agency should develop jobs, and the case manager should coach them for job interviews, (i.e., tell them what skills are necessary before sending them on interviews so they could better prepare and converse on the job skills needed).

Understanding of Penalties - While the majority of participants knew about penalties for non-participation or non-compliance with program requirements, some did not understand. A majority of the participants surveyed knew about the penalties for not participating in the JOBS program or not complying with program requirements. Participants knew they could lose AFDC benefits for one of the following reasons: (1) refusing to participate in the JOBS program without a good reason (87 percent); (2) receiving income or wages from JOBS-related employment -- e.g., on-the-job training (79 percent); and (3) not following the terms of their employability plan (83 percent). Twenty-one percent said they did not know they could lose benefits by refusing to participate in the program or due to earnings obtained from participating in a JOBS activity, e.g., on-the-job training.

Twenty-two respondents reported losing benefits while participating in the program. Twelve reported their AFDC and/or Food Stamps benefits were reduced after receiving student loan funds. Participants felt they should not have been penalized when they received student loan or grant funds targeted for school or training needs.

Disenchanted Minority - A minority (30 respondents) experienced multiple problems and gave consistently low ratings to program activities and support services. This minority included mandatory and volunteer participants, JOBS program completers, currently active

participants and dropouts. Twenty-two of them were mandatory participants who said they participated in the JOBS program only because they were required to do so as a condition of eligibility for AFDC and Food Stamp benefits. They differed from others in the study sample in that they expressed dissatisfaction with four or more activities/services of the JOBS program. Nineteen rated the JOBS program poor or very poor and believed the program would not help them get off welfare. Twenty-two needed services they did not receive. Seventeen felt like dropping out of the program, and 7 did drop out. Some characteristics of these dissatisfied individuals were:

- ▶ 33 median Age.
- ▶ 14 were single, never married; 6 were married; 5 were separated; 4 were divorced; and 1 was unknown.
- ▶ 12 had a high school diploma; 8 had less than 12 years of schooling; 4 and 5 respectively had some vocational and college education; and 1 had an unknown amount of education.
- ▶ 15 were receiving AFDC assistance for 36 of the previous 60 months.
- ▶ 27 had prior work experience.
- ▶ 7 were working and were off welfare.
- ▶ 6 were working and were still on welfare.

EIGHTY-SIX PERCENT OF THE RESPONDENTS SHARED SPECIFIC SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVING THE JOBS PROGRAM.

Eighty-six percent of the 232 respondents suggested the program needed improvements to ensure its success. Their suggestions fell into three broad categories: (1) achieving self-sufficiency, (2) improving support services, and (3) strengthening case manager performance.

Achieving Self Sufficiency - In order to become self-sufficient, 25 percent of the participants believed more emphasis should be placed on education and training in order to prepare them for a career which would increase their earning capacity above the minimum-wage level. They felt low (minimum wage) wages would force them to remain on welfare or to return to the public assistance rolls because their wages would not be sufficient to replace lost medical, AFDC, and/or Food Stamp benefits.

Some participants suggested two services which, if provided, would motivate and assist participants to become independent of welfare: (1) allow participants a trial work period and let them receive their first pay check before terminating benefits. The AFDC benefits obtained during this period could be used to meet employment start-up costs (e.g., transportation and clothes); and, (2) provide transitional services (child care, medical) to participants whose AFDC benefits will be terminated due to earned income. Participants believed these services would provide a smooth transition off welfare, or back on welfare if the employment was unsuccessful.

Improving Support Services - Thirty-five percent of the participants recommended improving key support services such as child care, transportation, education, and counseling. This would include assisting participants in finding quality, affordable child care and transportation services.

Strengthening Case Manager Performance - Eleven percent of the participants suggested that the agency and staff improve the process for explaining JOBS program services. Thirty-five percent of the participants suggested that case managers should do a better job of explaining the JOBS program activities and support services, assessing clients needs, and should be more empathetic and supportive and not condescending.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

American Public Welfare Association, "W MEMO" Vol. 1 Nos 8-9, November 1, 1989.

Center for Law and Social Policy, "Family Matters", Volume 1 No. 3, Spring 1989.

Dixon, Wilfred J. and Massey, Frank J., Jr., Introduction to Statistical Analysis, Third Edition, New York, San Francisco, St. Louis, Toronto, London and Sidney: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1969.

Gueron, Judith M., Reforming Welfare With Work, New York: Manpower Demonstration Research Cooperation, 1987.

National Puerto Rican Coalition, Inc., "Implementing The Family Support Act Perspectives of Puerto Rican Clients," Handout No.1, The Urban Institute Welfare Reform Workshop, 1990.

Sar A Levitan, Programs in Aid of the Poor, Sixth Edition, Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1990.

Social Research Center Calvin College, Attitudes Toward the MOST Program: A Survey of MOST Program Sanctionees for the Kent County Department of Social Services Grand Rapids, Michigan, March 1987.

U. S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Inspector General, Working Toward JOBS, June 1990.

U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Employment and Earnings, Volume 38 No. 2, February 1991.

U.S. General Accounting Office, Work And Welfare: Analysis of AFDC Employment Programs in Four States, GAO/HRD-88-33FS, January 1988.

U. S. General Accounting Office, Work and Welfare: Current AFDC Work Programs and Implications for Federal Policy, GAO/HRD-87-34, January 1987.

Quiroz, Julia Teresa and Tosca, Regina, On My Own: Mexican American Women Self-Sufficiency and the Family Support Act, National Council of LaRaza, 1990.

APPENDIX A

PROFILE OF SURVEY RESPONDENTS *

(# Respondents = 232)

Basic Demographics

- 32 median age of survey participants.
- 33 median age of mandatory participants.
- 30 median age of volunteer participants.
- 91 percent were females.
- 52 percent were African-Americans; 26 percent were Whites; 14 percent were Hispanics; two percent were Asians and Native Americans; and seven percent were unknown.
- 46 percent were single, never married; 29 percent were separated or divorced; 14 percent were married; three percent were widowed; and nine percent were unknown.
- 70 percent had one or two children.
- 30 percent had from three to six children.
- 22 percent of the children were age 3 and under.
- 1 percent were teenage parents at the time of the survey.
- 81 percent were mandatory participants.

Education

- 35 percent had a high school diploma or general equivalency degree.
- 35 percent had less than a high school degree.
- 11 percent had some vocational training or college.
- 12 percent had completed a college or university degree.
- 7 percent had an unknown amount of education.

Work History

- 84 percent had a work history.
- 8 percent did not have a work history.
- 8 percent had an unknown work history.

Welfare History

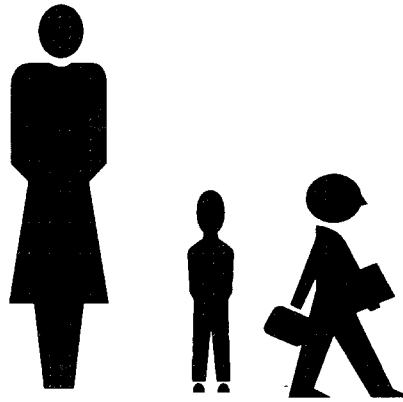
- 83 percent were receiving AFDC
- 7 percent were receiving Unemployed Parents assistance
- 10 percent were former recipients whose benefits were terminated.
- 8 percent were recipients whose AFDC benefits were reduced (sanction status).
- 60 percent received AFDC for 36 of the preceding 60 months.
- 61 percent were custodial parents above the age of 24.
- 10 percent were custodial parents under the age of 24 who had not completed high school and at the time of application were not enrolled in high school and had little or no work experience.
- 1 percent had a youngest child within 2 years of being ineligible for AFDC because of age.

* Demographic data was obtained from case files and provided by the local welfare offices.

APPENDIX B

The following stories illustrate participants' experiences in the JOBS program. The information was obtained during face to face interviews with these individuals. Pseudonyms are used to protect the confidentiality of the individuals.

The Monday Family



Mrs. Monday is a 32 years old, single (never married) African-American who has two sons, ages 4 and 9. She is a high school graduate. The family received Aid to Families with Dependent Children between 1985 and 1990.

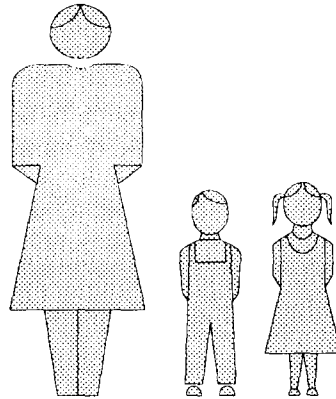
Mrs. Monday was required to participate in the JOBS program. However, before the agency approached her about participating in the program, she volunteered, after hearing about it from a friend. She believed the program could help her get a job and off of welfare. She said "this is a dream." I have been "a long time waiting".

Overall, Mrs. Monday was satisfied with the assessment of her education and skills and employability plan. However, she would like to have received more education to improve her reading skills. Her long range goal is to obtain a college/university degree. She participated in on-the-job training at the Department of Social Services. There were times she felt like dropping out of the program because of the attitudes of some of the agency staff. She "felt unwelcome", and her filing job, was not rewarding. She said all she did for three weeks was file papers.

She felt her JOBS case manager was very supportive and encouraged her to complete the program. She was pleased with the services she received (child care, transportation, counseling, transitional child care and transitional medical services). She completed the JOBS program and obtained a job providing housekeeping services for welfare recipients in need of such services. She said she got what she wanted out of the program a "job" and "to get off welfare". However, the most important benefit she received from participating in the program was "my self esteem -- my kids love me working and they are proud of me."

Mrs. Monday believes the program is very good, and it could help AFDC recipients get off welfare. She would recommend the program to other recipients. She suggested that the agency provide more counseling. Recipients need to know that there is better life than welfare. She suggested encouraging recipients to get off welfare by helping them to find employment, providing medical benefits, and continuing child care when AFDC benefits are terminated due to earned income.

The Thursday Family



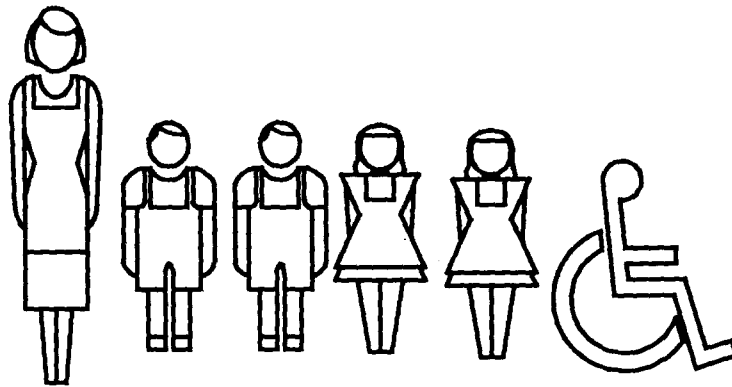
Mrs. Thursday is a 26 year old divorced, Mexican-American who receives AFDC assistance for herself and two children (daughter age 4 and son age 2). She is a high school graduate.

Mrs. Thursday began receiving AFDC in April 1989. She volunteered to participate in the JOBS program to obtain assistance with finding employment and child care payments. During the orientation, she was told about all the services JOBS would provide, except transitional medical services.

She was very satisfied with all aspects of the program except Job Search. Initially she thought the JOBS program would provide a job, and was disappointed when it did not. As a result, she thought Job Search was not helpful. She was without child care for a short time during her participation in JOBS, (the state's "child care funds ran out"). Nevertheless, she was very satisfied with the child care and transportation services she did receive.

Mrs. Thursday felt her case manager was supportive and encouraged her to complete the program and get off welfare. She is working (clerical worker for a taxi company). Her wages are not sufficient to impact her AFDC benefits. She expects an increase in her wages and believes her AFDC benefits will either be terminated or reduced. She believes the JOBS program is very good, could help recipients get off welfare, and said she would recommend it to others. She believes the program could be improved if the agency informed clients they can volunteer for the program and that services, especially child care and transportation, are provided to help individuals complete the program). Also, the agency can do a better job of informing clients that they do not develop jobs nor do they provide a lists of available jobs.

The Stamp Family



Mrs. Bell Stamp is a 34-year-old white female. She lives with her two daughters (Laura, age 15, and Doris, age 8), two sons (Matthew, age 11, and James, age 9) and her disabled brother who has multiple sclerosis. She is separated from her husband. Mrs. Stamp is a high-school graduate and has only worked part time.

Mrs. Stamp participated in the JOBS program only because she was required to as a condition of eligibility for AFDC benefits. There were times that she felt like dropping out of the program, but did not because she feared losing AFDC benefits. Her participation in the JOBS program was impacted by multiple problems. In addition to caring for her four children alone, she cared for her disabled brother, was abused by her husband and was evicted from her home and had much difficulty finding another house.

Mrs. Stamp wanted child care provider training but was told she had to participate in job search. She said she did not want to participate in job search. She was interested in becoming a child care provider because she could do this in her home and still be readily available to her children and her brother. Currently, Mrs. Stamp provides child care services for two children. She does not know if this meets the agency's work requirement. However, her goal is to expand her day care operations and to get off welfare.

Mrs. Stamp reported that overall the program appears to be good but she gave it low marks because the program did not serve her needs and the workers were condescending. "I felt like a little kid in a class room."

She said the program could be improved by giving recipients choices and by providing services and counseling that could help participants resolve personal problems that impact on participation in the program. For example, case managers should be more supportive of clients with problems, and help clients find houses. She also said recipients might not want to obtain employment that would result in terminating their AFDC benefits because they are afraid of losing medical benefits.