

STUDY SERIES  
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**Final Report on Cognitive Interview Research Results and  
Revisions to the Welfare Reform Benefits Questions for the  
March 2000 Income Supplement to the CPS**

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## **Introduction and Background**

This report describes the results of cognitive interview research on questions about welfare reform benefits which were contained in both the 1998 and 1999 March Income Supplement of the Current Population Survey (CPS). These questions were the first attempt by the CPS to measure participation in welfare reform benefits after 1996 legislation instituted the Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) program, which requires each state in the nation to implement their own welfare program and quickly transition welfare recipients to the work force. The cognitive interview research described in this report was the second (and final) phase of a project designed to evaluate the questions about participation in welfare reform benefits and to develop improvements for the March 2000 CPS. Prior to the cognitive interviews, the first phase of research was a series of focus groups conducted with welfare case managers and welfare program participants used to identify problems that existed with the questions, and to gather information to aid in the development of questionnaire design solutions. The results of the focus groups are documented in a separate report (by Loomis & Rothgeb, dated April 13, 1999); those results guided the development of revised questions on receipt of welfare reform benefits, which were then tested in the cognitive interviews.

This report begins with a description of the methods and procedures that were used to conduct the cognitive interviews. The cognitive interview results and our recommendations for March 2000 are presented according to the major topic areas of the welfare-reform related questions: receipt of cash assistance, cash diversion assistance, transportation and child care assistance, and participation in work-related training activities. After each recommendation, the final decisions that were made by the Housing and Household Economic Statistics Division (HHES) are presented.

## **Methodology and Procedures**

Similar to the approach for the focus group research, three states were chosen for the cognitive interview research. The interview locations were Boston, Massachusetts; Seattle, Washington; and Raleigh, North Carolina. Several factors were considered in choosing these sites. We wanted to visit different states because of the state-to-state variation in TANF programs, and we also wanted to choose states that we had not visited for the focus groups so that we would potentially encounter different issues that might be relevant for the questionnaire design. We also thought it would be useful to select states from different geographic areas of the U.S. Another factor was the characteristics of the states' TANF programs. Of particular concern was whether or not the state used cash diversion in their program, so that we could evaluate the design of questions among cash diversion recipients (Washington and North Carolina have cash diversion programs, Massachusetts does not). We also wanted some variation between the states with respect to whether the TANF program was state-administered or varied by county (North Carolina's programs are county-based; Massachusetts' and Washington's programs are state-based).

The cognitive interview research consisted of a series of one-on-one interviews with people who had experiences with different types of welfare benefits. Interview participants were recruited

through state and local government agencies that serve clients receiving welfare benefits. Our goal was to interview 8 people at each site who had had the following types of experiences in 1998:

- 2 people who participated in employment-related training as part of a welfare-to-work program;
- 2 people who worked at a paid job and received transportation and/or child care assistance;
- 2 people who received a “child-only” cash assistance grant;
- 1 person who received a cash diversion payment; and
- 1 person who received cash assistance from a general or emergency assistance program.

We completed a total of 19 interviews: 9 in Boston, 7 in Seattle, and only 3 in Raleigh (due to last-minute respondent cancellations and “no-shows”). The chart below provides information on the numbers of respondents interviewed according to the recruitment criteria.

<b>Number of Cognitive Interview Respondents by Recruitment Criteria</b>			
	<i>Number of Respondents Interviewed</i>		
	<u>Boston</u>	<u>Seattle</u>	<u>Raleigh</u>
<i>Recruitment criteria (referring to 1998 participation)</i>			
1. Participated in employment-related training as part of a welfare-to-work program	2	1	1
2. Received transportation or child care assistance while working at a paid job	4	2	--
3. Received child-only cash assistance grant	2	2	1
4. Received a cash diversion payment	NA	1	--
5. Received cash assistance through a General or Emergency Assistance Program	1 (General)	1 (General)	1 (Emergency)
<b>Total</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>3</b>

It is worth noting that some respondents who had been recruited for either criteria #1 (employment-related training in welfare-to-work programs) or criteria #2 (receiving supportive services while working in paid employment), actually had experience in both areas during 1998.

For each interview, an abbreviated form of the March Income Supplement was administered. We felt it was important to administer the welfare reform benefit questions in the context of the entire March Supplement interview. However, in order to keep the interviews brief (no longer than 1 hour) and allow time for probing respondents’ answers to the welfare questions, some sections of questions were deleted (e.g., Interest, Dividends, Property Income, Retirement and Pensions) and some of the detailed questions within sections were also deleted. Some probing questions were used throughout the interview to help the respondent become accustomed to

being asked about their answers; probing questions were used more heavily for the welfare benefit questions of interest. The types of probes used most often asked respondents to describe the assistance they received (to help verify “yes” responses) and to paraphrase questions (to help verify their comprehension of the question and elicit potential alternative approaches to question design). Appendix A contains the protocols used and shows the probing questions that were asked.

At all 3 sites, two slightly different protocols were used; they differed with respect to the position of the cash assistance questions in the interview. In one of the protocols, the questions about receipt of cash assistance were asked in the position they currently appear in the March interview (right after questions on SSI, which is several sections *before* questions about other benefits such as food stamps and Medicaid). In the other protocol, the questions asking about receipt of cash assistance were located near the end of the interview, *after* questions about food stamps, Medicaid, and other benefits. This alternative location for the cash assistance question was tested to see if it was more effective in getting respondents to focus their answers on cash assistance, and to exclude the other non-cash benefits which they would have already had a chance to report. This was done because of focus group findings that suggested respondents interpret the cash assistance question as asking about their “package” of benefits, for instance, cash assistance and food stamps together.

The protocols differed between sites with respect to some relatively minor question design differences. The interviews in Boston were conducted approximately one week before the Seattle and Raleigh interviews. Consequently, we were able to take advantage of preliminary findings in Boston to make some minor revisions to questions and test them in the subsequent test sites. The appendix includes the protocols used at each site. (Note that the appendix only shows the protocol using the current question order, since the only difference for the “revised question order” protocol was the skip instructions between questions.)

## **Results, Recommendations, and Final Decisions**

### ***Receipt of Cash Assistance***

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#### ***Boston:***

A1.) At any time during 1998, even for one month, did you receive any CASH assistance from a state or county welfare program, such as (STATE PROGRAM NAME)? Please do NOT include food stamps, SSI, energy assistance, or medical assistance payments.

#### ***Raleigh & Seattle:***

A1.) At any time during 1998, even for one month, did you receive any CASH assistance from a state or county welfare program, such as (STATE PROGRAM NAME)?

#### ***Boston, Seattle & Raleigh: (Child-only assistance, if A1=“no”)***

A2.) Just to be sure, in 1998 did anyone receive CASH assistance from a state or county welfare program, on behalf of CHILDREN in the household?

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Question A1 was designed to try to remedy the problems found with item Q59A88 in the focus group research. (Note that the March 1998/1999 Welfare Reform Benefits Questions, including Q59A88, are shown in Appendix B.) The purpose of this item is to measure whether any household members received cash assistance through participation in a TANF program or through other programs, such as General Assistance or Emergency Assistance. The focus group research primarily explored how TANF cash assistance recipients interpreted item Q59A88, and the design of item A1 reflects the information we received from such recipients during the focus group discussions. Some of the major findings from the focus groups were: (1) the term “welfare” was the most widely recognized and often used wording for referring to benefits received; (2) some recipients preferred to use their state’s welfare-to-work program name when referring to their benefits; and (3) the term “cash assistance” was commonly recognized by recipients and was much more descriptive of the specific type of assistance that Q59A88 is intended to measure, as compared to the terms “government payments” and “public assistance” which were misinterpreted by respondents (e.g., to apply only to federal government benefits, and to include non-cash benefits such as food stamps). (Please see the report on focus group research findings by Loomis & Rothgeb, dated April 13, 1999, for more complete information about the focus group research findings.)

The question that was originally designed for testing in the cognitive research was the A1 item used in the Boston interviews. However, because of findings from the Boston cognitive interviews, we tested a modified version of A1 in Raleigh and Seattle. In general, we found that the A1 question used in Raleigh and Seattle worked well for capturing reports of cash assistance, particularly for people who received their cash assistance through participation in welfare-to-work programs. However, we did detect some potential problems with this question, specifically for people who received their cash assistance outside of a welfare-to-work program and people whose assistance was paid directly to a third-party, such as to a landlord or utility company. However, the research suggests that question A2 could help improve the measurement of cash assistance, by “catching” some actual recipients who (incorrectly) answer “no” to A1 (e.g., child-only cash grant recipients). We also found no evidence that the order of the cash assistance questions in the March Supplement interview should be revised. The following describes these findings in more detail.

In the cash assistance question tested in Boston, respondents were told, “Please do NOT include food stamps, SSI, energy assistance, or medical assistance payments,” because of focus group findings which suggested that cash assistance recipients might think they should report their benefits as “a package,” for instance, cash assistance plus food stamps and medical assistance. However, it was found that the sentence, “Please do NOT include food stamps, etc...” might *confuse* respondents who receive cash benefits along with other non-cash benefits. This happened for one of the Boston respondents who incorrectly answered “no” to the cash assistance question. When the researcher probed as to why this happened, the respondent said,

*“[You] asked me if I received cash, and then [you] said do not include food stamps. Right away [my] brain is thinking, ‘the answer is no.’ I receive two things: cash assistance and food stamps—[you] said don’t include that.”*

In Raleigh and Seattle, we did not specifically ask respondents to exclude the value of non-cash benefits, and we used probing questions to determine if the amount of cash they reported in the follow-up questions also included the value of non-cash benefits. We found that all of the respondents reported only the value of their cash benefits. In sum, it appears that the sentence “Please do NOT include...” is not necessary, and that term “cash assistance” is quite effective in helping to exclude reports of non-cash benefits.

As mentioned above, we tested two different locations in the interview for the cash assistance questions. There was no evidence that the alternative location (i.e., later in the interview after questions about non-cash benefits) was better. Again, we think that the phrase “cash assistance” was most useful for communicating that non-cash benefits should be excluded from respondents’ answers.

The “cash assistance” wording certainly appeared to be a design improvement; however, we did find evidence that the success of this question depends on the *type* of cash assistance that respondents receive. This question appeared to work particularly well for respondents who participated in welfare-to-work programs to receive their cash benefits. For these respondents, the “cash assistance from a state or county welfare program” wording, or the state program name seemed to be quite helpful in aiding their comprehension of the question. This was evidenced by their responses to the question and by the question paraphrases they provided. Some of the question paraphrases are provided below (note that in Boston, the program name is Temporary Aid to Families with Dependent Children (TAFDC); in Raleigh and Seattle, the program name is WorkFirst.):

*“I received welfare until I found a job and they cut me off...[the question] asked me did I receive anything from welfare...” (Boston #5)*

*“So, basically what you’re talking about is just AFDC...Yes, that’s me...It’s just the money that goes along with the food stamps—well, some people don’t get food stamps. They only get cash benefits, but basically I think that you’re talking about the AFDC cash benefits.” (Boston #6)*

*“Yeah, I received the cash...I received money and I received it every month—every two weeks from welfare. It’s asking do you receive any kind of benefits from welfare, besides—without saying do you get/receive food stamps, Mass Health, they don’t want to know that. They just want to know do you receive any cash benefits.” (Boston #7)*

*“Yes...It’s asking if you participate in the WorkFirst program to get the public assistance...[it’s] a grant or a welfare check, basically.” (Seattle #7)*

*“Yes...[the question is asking] if anyone in my household was on welfare in ’98...I received a grant for \$518 a month and off and on I was sanctioned for this and sanctioned for that so it varied from month to month...” (Seattle #1)*

*“Yes...It’s asking if I received any welfare. A check from social services.” When she was later asked by the researcher what she calls the assistance she receives: “WorkFirst. It’s called WorkFirst, it’s no longer called welfare.” (Raleigh #3)*

While the cash assistance question (A1) worked very well for welfare-to-work program participants, it did not perform quite as well for the other types of cash assistance recipients in

our research. For child-only grant recipients, we found that question A1 alone was relatively successful in picking up reports of this type of assistance, but that also using item A2 (shown below) as a “safety net” could help improve the accuracy of reports. What appears to be more problematic is the potential for missing reports of “emergency” assistance with these items. We first discuss the findings for child-only recipients.

Before the cognitive interview research started, it was anticipated that child-only recipients might not recognize that question A1 applies to their situation, so item A2 was developed to serve as a “safety net.” If child-only grant recipients answered “no” to the initial cash assistance question (A1), we hoped that they would answer “yes” to item A2.

We interviewed a total of 5 child-only grant recipients. Out of these 5 respondents, 2 from Boston and 1 from Raleigh reported their grant at item A1, 1 respondent from Seattle answered “no” to A1 but said “yes” to A2, and 1 respondent from Seattle answered “no” to A1 and was unsure how to answer A2. While we only observed 1 child-only grant recipient who was “caught” at item A2, we believe this item could help improve measurement of cash assistance receipt. The respondent from Raleigh who reported her child-only grant at A1 said that she was uncertain how other child-only recipients would answer item A1. She thought that other child-only grant recipients might not be aware that their cash assistance was related to the WorkFirst program, because they are not required to engage in WorkFirst employment-related activities.

One other observation regarding item A2 was that it also “caught” a cash assistance recipient in Seattle who had participated in WorkFirst, but said “no” to item A1. She received cash assistance for herself and her children, but answered “no” to A1 and “yes” to A2. The reason appeared to be a misinterpretation of WorkFirst; she thought that WorkFirst assistance was limited to partial cash grants that can be received *after* obtaining a job. (This observation suggests that if item A2 is kept, the questionnaire should still allow respondents to answer in follow-up questions that the cash assistance grant covers both adults and children.)

If item A2 is kept as a “safety net” question, it is worth evaluating what the universe of eligible respondents should be. When item A2 was developed for testing, we thought it might be best to limit this question to households with children currently present, and to use a relatively strict income screener so that all the low-income households who responded “no” to A1 were not burdened with this additional question. However, we might want to consider relaxing the screening criteria to help maximize the chances that question A2 would catch as many cash assistance recipients as possible. One option would be to ask this item in households that answered “no” to A1 and that currently contain children. An advantage to this approach is that item A2 would sound more relevant for more respondents; the disadvantage would be missing recipients who had children in the household in the past year but no longer do currently.

We also interviewed 3 respondents who received “general” or “emergency” assistance. One was a man from Boston with no children in the household; one was a woman from Seattle who has children and has been working at a job for two years but regularly received a partial cash grant; and one was a woman from Raleigh with no children in the household. The Boston and Seattle respondents, who both received “general” assistance, correctly answered “yes” to A1, but the Seattle respondent was initially confused by the use of “WorkFirst” in the question. This was



because she never participated in the WorkFirst program, and she was uncertain for a moment about whether her cash assistance should be reported:

*“Yeah, I mean, no, now say that again?... [researcher reads question again]...Oh, yeah. [researcher probed for reason for confusion] Because you said welfare and then you said WorkFirst and I’m just trying to determine the difference. I mean when you said welfare, that’s welfare, but WorkFirst to me is something else...I know that WorkFirst is a program but I don’t know all the details about the program...but, like I said, I’ve been working for almost two years, so I haven’t had to go through a lot of the programs because before WorkFirst I went through job training programs, before, years ago. And now I’m working.” (Seattle #5)*

The Raleigh respondent who received emergency assistance said “no” to A1 (she was not asked item A2 because there were no children in her household). One reason for her “no” response was that she interpreted question A1 as asking about cash assistance received through participation in WorkFirst.

*“WorkFirst, if you don’t work, you won’t get no help...the system now, you have to work some in order to get some income...what I’m trying to say is that you have to work a little bit in order to receive your assistance.” (Raleigh #2)*

Another reason for the Raleigh respondent’s “no” response to A1 was that she did not view her emergency assistance as “cash assistance.” She explained that the social services office paid her bills directly and that she was not given the money herself.

To summarize, it appears that item A1 is quite effective in eliciting reports of cash assistance received by respondents who participated in welfare-to-work programs, and A1 is moderately successful in capturing reports of child-only cash grants. The research also suggests that question A2 has the potential to improve the measurement of child-only assistance, and maybe also cash assistance received for adult-and-child units when A1 is incorrectly answered “no.” For other cash assistance recipients (e.g., emergency and general assistance), item A1 might not be as successful, particularly when the cash assistance is not associated with participation in a welfare-to-work program, and when the recipient does not directly receive the cash assistance. Under the assumption that both these circumstances are common for emergency assistance recipients, we anticipate that reports of emergency assistance will be missed.

As a pair, questions A1 and A2 seem to be working successfully among the types of people who are probably the largest proportion of cash assistance recipients—i.e., welfare-to-work program participants and child-only grant recipients. Consequently, we do not recommend a wording change to these items to try to accommodate the measurement of emergency assistance grants. Instead we present three alternatives to consider. First, we think that to measure emergency assistance well, a separate question is probably necessary. The disadvantage to this approach is increased burden on the respondent, and seemingly badgering the respondent with repeated questions about different types of cash assistance. Also, we cannot recommend this approach without the opportunity to first test the question. A second alternative is to try to incorporate measurement of emergency assistance into the new item that we developed to measure cash diversion assistance (the findings for the cash diversion item, B1, are discussed below). This

would involve revising the diversion assistance question (B1) so that it applies more generally to “one-time” assistance received because of an emergency need, whether it be cash diversion or direct payment to a third-party. But again, we cannot recommend this be done without an additional test. A third alternative would be to include the term “emergency assistance” in item Q73A2 in the March Supplement, which is a “catch-all” question asking about “any severance pay, welfare, foster child care payments, or any other money income not already covered.” However, given the cognitive interview findings, emergency assistance recipients might not consider their assistance to be “money income” if their bills are paid directly by social services.

Staff from the questionnaire design laboratory at the National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS) will be testing welfare reform benefits questions in an upcoming split-panel field test. We recommend that the cash diversion question (B1) be revised to more generally ask about one-time assistance because of an emergency need, and tested in the NCHS field test. This approach would be less burdensome to respondents than an additional question dedicated to emergency assistance, and would probably be more effective than incorporating “emergency assistance” into item Q73A2. If NCHS is able to gather evidence that such a revised question is effective, we can then consider using it in the March CPS. However, if the NCHS test results are inconclusive, the only design change we would feel comfortable recommending without further research is including “emergency assistance” in item Q73A2.

#### Recommendations for Cash Assistance Items A1 and A2

Based on the cognitive interview findings, we recommend the following:

- (1) Adopt the cash assistance question (A1) that was used in the Raleigh and Seattle interviews.
- (2) Also include item A2 in the interview, with the following universe of eligible respondents: households responding “no” to A1 who currently have children in the household. This will help maximize the potential of question A2 to elicit reports of cash assistance, but also help to limit the administration of this question to those for whom it would be most relevant. The questionnaire should still allow respondents who answer “yes” to A2 to subsequently answer in follow-up questions that the cash assistance grant covers both adults and children.
- (3) Keep the cash assistance questions in their current location in the interview.
- (4) To improve measurement of receipt of emergency assistance, revise the diversion question (B1) to ask more generally about “one-time” assistance and test it in the NCHS field test later this month. Depending on the NCHS test results, either adopt the new question or incorporate the term “emergency assistance” into item Q73A2. Thus, we recommend the following question be tested by NCHS as an alternative to the diversion question we tested in cognitive research:

*At any time during 1998, did a state or county welfare agency give (you/anyone in the household) a ONE-TIME lump-sum payment, or pay (your/their) bills directly, because of an emergency need?*

If the NCHS test is not conclusive, we recommend that Q73A2 be revised to ask about “...any severance pay, welfare, emergency assistance, foster child care payments, or any other money income not already covered.”

**\*\*Final Decisions\*\***

Recommendations 1, 2, and 3 were accepted. As for recommendation 4, our observations during the NCHS field test indicated that the alternative question to measure diversion and emergency assistance could actually capture other types of assistance that were not intended to be measured with this question, such as energy assistance and lump-sum payments from Social Security or SSI to compensate for administrative delays in regular payments (see the Cash Diversion Assistance section later in this report). Consequently, we decided not to include a separate question to measure diversion/emergency assistance payments. The alternative recommendation to include the term “emergency assistance” in item Q73A2 was accepted by HHES.

***Program Name for Cash Assistance***

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***Boston:***

A3.) Did (NAME/you) receive the cash assistance from a welfare program, sometimes called (STATE PROGRAM NAME) in your state, or did (NAME/you) receive it from some other type of program, such as general assistance or emergency assistance?

***Raleigh & Seattle:***

A3.) From what type of program did (NAME/you) receive the cash assistance? Was it (STATE PROGRAM NAME), General Assistance, Emergency Assistance, or some other program?

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For the cognitive interview research, the follow-up questions gathering detailed information about cash assistance (i.e., items A3 through A8) were revised so that the wording of those items corresponded to the revised wording of the initial question (A1) determining receipt of cash assistance. The purpose of item A3 is to determine the specific program from which the cash assistance was received.

In the Boston interviews, we found that the wording originally developed for item A3 was very awkward to read and that this question was sometimes misinterpreted by respondents. Some of the respondents in Boston thought the question was asking if they received cash benefits from the state they live in or from some other state. Consequently, we revised item A3 into a shorter question for the Raleigh and Seattle interviews.

For the most part, respondents seemed to understand the intent of both versions of question A3, but some had difficulty providing an answer because they were unsure about the specific program from which their cash assistance was provided. For respondents in Raleigh and Seattle who participated in the WorkFirst program, answers to A3 came pretty easily, and most responded “WorkFirst.” Similarly, in Boston, several respondents quickly replied, “TAFDC.” The respondents who were unsure how to answer A3 were among the child-only and general assistance recipients.

In Seattle, one of the child-only recipients was unable to provide a program name for the cash grant she received. The other child-only recipient from Seattle was more knowledgeable about her assistance and answered “some other program” to A3 and specified that “It would be

TANF.” In Boston, one of the child-only recipients said that her grant was from TAFDC, but the other child-only recipient from Boston was unsure and said, “I received it from here—I don’t know much about welfare. So if it came from here, then it’s TAFDC.” In Raleigh, the child-only recipient we interviewed also seemed relatively knowledgeable about her grant and said that it “came under WorkFirst”, even though she was not actually participating in the WorkFirst program.

One of the Seattle respondents, who regularly received a partial grant while she was working at a job, was unsure how to answer A3 but settled on a response of “general assistance” because she was not a WorkFirst participant and did not consider her assistance to be emergency assistance. In contrast, the Boston respondent with no children in the household easily answered that his assistance was called “general relief.”

We also probed at the end of the cognitive interviews about respondents’ understanding of the terms “general assistance” and “emergency assistance.” We did this primarily because the term “general assistance” seemed to be rather vague, and we were unsure how it would be interpreted in A3 by respondents. However, it was also an attempt to find out more information about these programs that could aid in questionnaire design. From these probing questions we found that most respondents thought of emergency assistance as financial help that is needed immediately, usually because of a particular hardship, such as getting evicted or losing a job. The one cash diversion recipient that we interviewed indicated that her diversion payment was emergency assistance. As for general assistance, some respondents said they were not familiar with this term. Other respondents who said they had heard of general assistance were only able to describe it as a payment received on a regular basis, and as being another term for welfare.

In summary, the cognitive interview findings for A3 suggest that people who have participated in a state welfare-to-work program will be likely to recognize the program as the source of their cash assistance. What is much less clear is how people who receive cash assistance under *other* circumstances will classify the program source. There appears to be a variety of circumstances under which people can receive TANF-related assistance outside of participation in welfare-to-work programs—including child-only grants, diversion payments, and partial grants while working at a paid job—and we are uncertain how such assistance will be classified by respondents. We found some evidence in the cognitive interviews that such types of TANF-related assistance might not be categorized by respondents as originating from the welfare-to-work program, but rather from general or emergency assistance, which could ultimately result in underestimates of TANF cash benefits. Furthermore, given the variety of circumstances under which cash assistance can be received, we also wonder whether the existing categories for A3 are still meaningful for data analysts. Thus, we recommend discussing the purpose of this question in light of the changes that have taken place under welfare reform, and deleting the question if it is decided to no longer be useful for data analysts.

#### *Recommendations for Item Measuring the Program Name for Cash Assistance*

- (1) We request that HHES discuss the purpose of this question in light of the changes in programs under welfare reform, and that this question be deleted if it is decided that it is no

longer useful to data analysts. If item A3 is kept, we recommend using the item tested in Raleigh and Seattle.

**\*\*Final Decisions\*\***

HHES decided to keep the item measuring the program name, and the recommended wording for this question was accepted.

***Amount of Cash Assistance***

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***Boston & Seattle:***

- A4.) What is the easiest way for you to tell us (NAME'S/your) cash assistance payments from a state or county welfare program; weekly, every other week, twice a month, monthly, or yearly?
- A5.) How much did (NAME/you) receive (weekly/ every other week / twice a month/ monthly, in cash assistance payments in 1998?
- A6.) How many (weekly/ every other week/ twice a month/ monthly) cash assistance payments did (NAME/you) receive in 1998?

***Raleigh:***

- A4.) How much did (NAME/you) receive in cash assistance payments in 1998?  
READ IF NECESSARY: WEEKLY, EVERY OTHER WEEK, TWICE A MONTH, MONTHLY, YEARLY.
  - A5.) For how many months of 1998 did (NAME/you) receive cash assistance?
- 

The Boston interviews suggested that the series of three questions to collect information on the amount of cash assistance received was awkward. Particularly problematic was item A6, which asked for the number of payments received in 1998. Several Boston respondents had trouble with item A6; for instance, some asked for clarification from the researcher immediately after hearing the question, and others interpreted it as asking for the dollar amount and answered with the amount again. To elicit an answer at A6, the interviewer sometimes resorted to asking for the number of *months* that payments were received, and then helped guide the respondent toward the calculation for the number of payments. Because of the potential problems experienced in the Boston interviews, we used a revised set of questions for the Raleigh interviews, but repeated the use of the Boston question set in Seattle. We did this because, aside from the Boston experience, we had no reason to suspect these questions would be problematic, so we wanted to confirm the potential problem in another site (Seattle) and at the same time test a potential solution in another site (Raleigh).

As it turned out, the Seattle respondents did not have the same problem with item A6 as the Boston respondents. A reason for this might be the way in which the two programs pay out cash assistance. In Boston, cash assistance was usually paid out twice a month, while in Seattle, it was most common for assistance to be given monthly. Presumably, "How many *monthly* cash assistance payments did you receive" is an easier question to comprehend than "How many *twice a month* cash assistance payments did you receive."

In Raleigh, we tested a much simpler sequence of two questions. The first question asked for the amount of cash assistance received. The response format allowed space for the amount to be reported, and provided categories indicating the frequency of receipt that interviewers would “read as necessary.” This means that after entering the amount, interviewers would automatically code the frequency category when respondents have already indicated the frequency in their response (e.g., “\$420 a month”); when respondents do not volunteer the information on frequency, interviewers would read the categories. The second question asked for the number of months during the year that assistance was received, rather than number of payments received over the year. We found that this two-question sequence worked well, but because of the low number of interviews we completed in Raleigh, it was only tested with two respondents.

Even though the questions used in Raleigh were not tested on a large number of respondents, we recommend them for March 2000 because they appear to be much simpler, both for interviewers to read and for respondents to comprehend. Neither version of these items can be expected to yield data which exactly match the true amount that respondents received in cash assistance. For instance, it was often observed during the cognitive interviews that when the amount of payment varied over the course of a year (e.g., due to sanctions, employment), respondents were forced to estimate a single amount of payment to report, because the March Supplement does not allow for reports of multiple payment amounts (and related months received). Thus, we think it would be worthwhile to adopt the version of questions that appears easier for respondents to comprehend.

#### *Recommendations for Items Measuring the Amount of Cash Assistance*

- (1) Adopt the two-question series used in Raleigh for the March 2000. Ask NCHS to include these items in their field test to help confirm that they work well.

#### **\*\*Final Decisions\*\***

The recommendation to adopt the items tested in Raleigh was not accepted. It was decided to keep the original questions because HHES did not want to introduce an inconsistency with respect to how income amounts are asked for in the March supplement.

#### ***Coverage Unit for Cash Assistance***

---

##### ***Boston, Seattle & Raleigh:***

- A7.) Did the cash assistance cover adults AND children in the household, or JUST children?
  - A8.) Who in your household was covered by the cash assistance?
- 

These questions were adapted from the SIPP Wave 9 survey with the purpose of more accurately measuring the “unit” in the household that is covered by cash assistance. For most respondents these items worked fine. However, we did detect a potential problem with question A7 – some

respondents interpreted the question as asking if the assistance was “enough” to cover the expenses for adults and children, rather than whether the payment was *intended* to pay for the needs of adults and children. We think this occurred because of the word “cover” in the question. We recommend a simple wording change to avoid using the word “cover.”

*Recommendations for Items Measuring the Coverage Unit for Cash Assistance*

- (1) Remove the word “cover” from question A7, and revise as follows: “*Was the cash assistance for adults AND children in the household, or JUST children?*” Include a response category for “adults only.” Revise the next question to ask, “*Who in your household was the cash assistance for?*”

\*\*Final Decisions\*\*

This recommendation was accepted.

***Cash Diversion Assistance***

---

***Boston, Seattle & Raleigh:***

- B1.) At any time during 1998, did (anyone in this household/you) receive a one-time, lump sum payment from a state or county welfare program?
  - B2.) Who received a one-time, lump sum payment from a state or county welfare program?
  - B3.) How much was this payment?
- 

This is a new series of questions that was designed to measure receipt of cash diversion payments, that is, one-time lump sum cash payments paid to families in an effort to satisfy short-term financial needs and keep them from enrolling in TANF for cash assistance on a regular basis. In the focus group research, we briefly discussed diversion payments with case managers and welfare program participants, to yield information that would help design a question to capture cash diversion assistance. The focus groups suggested that one of the most important concepts related to diversion payments is that they are provided to families only one time (usually within some time period, such as 12 months). The groups also suggested that recipients might not recognize the term “diversion” and that more general wording, such as “lump-sum payment” might be more successful.

In the discussion of items A1 and A2 above, we already recommended that the question about receipt of cash diversion be revised. This recommendation will be reiterated below after first describing our findings from the cognitive interviews.

The diversion assistance questions that we tested were the same at all three sites we visited. Only one diversion assistance recipient was recruited and interviewed (in Seattle). However, all respondents were asked question B1. For the most part, respondents understood the general intent of this question. When asked to paraphrase question B1, most respondents indicated that they thought the question was asking about receipt of a large amount of money received at one

time. In Boston, where there is no cash diversion assistance available, all respondents answered “no,” suggesting that false positive responses might not be a significant problem.

However, we did discover some potential problems with item B1. One or two respondents from each site mentioned that large lump sum payments are sometimes received when an administrative mistake has been made and regular monthly payments were not received, or when people initially apply for cash assistance and have to wait a few months before receiving their regular monthly payments. At item B1, one respondent from Raleigh reported that a household member received such a lump sum payment to make up for Social Security payments that had not been received but were due to her.

Another potential problem we found was that the distinction between cash diversion assistance and emergency assistance can be fuzzy, and thus, item B1 might capture both types of assistance. For instance, one Seattle respondent who regularly received a child-only cash grant also reported at question B1 that she received a one-time, emergency assistance payment to pay her landlord one month’s rent. The Seattle respondent who received a cash diversion payment actually received it in 1999, so she answered “no” to the initial cash assistance question (A1) and to the diversion question (B1). When discussing her assistance with the researcher at the end of the interview, she indicated that question B1 sounded more applicable to her situation than A1, because she interpreted A1 as asking about receipt of assistance on a regular basis and B1 as asking about a one-time payment. However, when she was also asked at the end of the interview if she was familiar with the term “emergency assistance,” she also indicated that emergency assistance was what she received.

A case manager in Seattle explained that their emergency assistance program is for people receiving regular cash assistance payments who have an emergency need for additional financial assistance, but that their diversion assistance program is for people who do not qualify for regular cash assistance, but have a temporary emergency need. Both of these Seattle programs seemed to operate in the same way for recipients, that is, cash is not directly received by the assistance recipient, rather creditors are paid directly by the welfare agency. This suggests to us that, from the recipient’s perspective, the nature of diversion assistance and emergency assistance could be quite similar, and that it would be complicated to design questions to allow an analyst to make a distinction between receipt of these two types of assistance. From an analytical perspective, diversion payments could potentially be reported at item A1 or B1, and thus, isolating recipients of cash diversion in data analyses is probably not feasible anyway. The usefulness of a question on cash diversion is to help ensure that all types of cash assistance are reported.

Thus, our earlier recommendation to revise the diversion question to more generally apply to assistance received for an emergency need was made to help address two different issues arising from the cognitive interviews: (1) recipients of emergency assistance might be missed with question A1 and thus a follow-up question that asks about emergency assistance might help catch them; and (2) the distinction between cash diversion assistance and emergency assistance is not clear, and thus, it probably makes sense to design a question with the intent of eliciting reports about both types of assistance. The revised question we have proposed might help to reduce reports of lump sum payments received because of an administrative error or the initial cash



assistance application process, since it would specify that the purpose of the assistance is an emergency need.

### Recommendations for Cash Diversion Assistance Items

As recommended earlier in this report:

- (1) Include item A2 in the March Supplement but revise it to ask more generally about “one-time” assistance, and request that it be tested in the NCHS field test later this month.

*At any time during 1998, did a state or county welfare agency give (you/anyone in the household) a ONE-TIME lump-sum payment, or pay (your/their) bills directly, because of an emergency need?*

Adopting the question should depend on the NCHS test results. If we do not feel comfortable using this revised version question in March 2000, we recommend using the item that was tested in the cognitive research, and characterizing it as a measurement of “one-time” assistance, rather than “diversion” assistance. Interviewer instructions (and file documentation) should indicate that this item can include diversion payments or emergency assistance payments, either given to the recipient or given to a third-party to pay the recipients bills. It should also be indicated that this item should not include lump sum payments received to make up for regular payments that were due to the recipient because of an administrative error or a delay in processing the application for assistance (this should be reported as regular cash assistance).

### \*\*Final Decisions\*\*

This recommendation was withdrawn after observation of the NCHS field test. In their field test, we again observed that the proposed item could capture other types of assistance that were not intended to be measured with this item. One problem was that some respondents reported receipt of energy assistance at this item; this appeared to be a result of the reference to “paying bills directly.” We also found (again) that some respondents thought of lump-sum payments from programs such as Social Security and SSI, which are given to recipients to make up for several regular payments that have not been received because of administrative mistakes or delays. Because of these issues, we did not feel comfortable with the design of this item and did not recommend it for March 2000. Also, HHES indicated that measurement of one-time assistance is not a high priority for the March Supplement.

## *Transportation and Child Care Assistance*

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### ***Boston, Seattle & Raleigh:***

- C1.) At any time during 1998, did (you/anyone in this household) receive any of the following types of assistance from a state or county welfare agency or a case manager:
- a.) Transportation assistance to help (you/them) get to work or school or training, such as gas vouchers, bus passes, or help repairing a car?

### ***Boston & Seattle:***

- b.) Any child care services or assistance in 1998 so (you/they) could go to work or school or training?

### ***Raleigh:***

- b.) How about assistance to help pay for child care in 1998, so (you/they) could go to work or school or training?
- 

The purpose of these questions is to measure whether transportation assistance and/or child care assistance to support work-related activities were received by persons in low-income households. The transportation question worked well in cognitive testing. Respondents were able to accurately paraphrase the question indicating that the objective of the question was clearly communicated. It was evident that respondents were thinking of transportation assistance for a work-related activity, including school or training.

The types of work-related transportation assistance reported in the cognitive interviews included bus passes, gas vouchers, check/cash for gas, help repairing a car and receiving a free car (won in a lottery of successful welfare-to-work participants). These are consistent with the types of assistance mentioned earlier in the focus group research. As with the focus groups, no one mentioned assistance “registering” or “insuring” their cars, so the decision (based on focus group discussions) to remove those types of assistance from the question seems sound.

An issue that arose in two cognitive interviews (in two different states) which did not arise in the earlier focus groups was that of transportation assistance received for children's schooling. If the question is intended to obtain information only for adult members of the household, then we should consider including a phrase such as "anyone 16 years or older" in the question. Alternatively, to reduce wordiness, the question could remain in its current state and analysts could screen out age-inappropriate persons since the line number for the person receiving such assistance is captured and analysts can easily identify the age of the person for whom assistance is reported. If the question is supposed to include transportation assistance for children to get to school, then we need to make it more explicit so all respondents consider this type of assistance. In addition, the interviewer instructions and training should be reviewed to ensure that all interviewers are aware of the correct universe of this question.

Two versions of the child care assistance questions were tested. One version was used for cognitive interviews in Boston and Seattle and a different version was used in Raleigh. Cognitive

interviews were conducted first in Boston. Feedback from those cognitive interviews served as input for the second version of the child care assistance question. The rewording was suggested because it was thought that those respondents whose relatives are paid (through social services or a contract agency) to provide child care may be more responsive to the wording of “help pay for child care.” It was thought that they may not consider the child care provided by their relatives as “child care services.” This version of the question was only tested during three interviews in Raleigh. In those interviews, one respondent was the caretaker for her school-aged grandson and did not use child care, another respondent had no children, and one respondent did have children and used child care services.

Overall, the version used in Boston and Seattle seems to have worked fine for the vast majority of cases. Respondents' paraphrases indicated they understood the question was about any type of child care assistance they are provided while they participate in a work-related activity. Many respondents explained how the assistance was on a sliding scale such that while they are in nonpaying training activities the child care costs are totally covered, but that once they get a paid job, they have to start paying some of the costs depending on how much they earn at their job. Many of the respondents indicated that the assistance is provided through vouchers. A few reported they receive a check weekly or monthly to pay their child care provider. Some of the respondents also understood that the question included assistance that is provided to a relative who is the child care provider.

#### *Recommendations for Transportation and Child Care Assistance Items*

- (1) Determine whether the transportation question is intended to obtain reports of assistance provided to children to get to school. If necessary, add an age screener within the question using wording such as “During ...did anyone in the household 16 years or older receive...”
- (2) Review interviewer instructions to ensure that interviewers are aware of the correct universe when collecting information for the transportation assistance question.
- (3) Implement the child care question wording used in cognitive testing in Boston and Seattle. Results of cognitive interviewing indicates that the question is soliciting intended reports of assistance and works well.

#### **\*\*Final Decisions\*\***

HHES decided that it was not necessary to revise the wording of the transportation assistance question to exclude assistance for children to get to school; the wording of this item was accepted as recommended. The recommended child care assistance question was also accepted. We had also recommended that these items be asked only in low-income households containing at least one “working age” adult (i.e., under age 65), because the wording of these questions now focuses on assistance to support going to work, school, or training. HHES also accepted this recommendation. The transportation assistance item will be asked in low-income households that contain at least one person age 15 to 64. The child care assistance item will be asked in low-income households that contain at least one person age 15 to 64 and at least one child under age 15.

## ***Employment-Related Training Services***

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### ***Boston, Seattle & Raleigh:***

- D1.) At any time during 1998, did (you/anyone in this household) do any of the following training activities:
- a.) Attend classes or receive training to prepare for the GED exam, or to improve basic reading or math skills?
  - b.) Attend job readiness training to learn about resume writing, job interviewing, or building self-esteem?
  - c.) Attend a job search program or job club, or use a job resource center to get lists of jobs and employers, schedule job interviews, and fill out job applications?
  - d.) Attend a training program to learn a specific job skill, such as computer word processing, auto mechanics, nursing, providing child care, or a skill for some other job or vocation?
  - e.) Work in an unpaid job to get work experience, which is sometimes called a volunteer job, a community service job, or a work experience position?
- 

The purpose of this series of questions is to collect information (in low-income households) about services received to assist people in training for and in searching for paid employment. For the most part, this series of questions worked quite well. After the focus group research was completed, we replaced the original series of questions with this series of separate questions about specific categories of job-related services, giving examples to illustrate each category of service. Additionally, we eliminated the language about whether a social services or welfare office provided, required, or paid for the training activity. Instead, we focused on whether people *participated* in the training activity. This overall strategy seemed to increase understanding of the information intended for collection. When we probed at the end of the series about other types of training which we may not have asked about, there were no relevant reports. It should be noted that there were instances of reports of similar training at multiple items; that is, some respondents reported training at item b and also reported the same training at item c. Some respondents reported that they thought the questions sounded similar in terms of the information the questions were collecting.

We did not include “on-the-job” training in this series of questions because information from the focus group research suggested that on-the-job training was interpreted as training given as part of regular paid employment and would probably be reported earlier in the supplement in the work experience questions. We wanted to explore this issue further in the cognitive interviews. A separate probe about on-the-job training was administered at the end of the discussion of the job-related services series. When probed about their understanding of “on-the-job training,” most respondents (especially in Boston and Seattle) indicated that it is paid, job specific training (provided by employers) once a person is formally in a job. In general, respondents did not think on-the-job training was the type of training being asked about in the training questions above. These results were consistent with those obtained in the focus groups.

Overall the job-related services series of questions elicited the types of reports intended. Provided below is a brief description of the information reported in the cognitive interviews for each specific type of training.

The first question (a) on GED training (and math and reading classes) seemed completely understood. Respondents' paraphrases of the question indicated that they understood the objective of the question. There was only one case of a person who did not report her GED training at this question. (This appears to be because she had reported earlier in the interview that she was in the process of obtaining her GED.) One other respondent provided a "no" response but then mentioned that she wasn't sure whether the question was intended to collect information about her grandson regarding help he might have received with improving his math or reading skills. If reports such as this are given, analysts will have the line number of the person for whom the information was collected and can easily determine the age of the relevant person and eliminate any inappropriate cases. Perhaps including the phrase "GED" as a modifier for "classes" will more clearly communicate the level of education for which the question is targeted.

The second question (b) on job readiness also was well understood. The types of activities the respondents reported in this question were consistent with what was intended (e.g. resume writing, interviewing skills, how to complete a job application, how to conduct a job search, etc.) During the earlier focus groups, participants had indicated that they did not consider job readiness programs to be job training and would probably not have reported it in the March 1999 version of the question. Including a separate question solely about job readiness training appeared to improve understanding by respondents that these activities are to be reported. We are not aware of any training of this type that was missed during the cognitive interviews.

The intent of the third question (c) on job search programs and job resource centers was understood by the majority of respondents. Most respondents reported the types of activities commonly associated with job resource centers. These included: helping people with applications, providing lists of potential employers, providing assistance matching skills and job interests with potential employers, and searching on the Internet for jobs. Some respondents reported similar activities such as resume writing at both questions (b and c). This seems to partly be a function of a job resource center providing both types of services. Participants might receive job readiness training and once they are done, they move on to job search activities consulting with the resource center staff. There were a couple of respondents who thought this question was asking if they had gone to a job agency to look for a job. And a couple of other respondents seem to think the question was asking if they had looked for a job.

The fourth question (d) asking about job skills training worked very well. The respondents seemed to understand the intent of the question was about training for specific job skills, such as computer skills, word processing, keyboarding skills, child care skills, home health aide skills, and nursing.

The final question (e) in this series focused on unpaid work experience. For the most part this question worked fine. Most respondents interpreted the question as asking about work experience to build up their job skills. Several respondents were participating in work

experience programs. A few respondents misinterpreted the question to be about charitable volunteer work, not work-related volunteer work required of them to receive benefits. To reduce the emphasis on volunteer work, consideration should be given to rephrasing the question so “volunteer work” is not the first work experience activity mentioned. Revised wording could read "Work in an unpaid job to get work experience, which is sometimes called a community service or volunteer job, or a work experience position."

#### Recommendations for Employment-Related Training Services

- (1) Retain the separate questions about specific categories of job-related services, as used in the cognitive interviews, with slight modifications to items a and e (see recommendation 2 and 3 below.) Results from the earlier focus groups demonstrated that program participants did not always recognize that the questions used in March 1999 were asking about job-related services they had in fact received. Separating the job-related services into distinct questions seems to have resolved that problem. At the end of the cognitive interviews, no one reported any relevant job-related services that had not been captured by the revised survey questions tested in the cognitive interviews.
- (2) Modify item a to read "Attend GED classes or receive training to prepare for the GED exam, or to improve basic reading or math skills."
- (3) Modify item e to read "Work in an unpaid job to get work experience, which is sometimes called a community service or volunteer job, or a work experience position."
- (4) Request that public use file documentation include a footnote stating that responses to multiple items in the series should not be used as a measure of the quantity of services received by individuals. Several respondents responded “yes” to multiple items in the series for the same service received (e.g., resume writing skills was reported in items b and c). For this reason, if individual reports to each item are used as a count of the number of services received, it will most likely lead to over reporting of services received.

#### \*\*Final Decisions\*\*

All recommendations were accepted. However, HHES also decided to revise the universe for these questions to make eligibility requirements more strict. Because the wording of the training items does not specify that the training should be related to government-sponsored programs, the universe was revised in an effort to target these questions to households receiving welfare, or “at-risk” of receiving welfare. Households asked these questions will: (1) contain one or more persons age 15 to 64 years old, and (2) either be receiving some type of means-tested benefit or have household income near the poverty level.

## Recommended Questions for March 2000

Below we show the entire series of questions we recommended for the March 2000 Income Supplement to measure participation in welfare-reform benefits, based on the results of the cognitive research.

### CASH ASSISTANCE (to replace "Public Assistance" items Q59A88 through Q59C@A)

*[A1 UNIVERSE: ALL LOW-INCOME HOUSEHOLDS]*

A1.) At any time during 1998, even for one month, did (anyone in this household/you) receive any CASH assistance from a state or county welfare program, such as (STATE PROGRAM NAME)?

INCLUDE CASH PAYMENTS FROM:

WELFARE OR WELFARE-TO-WORK PROGRAMS,  
(STATE PROGRAM NAME AND ACRONYM FOR WELFARE PROGRAM),  
GENERAL ASSISTANCE / EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM,  
REFUGEE CASH AND MEDICAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM,  
GENERAL ASSISTANCE FROM BUREAU OF INDIAN AFFAIRS, OR  
TRIBAL ADMINISTERED GENERAL ASSISTANCE.

<1> Yes

ASK: Who received this cash assistance?

[SHOW HOUSEHOLD ROSTER]

(GO TO A3)

<2> No (GO TO A2 IF HOUSEHOLD HAS CHILDREN; OTHERWISE GO TO B1)

*[A2 UNIVERSE: LOW-INCOME HOUSEHOLDS CURRENTLY CONTAINING CHILDREN]*

A2.) Just to be sure, in 1998 did anyone receive CASH assistance from a state or county welfare program, on behalf of CHILDREN in the household?

<1> Yes

ASK: Who received this cash assistance?

[SHOW HOUSEHOLD ROSTER]

(GO TO A3)

<2> No (GO TO B1)

***{Note: we have recommended that A3 be considered for deletion.}***

A3.) From what type of program did (NAME/you) receive the cash assistance? Was it (STATE PROGRAM NAME), General Assistance, Emergency Assistance, or some other program?

- <1> (STATE PROGRAM NAME)
- <2> General Assistance / Emergency Assistance
- <3> Some other program (Specify)\_\_\_\_\_

A4.) How much did you (NAME/ you) receive in cash assistance payments in 1998?

\$\_\_\_\_\_

- READ IF NECESSARY:
- <1> WEEKLY
  - <2> EVERY OTHER WEEK
  - <3> TWICE A MONTH
  - <4> MONTHLY
  - <5> YEARLY

A5.) For how many months of 1998 did (NAME/you) receive cash assistance?

NUMBER OF MONTHS \_\_\_\_\_

A6.) According to my calculations, (NAME/you) received a total of (TOTAL) dollars in cash assistance from a state or county welfare program in 1998. Does that sound about right?

- <1> Yes (GO TO A8)
- <2> No (GO TO A7)

A7.) What is your best estimate of the correct amount of cash assistance (NAME/you) received during 1998?

[SHOW PREVIOUS AMOUNT]

AMOUNT \_\_\_\_\_

A8.) Was the cash assistance for adults AND children in the household, or JUST children?

- <1> Both adults and children
- <2> Children only

A9.) Who in your household was the cash assistance for?

[SHOW HOUSEHOLD ROSTER]



[B1 UNIVERSE: ALL LOW-INCOME HOUSEHOLDS]

{Note: Adopting this version of question B1 is dependent upon the NCHS field test results.}

B1.) At any time during 1998, did a state or county welfare agency give (you/anyone in the household) a ONE-TIME lump-sum payment, or pay (your/their) bills directly, because of an emergency need?

<1> Yes (GO TO B2)

<2> No (GO TO Q60A88 (VETERANS PAYMENTS ))

B2.) Who received a one-time, lump sum payment from a state or county welfare program?

[SHOW HOUSEHOLD ROSTER]

B3.) How much was this payment?

\$ \_\_\_\_\_ GO TO Q60A88 (VETERANS PAYMENTS)

**NEW WELFARE REFORM** (to replace items SWR1 through SWR13)

[C1 UNIVERSE: LOW INCOME HOUSEHOLDS WITH AT LEAST ONE ADULT UNDER AGE 65]

C1.) At any time during 1998, did (you/anyone in this household) receive any of the following types of assistance from a state or county welfare agency or a case manager:

***{Note: consider whether an age screener should be used for item a}***

a.) Transportation assistance to help (you/them) get to work or school or training, such as gas vouchers, bus passes, or help repairing a car?

<1> Yes (ASK: Who received transportation assistance? [SHOW HOUSEHOLD ROSTER])

<2> No

b.) Any child care services or assistance in 1998 so (you/they) could go to work or school or training?

<1> Yes (ASK: Who received child care assistance? [SHOW HOUSEHOLD ROSTER])

<2> No

*[D1 UNIVERSE: LOW INCOME HOUSEHOLDS CONTAINING AT LEAST ONE ADULT UNDER AGE 65]*

D1.) At any time during 1998, did (you / anyone in this household) do any of the following training activities:

(a) Attend GED classes or receive training to prepare for the GED exam, or to improve basic reading or math skills?

<1> Yes (ASK: Who did this type of training? [SHOW HOUSEHOLD ROSTER])

<2> No

(b) Attend job readiness training to learn about resume writing, job interviewing, or building self-esteem?

<1> Yes (ASK: Who did this type of training? [SHOW HOUSEHOLD ROSTER])

<2> No

(c) Attend a job search program or job club, or use a job resource center to get lists of jobs and employers, schedule job interviews, and fill out job applications?

<1> Yes (ASK: Who did that? [SHOW HOUSEHOLD ROSTER])

<2> No

(d) Attend a training program to learn a specific job skill, such as computer word processing, auto mechanics, nursing, providing child care, or a skill for some other job or vocation?

<1> Yes (ASK: Who did this type of training? [SHOW HOUSEHOLD ROSTER])

<2> No

(e) Work in an unpaid job to get work experience, which is sometimes called a community service or volunteer job, or a work experience position?

<1> Yes (ASK: Who worked at an unpaid job? [SHOW HOUSEHOLD ROSTER])

<2> No

## **References**

Loomis, L. & Rothgeb, J. “*Report on Focus Group Results for the Welfare Reform Benefits Questions in the March Income Supplement to the CPS.*” Census Bureau report dated April 13, 1999.

## **Acknowledgements**

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## **Appendix A**

### **Cognitive Interview Protocols used in Boston, Seattle, and Raleigh**

**Welfare Reform Benefits Questions – BOSTON Cognitive Interview Protocol**  
**(Current Question Order)**

A) Cash assistance questions (for all low-income households):

A1.) At any time during 1998, even for one month, did (anyone in this household/you) receive any CASH assistance from a state or county welfare program, such as (STATE PROGRAM NAME)? Please do NOT include food stamps, SSI, energy assistance, or medical assistance payments.

INCLUDE CASH PAYMENTS FROM:

WELFARE OR WELFARE-TO-WORK PROGRAMS,  
(STATE PROGRAM NAME AND ACRONYM FOR WELFARE PROGRAM),  
GENERAL ASSISTANCE / EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM,  
REFUGEE CASH AND MEDICAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM,  
GENERAL ASSISTANCE FROM BUREAU OF INDIAN AFFAIRS, OR  
TRIBAL ADMINISTERED GENERAL ASSISTANCE.

<1> Yes

ASK: Who received this cash assistance?

\_\_\_\_\_ (GO TO A3 AFTER PROBE)

<2> No (GO TO A2 AFTER PROBE)

**PROBE:**

- *IN YOUR OWN WORDS, WHAT IS THIS QUESTION ASKING?*
- *IF “YES”: PLEASE EXPLAIN TO ME WHY YOU ANSWERED ‘YES’ / DESCRIBE WHAT YOU RECEIVE.*
- *WHAT TYPES OF ASSISTANCE DID YOU THINK ABOUT AS YOU WERE ANSWERING THIS QUESTION?*  
*(DID YOU THINK OF ANYTHING IN ADDITION TO CASH?)*  
*(DID YOU INCLUDE CASH FROM A GENERAL/EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM?)*
- *ARE THERE ANY WORDS IN THE QUESTION UNFAMILIAR OR UNCLEAR?*
- *(IF NEEDED:) WHAT IF I HAD ASKED, “DID YOU RECEIVE ANY CASH ASSISTANCE FROM A STATE OR COUNTY WELFARE PROGRAM BECAUSE YOU HAD NO OTHER INCOME OR YOUR INCOME WAS LOW?”*

(BOSTON)

A2.) [HOUSEHOLDS CONTAINING CHILDREN, STRICTER INCOME SCREENER]

Just to be sure, in 1998 did anyone receive CASH assistance from a state or county welfare program, on behalf of CHILDREN in the household?

<1> Yes

ASK: Who received this cash assistance?

\_\_\_\_\_ (GO TO A3 AFTER PROBE)

<2> No (GO TO B1 AFTER PROBE)

**PROBE:**

- *IN YOUR OWN WORDS, WHAT IS THIS QUESTION ASKING?*
- *IF "YES": PLEASE EXPLAIN TO ME WHY YOU ANSWERED 'YES' / DESCRIBE WHAT YOU RECEIVE.*

A3.) Did (NAME/you) receive the cash assistance from a welfare program, sometimes called (STATE PROGRAM NAME) in your state, or did (NAME/you) receive it from some other type of program, such as general assistance or emergency assistance?

<1> Welfare program (STATE PROGRAM NAME)

<2> General assistance / Emergency assistance

<3> Some other assistance (Specify) \_\_\_\_\_

A4.) What is the easiest way for you to tell us (NAME's/ your) cash assistance payments from a state or county welfare program; weekly, every other week, twice a month, monthly, or yearly?

<1> weekly

<2> every other week

<3> twice a month

<4> monthly

<5> yearly

A5.) How much did you (NAME/ you) receive (weekly/ every other week/ twice a month/ monthly) in cash assistance payments in 1998?

\$ \_\_\_\_\_

(BOSTON)

A6.) How many (weekly/ every other week/ twice a month/ monthly) cash assistance payments did (NAME/you) receive in 1998?

NUMBER OF PAYMENTS \_\_\_\_\_

~~A6.) According to my calculations, (NAME/you) received a total of (TOTAL) dollars in cash assistance from a state or county welfare program in 1998. Does that sound about right?~~

~~A7.) What is your best estimate of the correct amount of cash assistance (NAME/you) received during 1998?~~

A7.) Did the cash assistance cover adults **and** children in the household, or **just** children?

<1> Both adults and children

<2> Children only

A8.) Who in your household was covered by the cash assistance?

\_\_\_\_\_

B.) Diversion payments (for all low-income households):

B1.) At any time during 1998, did (anyone in this household/you) receive a one-time, lump sum payment from a state or county welfare program?

<1> Yes (GO TO B2 AFTER ASKING PROBE)

<2> No (GO TO Q60A88 (VETERANS PAYMENTS ) AFTER ASKING PROBE)

**PROBE:** IN YOUR OWN WORDS, WHAT IS THIS QUESTION ASKING?

IF "YES": PLEASE DESCRIBE WHAT WAS RECEIVED.

ARE ANY WORDS OR TERMS IN THIS QUESTION UNCLEAR OR CONFUSING?

B2.) Who received a one-time, lump sum payment from a state or county welfare program?

\_\_\_\_\_

B3.) How much was this payment?

\$ \_\_\_\_\_ GO TO Q60A88 (VETERANS PAYMENTS)

(BOSTON)

C.) Transportation & Child Care (low-income households with at least one adult under age 65)

C1.) At any time during 1998, did (you/anyone in this household) receive any of the following types of assistance from a state or county welfare agency or a case manager:

a.) Transportation assistance to help (you/them) get to work or school or training, such as gas vouchers, bus passes, or help repairing a car?

<1> Yes (ASK: Who received transportation assistance? \_\_\_\_\_)

<2> No

b.) Any child care services or assistance in 1998 so (you/they) could go to work or school or training?

<1> Yes (ASK: Who received child care assistance? \_\_\_\_\_)

<2> No

**PROBES FOR A & B:**

*IN YOUR OWN WORDS, WHAT IS THIS QUESTION ASKING?*

*IF "YES": PLEASE DESCRIBE WHAT WAS RECEIVED.  
WHO PROVIDED THE ASSISTANCE?*

*IF "NO": HAVE YOU RECEIVED ANY OTHER TYPE OF ASSISTANCE WITH TRANSPORTATION / CHILD CARE? HOW ABOUT FROM ANOTHER SOURCE? WHO?*



(BOSTON)

D.) Work-Related Training (low-income households containing at least one adult under age 65)

At any time during 1998, did (you / anyone in this household) do any of the following training activities:

**PROBE FOR EACH OF A-E BELOW:**

IF "YES": PLEASE DESCRIBE THE ACTIVITY THAT YOU DID.

IF "NO": WHAT TYPES OF ACTIVITIES DID THIS QUESTION MAKE YOU THINK ABOUT?

- (a) Attend classes or receive training to prepare for the GED exam, or to improve basic reading or math skills?

<1> Yes (ASK: Who did this type of training? \_\_\_\_\_)  
<2> No

- (b) Attend job readiness training to learn about resume writing, job interviewing, or building self-esteem?

<1> Yes (ASK: Who did this type of training? \_\_\_\_\_)  
<2> No

- (c) Attend a job search program or job club, or use a job resource center to get lists of jobs and employers, schedule job interviews, and fill out job applications?

<1> Yes (ASK: Who did that? \_\_\_\_\_)  
<2> No

PROBE: IN YOUR OWN WORDS, WHAT IS THIS QUESTION ASKING?

(CONTINUES ON NEXT PAGE)

(BOSTON)

**PROBE FOR EACH OF A-E BELOW:**

IF "YES": PLEASE DESCRIBE THE ACTIVITY THAT YOU DID.

IF "NO": WHAT TYPES OF ACTIVITIES DID THIS QUESTION MAKE YOU THINK ABOUT?

- (d) Attend a training program to learn a specific job skill, such as computer word processing, auto mechanics, nursing, providing child care, or a skill for some other job or vocation?

<1> Yes (ASK: Who did this type of training? \_\_\_\_\_)

<2> No

PROBE: IN YOUR OWN WORDS, WHAT IS THIS QUESTION ASKING?

- (e) Work in an unpaid job to get work experience, which is sometimes called a volunteer job, a community service job, or a work experience position?

<1> Yes (ASK: Who worked at an unpaid job? \_\_\_\_\_)

<2> No

PROBE: IN YOUR OWN WORDS, WHAT IS THIS QUESTION ASKING?

**PROBE AT END:**

HAVE YOU DONE ANY OTHER TYPE OF JOB-RELATED TRAINING OR PREPARATION THAT I DIDN'T ASK YOU ABOUT?

HOW ABOUT "ON-THE-JOB TRAINING"? WOULD YOU INCLUDE THAT IN ONE OF THESE CATEGORIES? WHICH ONE (E.G., D OR E)? WHY?

I'D ALSO LIKE TO ASK YOU ABOUT "GENERAL ASSISTANCE" AND "EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE." ARE THESE PROGRAMS FAMILIAR TO YOU? HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE THESE TYPES OF ASSISTANCE (E.G., WHAT DO THEY PROVIDE)?

[END]

**Welfare Reform Benefits Questions – SEATTLE Cognitive Interview Protocol**  
**(Current Question Order)**  
*(minimal revisions after Boston)*

A) Cash assistance questions (for all low-income households):

A1.) At any time during 1998, even for one month, did (anyone in this household/you) receive any CASH assistance from a state or county welfare program, such as (STATE PROGRAM NAME)?

INCLUDE CASH PAYMENTS FROM:

WELFARE OR WELFARE-TO-WORK PROGRAMS,  
(STATE PROGRAM NAME AND ACRONYM FOR WELFARE PROGRAM),  
GENERAL ASSISTANCE / EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM,  
REFUGEE CASH AND MEDICAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM,  
GENERAL ASSISTANCE FROM BUREAU OF INDIAN AFFAIRS, OR  
TRIBAL ADMINISTERED GENERAL ASSISTANCE.

<1> Yes

ASK: Who received this cash assistance?

\_\_\_\_\_ (GO TO A3 AFTER PROBE)

<2> No (GO TO A2 AFTER PROBE)

**PROBE:**

- *IN YOUR OWN WORDS, WHAT IS THIS QUESTION ASKING?*
- *IF “YES”: PLEASE TELL ME MORE ABOUT WHAT YOU RECEIVE. (WHAT DO YOU CALL THE ASSISTANCE YOU RECEIVE?)*
- *IF “NO”: DO YOU RECEIVE ANY CASH BENEFITS? (WHAT DO YOU CALL THOSE BENEFITS?)*
- *ARE THERE ANY WORDS IN THE QUESTION UNFAMILIAR OR UNCLEAR?*
- *(IF NEEDED:) WHAT IF I HAD ASKED, “DID YOU RECEIVE ANY CASH ASSISTANCE FROM A STATE OR COUNTY WELFARE PROGRAM BECAUSE YOU HAD NO OTHER INCOME OR YOUR INCOME WAS LOW?”*

(SEATTLE)

A2.) [HOUSEHOLDS CONTAINING CHILDREN, STRICTER INCOME SCREENER]

Just to be sure, in 1998 did anyone receive CASH assistance from a state or county welfare program, on behalf of CHILDREN in the household?

<1> Yes

ASK: Who received this cash assistance?

\_\_\_\_\_ (GO TO A3 AFTER PROBE)

<2> No (GO TO B1 AFTER PROBE)

**PROBE:**

- *IN YOUR OWN WORDS, WHAT IS THIS QUESTION ASKING?*
- *IF "YES": PLEASE EXPLAIN TO ME WHY YOU ANSWERED 'YES' / DESCRIBE WHAT YOU RECEIVE.*

A3.) From what type of program did (NAME/you) receive the cash assistance? Was it (STATE PROGRAM NAME), General Assistance, Emergency Assistance, or some other program?

<1> (STATE PROGRAM NAME)

<2> General Assistance / Emergency Assistance

<3> Some other program (Specify)\_\_\_\_\_

A4.) What is the easiest way for you to tell us (NAME's/ your) cash assistance payments from a state or county welfare program; weekly, every other week, twice a month, monthly, or yearly?

<1> weekly

<2> every other week

<3> twice a month

<4> monthly

<5> yearly

A5.) How much did you (NAME/ you) receive (weekly/ every other week/ twice a month/ monthly) in cash assistance payments in 1998?

\$ \_\_\_\_\_

***PROBE: IS THAT AMOUNT CASH ONLY, OR DOES IT ALSO INCLUDE THE VALUE OF FOOD STAMPS OR OTHER BENEFITS?***

(SEATTLE)

A6.) How many (weekly/ every other week/ twice a month/ monthly) cash assistance payments did (NAME/you) receive in 1998?

NUMBER OF PAYMENTS \_\_\_\_\_

~~A6.) According to my calculations, (NAME/you) received a total of (TOTAL) dollars in cash assistance from a state or county welfare program in 1998. Does that sound about right?~~

~~A7.) What is your best estimate of the correct amount of cash assistance (NAME/you) received during 1998?~~

A7.) Did the cash assistance cover adults **and** children in the household, or **just** children?

- <1> Both adults and children
- <2> Children only

A8.) Who in your household was covered by the cash assistance?

\_\_\_\_\_

C.) Diversion payments (for all low-income households):

B1.) At any time during 1998, did (anyone in this household/you) receive a one-time, lump sum payment from a state or county welfare program?

- <1> Yes (GO TO B2 AFTER ASKING PROBE)
- <2> No (GO TO Q60A88 (VETERANS PAYMENTS ) AFTER ASKING PROBE)

**PROBE:** IN YOUR OWN WORDS, WHAT IS THIS QUESTION ASKING?

IF "YES": PLEASE DESCRIBE WHAT WAS RECEIVED.

WHAT DOES THE TERM "LUMP SUM PAYMENT" MEAN TO YOU?

ARE ANY WORDS OR TERMS IN THIS QUESTION UNCLEAR OR CONFUSING?

B2.) Who received a one-time, lump sum payment from a state or county welfare program?

\_\_\_\_\_

B3.) How much was this payment?

\$ \_\_\_\_\_ GO TO Q60A88 (VETERANS PAYMENTS)

(SEATTLE)

C.) Transportation & Child Care (low-income households with at least one adult under age 65)

C1.) At any time during 1998, did (you/anyone in this household) receive any of the following types of assistance from a state or county welfare agency or a case manager:

b.) Transportation assistance to help (you/them) get to work or school or training, such as gas vouchers, bus passes, or help repairing a car?

<1> Yes (ASK: Who received transportation assistance? \_\_\_\_\_)

<2> No

b.) Any child care services or assistance in 1998 so (you/they) could go to work or school or training?

<1> Yes (ASK: Who received child care assistance? \_\_\_\_\_)

<2> No

**PROBES FOR A & B:**

*IN YOUR OWN WORDS, WHAT IS THIS QUESTION ASKING?*

*IF "YES": PLEASE DESCRIBE WHAT WAS RECEIVED.  
WHO PROVIDED THE ASSISTANCE?*

*IF "NO": HAVE YOU RECEIVED ANY OTHER TYPE OF ASSISTANCE WITH TRANSPORTATION /  
CHILD CARE? HOW ABOUT FROM ANOTHER SOURCE? WHO?*

(SEATTLE)

D.) Work-Related Training (low-income households containing at least one adult under age 65)

At any time during 1998, did (you / anyone in this household) do any of the following training activities:

**PROBE FOR EACH OF A-E BELOW:**

*IN YOUR OWN WORDS, WHAT IS THIS QUESTION ASKING?(WHAT ACTIVITIES DO YOU THINK OF?)*

*IF "YES": PLEASE DESCRIBE THE ACTIVITY THAT YOU DID.*

- (f) Attend classes or receive training to prepare for the GED exam, or to improve basic reading or math skills?

<1> Yes (ASK: Who did this type of training? \_\_\_\_\_)

<2> No

- (g) Attend job readiness training to learn about resume writing, job interviewing, or building self-esteem?

<1> Yes (ASK: Who did this type of training? \_\_\_\_\_)

<2> No

- (h) Attend a job search program or job club, or use a job resource center to get lists of jobs and employers, schedule job interviews, and fill out job applications?

<1> Yes (ASK: Who did that? \_\_\_\_\_)

<2> No

(CONTINUES ON NEXT PAGE)

(SEATTLE)

**PROBE FOR EACH OF A-E BELOW:**

*IN YOUR OWN WORDS, WHAT IS THIS QUESTION ASKING? (WHAT ACTIVITIES DO YOU THINK OF?)*

*IF "YES": PLEASE DESCRIBE THE ACTIVITY THAT YOU DID.*

- (i) Attend a training program to learn a specific job skill, such as computer word processing, auto mechanics, nursing, providing child care, or a skill for some other job or vocation?

<1> Yes (ASK: Who did this type of training? \_\_\_\_\_)

<2> No

- (j) Work in an unpaid job to get work experience, which is sometimes called a volunteer job, a community service job, or a work experience position?

<1> Yes (ASK: Who worked at an unpaid job? \_\_\_\_\_)

<2> No

**PROBE AT END:**

HAVE YOU DONE ANY OTHER TYPE OF JOB-RELATED TRAINING OR PREPARATION THAT I DIDN'T ASK YOU ABOUT?

HOW ABOUT "ON-THE-JOB TRAINING"? HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE THAT TYPE OF TRAINING? DID YOU DO ON-THE-JOB-TRAINING IN 1998? (DID YOU TELL ME ABOUT IT ALREADY?)

I'D ALSO LIKE TO ASK YOU ABOUT "GENERAL ASSISTANCE" AND "EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE." ARE THESE PROGRAMS FAMILIAR TO YOU? HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE THESE TYPES OF ASSISTANCE (E.G., WHAT DO THEY PROVIDE)?

[END]



**Welfare Reform Benefits Questions – RALEIGH Cognitive Interview Protocol**  
**(Current Question Order)**

*(more extensive revisions after Boston)*

A) Cash assistance questions (for all low-income households):

A1.) At any time during 1998, even for one month, did (anyone in this household/you) receive any CASH assistance from a state or county welfare program, such as (STATE PROGRAM NAME)?

INCLUDE CASH PAYMENTS FROM:

WELFARE OR WELFARE-TO-WORK PROGRAMS,  
(STATE PROGRAM NAME AND ACRONYM FOR WELFARE PROGRAM),  
GENERAL ASSISTANCE / EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM,  
REFUGEE CASH AND MEDICAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM,  
GENERAL ASSISTANCE FROM BUREAU OF INDIAN AFFAIRS, OR  
TRIBAL ADMINISTERED GENERAL ASSISTANCE.

<1> Yes

ASK: Who received this cash assistance?

\_\_\_\_\_ (GO TO A3 AFTER PROBE)

<2> No (GO TO A2 AFTER PROBE)

**PROBE:**

- *IN YOUR OWN WORDS, WHAT IS THIS QUESTION ASKING?*
- *IF “YES”: PLEASE TELL ME MORE ABOUT WHAT YOU RECEIVE. (WHAT DO YOU CALL THE CASH ASSISTANCE YOU RECEIVE?)*
- *IF “NO”: DO YOU RECEIVE ANY CASH BENEFITS? (WHAT DO YOU CALL THOSE BENEFITS?)*
- *ARE THERE ANY WORDS IN THE QUESTION UNFAMILIAR OR UNCLEAR?*
- *(IF NEEDED:) WHAT IF I HAD ASKED, “DID YOU RECEIVE ANY CASH ASSISTANCE FROM A STATE OR COUNTY WELFARE PROGRAM BECAUSE YOU HAD NO OTHER INCOME OR YOUR INCOME WAS LOW?”*

(RALEIGH)

A2.) [HOUSEHOLDS CONTAINING CHILDREN, STRICTER INCOME SCREENER]

Just to be sure, in 1998 did anyone receive CASH assistance from a state or county welfare program, on behalf of CHILDREN in the household?

<1> Yes

ASK: Who received this cash assistance?

\_\_\_\_\_ (GO TO A3 AFTER PROBE)

<2> No (GO TO B1 AFTER PROBE)

**PROBE:**

- *IN YOUR OWN WORDS, WHAT IS THIS QUESTION ASKING?*
- *IF "YES": PLEASE EXPLAIN TO ME WHY YOU ANSWERED 'YES' / DESCRIBE WHAT YOU RECEIVE.*

A3.) From what type of program did (NAME/you) receive the cash assistance? Was it (STATE PROGRAM NAME), General Assistance, Emergency Assistance, or some other program?

<1> (STATE PROGRAM NAME)

<2> General Assistance / Emergency Assistance

<3> Some other program (Specify)\_\_\_\_\_

A4.) How much did you (NAME/ you) receive in cash assistance payments in 1998?

\$\_\_\_\_\_

- READ IF NECESSARY:
- <1> WEEKLY
  - <2> EVERY OTHER WEEK
  - <3> TWICE A MONTH
  - <4> MONTHLY
  - <5> YEARLY

***PROBE: IS THAT AMOUNT CASH ONLY, OR DOES IT ALSO INCLUDE THE VALUE OF FOOD STAMPS OR OTHER BENEFITS?***

(RALEIGH)

A5.) For how many months of 1998 did (NAME/you) receive cash assistance?

NUMBER OF MONTHS \_\_\_\_\_

~~A6.) According to my calculations, (NAME/you) received a total of (TOTAL) dollars in cash assistance from a state or county welfare program in 1998. Does that sound about right?~~

~~A7.) What is your best estimate of the correct amount of cash assistance (NAME/you) received during 1998?~~

A6.) Did the cash assistance cover adults **and** children in the household, or **just** children?

<1> Both adults and children

<2> Children only

A7.) Who in your household was covered by the cash assistance?

\_\_\_\_\_

D.) Diversion payments (for all low-income households):

B1.) At any time during 1998, did (anyone in this household/you) receive a one-time, lump sum payment from a state or county welfare program?

<1> Yes (GO TO B2 AFTER ASKING PROBE)

<2> No (GO TO Q60A88 (VETERANS PAYMENTS ) AFTER ASKING PROBE)

**PROBE:** IN YOUR OWN WORDS, WHAT IS THIS QUESTION ASKING?

IF "YES": PLEASE DESCRIBE WHAT WAS RECEIVED.

WHAT DOES THE TERM "LUMP SUM PAYMENT" MEAN TO YOU?

ARE ANY WORDS OR TERMS IN THIS QUESTION UNCLEAR OR CONFUSING?

B2.) Who received a one-time, lump sum payment from a state or county welfare program?

\_\_\_\_\_

B3.) How much was this payment?

\$ \_\_\_\_\_ GO TO Q60A88 (VETERANS PAYMENTS)

(RALEIGH)

C.) Transportation & Child Care (low-income households with at least one adult under age 65)

C1.) At any time during 1998, did (you/anyone in this household) receive any of the following types of assistance from a state or county welfare agency or a case manager:

a.) Transportation assistance to help (you/them) get to work or school or training, such as gas vouchers, bus passes, or help repairing a car?

<1> Yes (ASK: Who received transportation assistance? \_\_\_\_\_)

<2> No

b.) How about assistance to help pay for child care in 1998, so (you/they) could go to work or school or training?

<1> Yes (ASK: Who received child care assistance? \_\_\_\_\_)

<2> No

**PROBES FOR A & B:**

*IN YOUR OWN WORDS, WHAT IS THIS QUESTION ASKING?*

*IF "YES": PLEASE DESCRIBE WHAT WAS RECEIVED.  
WHO PROVIDED THE ASSISTANCE?*

*IF "NO": HAVE YOU RECEIVED ANY OTHER TYPE OF ASSISTANCE WITH TRANSPORTATION /  
CHILD CARE? HOW ABOUT FROM ANOTHER SOURCE? WHO?*

D.) Work-Related Training (low-income households containing at least one adult under age 65)

At any time during 1998, did (you / anyone in this household) do any of the following training activities:

**PROBE FOR EACH OF A-E BELOW:**

*IN YOUR OWN WORDS, WHAT IS THIS QUESTION ASKING? (WHAT ACTIVITIES DO YOU THINK OF?)*

*IF "YES": PLEASE DESCRIBE THE ACTIVITY THAT YOU DID.*

- (a) Attend classes or receive training to prepare for the GED exam, or to improve basic reading or math skills?

<1> Yes (ASK: Who did this type of training? \_\_\_\_\_)

<2> No

- (b) Attend job readiness training to learn about resume writing, job interviewing, or building self-esteem?

<1> Yes (ASK: Who did this type of training? \_\_\_\_\_)

<2> No

- (c) Attend a job search program or job club, or use a job resource center to get lists of jobs and employers, schedule job interviews, and fill out job applications?

<1> Yes (ASK: Who did that? \_\_\_\_\_)

<2> No

(CONTINUES ON NEXT PAGE)

(RALEIGH)

**PROBE FOR EACH OF A-E BELOW:**

*IN YOUR OWN WORDS, WHAT IS THIS QUESTION ASKING?(WHAT ACTIVITIES DO YOU THINK OF?)*

*IF "YES": PLEASE DESCRIBE THE ACTIVITY THAT YOU DID.*

- (d) Attend a training program to learn a specific job skill, such as computer word processing, auto mechanics, nursing, providing child care, or a skill for some other job or vocation?

<1> Yes (ASK: Who did this type of training? \_\_\_\_\_)  
<2> No

- (e) Work in an unpaid job to get work experience, which is sometimes called a volunteer job, a community service job, or a work experience position?

<1> Yes (ASK: Who worked at an unpaid job? \_\_\_\_\_)  
<2> No

**PROBE AT END:**

HAVE YOU DONE ANY OTHER TYPE OF JOB-RELATED TRAINING OR PREPARATION THAT I DIDN'T ASK YOU ABOUT?

HOW ABOUT "ON-THE-JOB TRAINING"? HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE THAT TYPE OF TRAINING? DID YOU DO ON-THE-JOB-TRAINING IN 1998? (DID YOU TELL ME ABOUT IT ALREADY?)

I'D ALSO LIKE TO ASK YOU ABOUT "GENERAL ASSISTANCE" AND "EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE." ARE THESE PROGRAMS FAMILIAR TO YOU? HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE THESE TYPES OF ASSISTANCE (E.G., WHAT DO THEY PROVIDE)?

[END]

## **Appendix B**

### **March 1998/1999 Welfare Reform Benefits Questions**

## March 1998/1999 Welfare Reform Benefits Questions

### Q59A88

At any time during 1997, even for one month, did (anyone in this household/you) receive any government payments because their income was low, such as public assistance or welfare?

UNIVERSE: Asked if the household size and family income falls into one of these categories:

<u>Household size</u>	<u>Family income</u> (FAMINC item on the "control card")
1 person	Less than \$20,000
2-3 people	Less than \$30,000
4 + people	Less than \$50,000
Any hh size	DK or REF

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### SWR1, SWR2, SWR3

At any time during 1997, did (you/anyone in this household) receive any of the following types of GOVERNMENT assistance because (your/their) income was low:

Transportation assistance, such as gas vouchers, bus passes, or help registering, repairing, or insuring a car?

Any child care services or assistance in 1997 so (you/they) could go to work or school or training?

Did (you/anyone in this household) receive any other assistance from the government last year because (your/their) income was too low to meet (your/their) needs?

UNIVERSE: Asked if the household falls into family income/household size categories above (same as Q59A88).

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**SWR7**

At any time during 1997, did social services or a welfare office provide job training, a Job Club, a job search program, or anything else to help (you/anyone in this household) try to find a job?

UNIVERSE: Household is below income/hh size thresholds AND  
{ Q30=1, i.e., someone in the household did not work at a job in the last year but was reported to have spent some time trying to find a job or was on layoff

*OR*

Q36 not equal to X, i.e., someone in the household worked less than 50 weeks in the previous year and spent time looking for work or on layoff from a job in the previous year }

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**SWR9**

At any time during 1997, did (you/anyone in this household) attend schooling or training because social services or a welfare office paid for, referred, or sent (you/them) there?

UNIVERSE: Household is below income/hh size thresholds AND  
{ Q32=4, i.e., someone's main reason for not working last year was because 'going to school';

*OR*

Q38=3, i.e., someone's main reason for not working or looking for work during some weeks of the last year was 'going to school';

*OR*

Q66a=1, i.e., someone in the household attended school beyond the high school level last year. }

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**SWR11**

At any time during 1997, did the welfare or social services office have (you/anyone in this household) do any community service, work in an unpaid job, or do any other work-related or job-training activities?

UNIVERSE: Respondents who answered 'no' to SWR7 and SWR9 (or 'no' to the one they were asked)

*OR*

Respondents who did not qualify for SWR7 and SWR9 but did report receipt of some means-tested benefit (public assistance/welfare--Q59A88, food stamps—Q87, Medicaid—SHI15, public housing or rental assistance—Q85/86, energy assistance—Q93, or WIC--SWRWIC, transportation assistance--SWR1, or child care assistance—SWR2, or 'other' assistance—SWR3)