

# **Continuing a Commitment to the Higher Education Option:**

**Model State Legislation, College Programs, and Advocacy Organizations  
that Support Access to Post-Secondary Education  
for Public Assistance Recipients**

**A Report to the Annie E. Casey Foundation**

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## **About the Howard Samuels Center**

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Founded in 1988 the Howard Samuels State Management and Policy Center is an important source of comparative state research and analysis, especially on welfare policies, economic and community development, and education. The Samuel Center's research gives particular emphasis to the needs of women, minorities and low-income populations and strives to meet the growing need for applied research on comparative state policy and management. It is dedicated to building links between the academic community and policy makers and to training scholars who will be responsive and reflective of diverse communities. The Samuels Center's reports are widely discussed and cited by academicians and policy makers.

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## Welfare Students Say<sup>1</sup> . . .

To hear the people . . . talk about how people on welfare aren't that smart, and education really isn't an opportunity for them—most of them don't have high school degrees, how is that possible for them? But I'm working with a bunch of women who were drug addicts for fifteen years and never graduated or passed the eighth grade, but are in community college on the honor roll. They are getting all these awards for their work and their schooling. So I'm saying that it's possible.

I think I'm a completely different person because of my education. Before, I didn't really see any direction in my life. I didn't know where I was going. I didn't even know about all the theories behind poverty. Just knowing that, and knowing that there is this whole political world—I think really my education has changed my life. It's definitely changed my income. But it's really changed how I look at things. . . I think it's changed the way I look at the world. It's changed, I think, everything about my life.

. . . looking back, I think I had a negative view about women on welfare. I was like, Okay, those women are on welfare forever, having more babies. But I'm not. I'm trying to do something for myself. But now that I look back, I'm like, that's not true. The system pushes you down. It traps you there. It's hard to find a way out of that. They're trying to force people to get off welfare, putting them into Work First. But there's no way they're just keeping them there. They're pulling and pushing at the same time. The policies really don't make sense.

[Education is] freedom. We have so many choices now. We're free from being poor. We're free from being limited. My daughter's gonna go to college. . . I hear moms tell me all the time "My kid doesn't say if I go to college, he says when , because of me being a role model. I did that." Education is freedom. It's power.

. . . school kept me busy. I started seeing a whole new person in myself—meeting new people and kind of experiencing this part of life I had never known. Like I said, nobody in my family had gone to college. If they did, I didn't know about it. I just started realizing that, in order for me to change the cycle and do right by my kid and myself, that I needed to get an education.

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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This report highlights innovative approaches to providing opportunities for public assistance recipients and low-income single parents to earn post-secondary education credentials within the policy framework of Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF). We have identified relevant legislation, programs, and organizations that facilitate participation of public assistance recipients and low-income single parents in post-secondary education. Our report is not a state-by-state account or evaluation of every policy, program, or organization. Instead, it focuses only on those policies, programs and organizations where innovative programs for students on public assistance have been successfully designed and implemented. However, it is crucial to show policymakers, legislators, and others how states, colleges and universities, and citizens have toiled to expand higher education opportunities for public assistance recipients.

Access to higher education is critical for low income people because it continues to be a primary means to increase earnings and improve social mobility. Under PRWORA, short-term training has been favored over education and training that takes longer to complete. While some short-term programs have been quickly declared a success, too often a minor increase in earnings is presented by researchers as significant while the issue of what constitutes long-term success is left unaddressed. Often immediate wage increases are offset by decreases in assistance. Other concerns, such as improving a welfare recipient's earning power, career mobility, and standard of living remain unaddressed.

Using data collected from interviews with public officials, program directors and staff, college faculty, legal aid centers, public policy institutions and other sources, we identify models for future efforts and valuable lessons learned from existing programs and organizations. We hope that the lessons and models presented in this report are useful to a variety of stakeholders who have an interest in educational access and equity, and who are interested in developing a diverse, highly skilled, adaptive workforce that incorporates those who have traditionally been left out of policy efforts to enhance social mobility.

### **Model Legislation**

The 1996 federal welfare reform law had a significant impact on the ability of welfare recipients to attend higher education programs. The federal legislation did not fully restrict access to higher education, but severely limited participation to one year or less of post-secondary education. This was carried out within the framework of devolution, whereby the states were given the power to determine (within certain guidelines) the type and duration of education and training programs that welfare

recipients could attend. Most states strictly interpreted the federal legislation to mean less than one year of education.

Based on concerns raised by various low-income students and other advocacy groups, and existing supportive policies, we have identified several key components which must be addressed if legislation is to afford access to education for public assistance recipients and support those students while working toward a degree. Policies that support post-secondary education for public assistance recipients should include many or all of the following provisions:

- ▶ Allow access to vocational, two-year and four-year degrees;
- ▶ Allow adequate time to complete degrees or programs;
- ▶ Allow public assistance recipients to choose work or school;
- ▶ Explicit notification of right to higher education;
- ▶ School activity counts as work;
- ▶ Income disregards for financial aid and grants;
- ▶ Time in school “stops the clock” on receiving benefits (this is important because public assistance recipients often take remedial courses which provide no credit toward a credential, thus extending the time it takes to complete a degree);
- ▶ Additional services and subsidies to support college attendance.

### **Model Programs**

Students who are poor, single, *and* receive public assistance face obstacles to successful and meaningful participation in higher education that makes them distinct in comparison to most students. The rules imposed by TANF and the welfare bureaucracy are a major impediment. These students also face obstacles related to balancing the demands of family work and school while they grapple with issues of poverty. Programs that support low-income students and students who receive public assistance recognize the particular circumstances of these students. Key components of model programs include:

- ▶ Subsidies or supports for childcare, transportation, textbooks, uniforms, classroom, and/or lab materials;
- ▶ Emergency financial support;
- ▶ Coordination between campus-based offices and departments and links to offices and organizations outside the campus;
- ▶ The dedicated participation of faculty members and counselors who work closely with students;
- ▶ Inclusion of a broad range of classes and options in a course of study that may include necessary remedial, ESL and basic education as well as a variety of relevant internship and work experiences.

There is clear and compelling evidence that programs that target this student population are important because public assistance recipients who participate in focused programs earn grade point averages and graduate at rates comparable to their non-public assistance receiving peers and they fare much better than recipients who are not in targeted programs. Of the programs discussed in this report, most involve work-related activities and thus do not contradict the widespread view that work requirements must be central to welfare reform. Although not all low-income students may be ready or may choose to attend college, there is a sizable population of recipients (or low-income parents) who can benefit from receipt of a higher education credential. Thus, it is crucial that there be an option. Because the number of those receiving public assistance has so significantly decreased because of time limits and other factors, it is increasingly important to design higher education programs that address the needs of all low-income and single parent students and not only those on public assistance.

### **Model Organizations**

The 1996 welfare reform legislation restricted the states' capacity to determine how much post-secondary education to allow qualified recipients. Local coalitions and organizations formed throughout the country to counter the effects of this policy and to urge new legislation that promotes effective policies whereby welfare recipients can access the education they need to move permanently off welfare. In some cases, individual organizations or coalitions already existed and were welfare advocates. These groups mobilized to include welfare reform on their agenda

The organizations profiled in this report are examples of what can be achieved as a result of organizing, advocacy, and coalition building. Collaboration among groups concerned with social justice, children's and family policy, poverty eradication and women's empowerment gives a stronger public voice to the higher education option. Organized groups are better able to influence policymakers. Despite the clear benefits associated with organizing, coalition-building and consciousness-raising efforts, our research on ways to promote the college option for TANF recipients shows that there remain significant barriers to organizing low-income students and building coalitions.

Despite these difficulties, however, the current profiles of model organizations illustrate our findings from earlier work: there are effective strategies that creative welfare advocates and student organizers have employed to bring about change. These include being vocal about the value of a college education to facilitate economic mobility, disseminating information widely among the targeted population, identification of strategic political allies (regardless of party), getting welfare recipients themselves involved in organizing tasks and in presenting demands for new legislation, and mobilizing resources among interested allies.

## Recommendations

A key finding of this research on existing reform legislation and model higher education programs is that conflicts between work and college can be reconciled through innovative strategies that enable families to leave welfare rolls, and ensure the long term economic viability of families. An examination of state legislative efforts that have reformed TANF policy to allow participation in post-secondary education highlights the importance of the contribution of local citizen groups to policy formation. This report profiles advocacy organizations that are experienced in working on welfare and post-secondary issues and can provide valuable insights to and serve as examples for policy makers. These organizations are able to provide the valuable “insider” experience and perspective necessary to fine-tune policy and program operations. We have also identified college programs that have clearly defined missions and are sensitive to the needs of this marginalized segment of the general student population. These programs understand the needs of this student population and provide the intensive supports and services that substantially increase the chances that students will perform well, graduate, and get jobs that pay well and increase social mobility.

We provide recommendations that are relevant to different actors who are in a position to shape welfare and post-secondary education policy. The key policy decision that we suggest is expanding access to higher education for welfare recipients and extending access to participation in these programs to the working poor. Such an extension would likely garner wider political support and may lead to better functioning programs than those which target only the very poor. An increase in such programs throughout the US, along with effective outreach to publicize the programs, would increase the likelihood of poor people becoming self-sufficient. We believe that the following recommendations are routes toward that end. Our recommendations are organized as they relate to legislation, colleges, universities, welfare departments and funders.

## LEGISLATION

- ▶ **Laws to Provide Broad Access to a Range of Education Options.** The laws must be flexible in order to meet the diverse needs of welfare recipients’ needs
- ▶ **School Counts Toward Meeting Work Requirements.** Participation in post-secondary education, and school-related activity should count toward meeting work requirements.
- ▶ **No Limits on Time Spent in School.** Limiting education to less than two years means reducing the opportunity for welfare recipients to earn degrees and limits amount of school if students require ESL or other basic education.

- ▶ **Income Disregards** Financial aid, Pell grants and other academic grants must be treated in a way that will not diminish a person's public assistance grant.
- ▶ **Stop the Clock While in School.** As long as a student is making satisfactory and timely progress toward the certificate or degree, the 60-month limit on TANF receipt should be stopped.
- ▶ **Subsidies for Child Care, Transportation, Books and College-related Expenditures.** Additional supports ensure that students can effectively balance the demands of family, education, and work.
- ▶ **Explicit Directives to Caseworkers That Applicants Must Be Informed of Their Right to Education.** Public assistance recipients and applicants are not always adequately informed of their rights. Case workers must be instructed to discuss all the options which may be available to an applicant.
- ▶ **Encourage Partnerships Between Institutions, Local Advocacy Groups, Colleges and Welfare Offices.** A process that involved all stakeholders – welfare recipients, college administrators, activists and advocates and welfare officials – can facilitate better policy and more effective implementation
- ▶ **Extend Access to Post-secondary Education Supports.** Income level and parenthood should become primary criteria for participation. This can potentially extend access to the working poor and marginal middle class.

## COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

- ▶ **Support Existing Programs for Public Assistance Recipients and/or Single Parents.** Special programs for public assistance recipients and/or single parents have been established at many colleges and universities. However, many programs have ceased to exist because of TANF policies on participation in post-secondary education. Post-secondary institutions should continue to support them, help them to identify additional sources of funding, and encourage partnering with new stakeholders.
- ▶ **Use Existing Programs and Resources Effectively.** Degree programs should not be redesigned to fit a work-first philosophy. TANF should require a mix of work, post-secondary education, and related experiences that will improve job retention and earnings, education, must remain a prominent part of that mix. However, redesign

might be needed in areas that can increase flexibility in scheduling and course offerings.

- ▶ **Provide adequate and appropriate Financial Aid.** Financial aid is critical for all students, but it is especially so for low-income and single parent students. The range of financial aid assistance available to disadvantaged students must be improved and criteria for receiving aid must be more flexible (e.g., allowing part-time students access to financial aid).
- ▶ **Improve Qualitative and Quantitative Data Collection.** Public assistance recipients and single parent students are seriously undercounted. Too little data is collected and that which is collected is not made widely available. Welfare bureaucracies should make these data available to institutions of higher education in order to facilitate necessary research to improve policy and program outcomes.

## **WELFARE DEPARTMENTS AND PROGRAMS**

- ▶ **Partnerships.** In support of post-secondary education options for public assistance recipients, welfare departments should partner with two - and four - year colleges, CBOs, workforce development agencies, economic development boards, and employers.
- ▶ **Individual Development Accounts.** Provide stronger incentives to use Individual Development Accounts by offering greater matches for every dollar saved.
- ▶ **Institutionalize Referral Processes.** Ensure that TANF recipients and TANF eligible people are able to access information about post-secondary education programs, and able to contact relevant post-secondary institutions.

## **FUNDERS**

- ▶ **Fund and Support Student and Community Advocacy for Higher Education.** Students and community groups have a critical role to play in policy debate. They often are able to provide the “insider” experience vital to appropriate policy development.
- ▶ **Support and Encourage Networks/Partnerships Community Groups, Legal Aid, College Administrators and Student Groups.** These groups have been and are key to continued efforts to maintain access to higher education.

- ▶ **Fund Research That Examines Both the Impacts of Welfare Reform and the Effects of Higher Education on Single Mothers and Their Families.** Both quantitative and qualitative data are needed to fully document the impact of cuts in public assistance and the role of education as a route out of poverty.
  
- ▶ **Support Initiatives for New Partnerships and Interaction to Reduce Adversarial Relationships.** Support initiatives to rebuild or create better relationships among welfare agencies, caseworkers, local community groups, and welfare recipients, in order to increase effectiveness and refocus adversarial “cultures.”



## INTRODUCTION

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This report highlights innovative approaches to providing opportunities for public assistance recipients and low-income single parents to earn post-secondary\* education credentials within the policy framework of Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF). We have identified relevant legislation, programs, and organizations that facilitate participation of public assistance recipients and low-income single parents in post-secondary education. Through our examination of how state governments, higher education institutions, community-based organizations, and advocates have attempted to keep open the doors of higher education for the most economically and educationally disadvantaged citizens, we have identified programs, organizations and legislation that can serve as models for future efforts. These endeavors point to a desire of many to maintain a “higher education option.”

Our report is not a state-by-state account or evaluation of every policy, program, or organization. Instead, it focuses only on those policies, programs and organizations where innovative programs for students on public assistance have been successfully designed and implemented. It is almost certain, however, that we have missed a program or organization that should be included in this report. Our goal was to examine key program and policy designs that provide the greatest support for the higher education option under welfare reform. From these we developed a list of key components of legislation and programs that support access to higher education under welfare reform and present the “lessons learned” that capture the features of model legislation, programs and organizations. Our study differs from other reports in its focus on state welfare policies that facilitate participation in higher education (acquisition of two and four year degrees), the state and county-level reforms of TANF to include a higher education option (often driven by citizens groups), and college programs that provide supports that assist low-income students like public assistance recipients.

Although it is a relatively straightforward task to identify TANF policy on higher education in the states, we have learned that all too often, what is written in law or in regulations does not always occur in practice. Some states, like Wyoming for example, initially established impressive policies that turned out to be of limited use to welfare recipients. With regard to legislation, we focused on states that have reformed their TANF policy to include a college option that, at a minimum, allows students to earn an associates degree. Through previous research we have learned that the most supportive legislation is

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\* We define post-secondary education to include all education and credentials beyond the high school diploma or General Equivalency Diploma (GED). Our usage of higher education is more restrictive: education that leads to associate and bachelor degrees.

almost always a result of citizens' input, typically in the form of diverse coalitions that work together to affect reform. This research allowed us to see first hand, the wide variety and large numbers of dedicated activists, advocates, practitioners and students who have worked with diligence and imagination to ensure access to higher education.

Using data collected from interviews with public officials, program directors and staff, college faculty, legal aid centers, public policy institutions and other sources, we attempt to provide models for future efforts and valuable lessons learned from existing programs and organizations. To facilitate other efforts, contact information for organizations and programs already in place has been included. It is equally important, however, to show policymakers and legislators preparing to reauthorize TANF that states, colleges, and ordinary citizens have worked to expand higher education opportunities for welfare recipients. They do this work in recognition of the fact that education is a key to earning a living wage and ensuring long-term economic viability for themselves and their families.

We hope that the lessons and models chronicled in this report are useful to a variety of stakeholders who have an interest in educational access and equity, and who are interested in developing a diverse, highly skilled, adaptive workforce that incorporates those who have traditionally been left out of policy efforts to enhance social mobility.

### **Limiting the Higher Education Option in Welfare Policy**

The model legislation, programs, and organizations reviewed in this report are important because the welfare reform legislation of 1996, the Personal Responsibility Work Opportunity and Reconciliation Act (PRWORA), and the replacement of the entitlement, Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC), with the block grant Temporary Assistance Needy Families (TANF) limited the amount of time that public assistance recipients can participate in higher education. In a quiet way, TANF erected a new set of obstacles for public assistance recipients trying to attain social and occupational mobility.

Prior to TANF, the college option for public assistance recipients was an important means for widening access and equity in higher education for a marginalized population facing numerous barriers. Under AFDC and Jobs Opportunities Basic Skills (JOBS) program states were encouraged to allow a higher education option as part of the emphasis on training. Under this policy regime, 47 states allowed at least two years participation in higher education and 37 states allowed four years<sup>2</sup>. While PRWORA and TANF promised to devolve policy decision making to the states, this was somewhat complicated with regard to higher education. States, for many reasons, chose to interpret TANF rules to allow less than a year of vocational education, often focusing on a variety of short-term, job training options. Through advocacy reform movements, and in at least one case, an executive decision, higher education options were gradually resurrected in many states.

Despite the existence of proven college programs for public assistance recipients, and the emergence of successful efforts in reforming TANF policy on post-secondary education, most states did not reverse their positions on access to education, even after the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services attempted in 1999 to make TANF definitions of work and education more flexible.<sup>3</sup> In Ohio, for instance, programs that aided public assistance recipients, such as the Women's Resource Center at Cleveland State University, had to redesign their program because this institutional resource for public assistance recipients in college could no longer provide the same services under TANF. Another Ohio program, the New Directions program at Sinclair Community College (a version of an earlier higher education option under JOBS) ceased to exist because of the literal interpretation of TANF by state and county officials to not allow more than one year of vocational education. In Vermont, the statewide Single Parents Program was allowed to continue only because it was a demonstration project that began before TANF (the state covered the program costs). This seven-year demonstration is now in its final year. The program may not be able to continue if changes under welfare reauthorization further restrict access to education, despite the state's desire to keep the program.

There is evidence that, under previous welfare policies, a college option not only had a positive impact in the lives of individuals and their families, but also led to permanent reductions in the need for public assistance. The data from a 1990 Howard Samuels Center study of 158 AFDC graduates in New York show that 100% of four-year graduates were off welfare, compared with nearly 81% of associate degree holders<sup>4</sup>. In a subsequent study of 840 recipients in five states, we found that while an associate degree does improve earning power, a bachelor's degree leads to greater economic independence<sup>5</sup>. These studies show that former welfare recipients with bachelors degrees maintained employment and were unlikely to need welfare again. A recent report released by the Children's Defense Fund found that among welfare leavers in New York State, the only group likely to escape poverty by relying on earnings alone was those who had at least two years of higher education or a vocational degree.<sup>6</sup> Of the seven states that the Congressional Research Service has found to have the highest TANF adult employment rates, four (Hawaii, Illinois, New Mexico, and Maine) have reformed TANF to include post-secondary education-friendly legislation and one (Minnesota) interprets TANF rules in a way that allows college activities to meet work requirements<sup>7</sup>. Of this group, only Michigan and Indiana cling to the original TANF rules of allowing a maximum of 12 months participation in post-secondary education.

TANF mandated lifetime assistance limits that, depending on the state, ranged from 24 to 60 months and mandated minimum work requirements, beginning with 20 hours in 1997 and increasing incrementally to 35-hours in 2002. This was not new, since the federal government had been pushing work first models long before TANF. However, the blanket application of the policy was particularly harmful to recipients who were already in school. There was no requirement that work assignments be near a student's campus or home, nor did they have to be related to a student's field of study or provide skills that would help graduates obtain a job with potential for advancement. In New York

City, for instance, we found that students were being assigned to street cleaning details or mindless clerical tasks<sup>8</sup>. Also, TANF discouraged defining attending school and studying as work.

The combination of stringently interpreted TANF policy on higher education and work requirements forced tens of thousands of students nationwide to drop out of college. The limited tracking of public assistance receiving students means that they are seriously undercounted, but data point to sharply increased dropout rates. Pell Grant data show that in 1995-96 there were at least 650,000 public assistance recipients in college; by 1999 that number had declined to 358,000<sup>9</sup>. In 1996-97 there were more than 27,000 public assistance recipients in college at the City University of New York, which by 2000 had declined to less than 10,000 students.<sup>10</sup> In the California community colleges the decrease was less dramatic but substantial nonetheless: the more than 136,000 welfare recipients enrolled in 1996-97 had decreased to nearly 113,000 in 1999-2000.<sup>11</sup>

Interviews with students who receive public assistance and with college officials and administrators indicate that the decreases are not simply a reflection of declining caseloads. Many students have been forced to leave college, and to put educational aspirations on hold with serious consequences for future social mobility. Some students decided to risk their primary source of income (TANF) and health insurance to remain in school, and consequently, have faced unnecessary hardships. It is clear that under supportive conditions public assistance recipients persist and do well in their college education. In Maine for instance, the welfare case load dramatically decreased after implementation of TANF while the number of recipients as a percentage of the state's TANF rolls participating in their Parents as Scholars program increased by half between 1997 and 2001.<sup>12</sup> In California, where there exists a statewide support system for public assistance recipients and low-income students in the community colleges, the decline in enrollment was not nearly as drastic as it might have been in the absence of special programs.

### **Building Human Capital and Enhancing Social Mobility: Welfare and Higher Education**

Earning a post-secondary credential makes a significant difference in potential earning power and in the quality of life of public assistance recipients:

- ▶ Work first programs prepare most welfare recipients for work in the low-wage economy, regardless of their skill level or occupational aspirations
- ▶ Full-time, low wage work does not move families out of poverty
- ▶ More than one-half million welfare recipients were attending college in 1995
- ▶ Even brief periods of college attendance have been shown to increase earnings
- ▶ The fastest growing occupations paying high wages will require at least an associates degree

Education is, therefore, critical to increasing earnings and improving social mobility. Over the course of a life time, the income and earnings for a college graduate are nearly twice that of a high school

graduate (see tables 1 and 2). Given racial and gender-based inequities in earning power, college credentials become important for enhancing social mobility, even though blacks and Hispanics still earn less on average than whites with the same credentials, and women still earn less on average than men with the same credentials (see tables 1 and 2).

**TABLE 1:  
Income by Educational Attainment  
for Persons 18 Years Old and Over, by Sex and Race**

Race	Sex	High School Graduate	Some College, No Degree	Associate Degree	Bachelor's Degree	Master's Degree	Professional Degree
All	Male	\$28,020	\$31,948	\$37,185	\$51,648	\$65,687	\$109,730
All	Female	\$15,983	\$18,342	\$23,731	\$29,848	\$39,650	\$59,121
White	Male	\$29,046	\$33,092	\$38,302	\$53,357	\$67,868	\$111,892
White	Female	\$16,202	\$18,438	\$23,689	\$29,842	\$40,113	\$60,215
Black	Male	\$21,702	\$26,113	\$28,813	\$36,551	\$47,126	No Data
Black	Female	\$15,054	\$18,149	\$24,283	\$29,588	\$37,367	No Data
Hispan.	Male	\$22,323	\$25,138	\$28,800	\$38,521	\$52,670	\$69,423
Hispan.	Female	\$14,423	\$15,690	\$21,333	\$28,281	\$34,628	No Data

Source: US Census Bureau 2000.

**TABLE 2:  
Mean Earnings by Educational Attainment  
for Persons 18 Years Old and Over, by Sex and Race**

Race	Sex	High School Graduate	Some College, No Degree	Associate Degree	Bachelor's Degree	Master's Degree	Professional Degree
All	Male	\$32,611	\$39,367	\$40,465	\$55,832	\$71,225	\$120,052
All	Female	\$22,656	\$26,562	\$29,776	\$37,319	\$46,072	\$74,077
White	Male	\$33,505	\$40,743	\$41,164	\$57,586	\$73,634	\$121,465
White	Female	\$23,088	\$26,934	\$29,947	\$37,656	\$46,121	\$75,425
Black	Male	\$27,056	\$31,953	\$35,139	\$40,034	\$51,840	No Data
Black	Female	\$20,721	\$24,532	\$28,227	\$32,990	\$40,861	No Data
Hispan.	Male	\$26,247	\$30,370	\$32,671	\$42,529	\$59,203	No Data
Hispan.	Female	\$20,629	\$23,199	\$27,216	\$34,001	No Data	No Data

Source: US Census Bureau 2000.

Those who have the most to gain economically and socially are those whose skill and educational level restrict them to low-paying jobs with earnings that will grow very little over the course of their working life. Because of the limited advancement potential from low-wage work, achieving economic viability – the interdependent mix of education and experience that facilitates social and occupational mobility and allows a person to optimize their skills and talents – becomes less possible for many hard-working people.

A recent study of public assistance recipients in California demonstrates the value of higher education to improving social mobility and attaining economic viability. The earnings of CalWORKs (California's TANF program) recipients in community colleges were initially lower than those of the general community college student body. However, once they left college their earnings grew faster than those of the general student body that had left college<sup>13</sup>. CalWORKs recipients who left school in 1999-2000 with certificates or Associate degrees showed significant increases in annual median earnings compared to those who did not earn a degree; they doubled their earnings one year after completing school<sup>14</sup>. CalWORKs recipients who earned a degree or certificate were also more likely to be employed full-time, year-round than their peers who did not participate in higher education.

In a study of students from Eastern Washington University, Thomas Karier tracked welfare student dropouts and found that their median hourly wage was \$9.06 compared to \$11 for those who completed school.<sup>15</sup> Thirty-two percent of the welfare student graduates Karier followed earned more than \$14 per hour, while this was true of less than 4 percent of dropouts.<sup>16</sup> In addition, dropouts will still earn more than those who never attend college, with wage levels varying based on length of time in school. Those students who dropped out in their first year earned \$6.40 per hour, while those who left school in their fourth year earned \$9.84 after dropping out.<sup>17</sup> In Maine, graduates of the Parents as Scholars program earned a median income of \$11.71 per hour, compared to median earnings of \$8 per hour prior to entering college.<sup>18</sup> This comparison is even more striking when juxtaposed against the median \$7.50 per hour of Maine welfare leavers who did not obtain post-secondary education credentials. The Maine study also found that earning a college degree had a positive impact on welfare recipients' children and their own personal self-esteem.

In a study of more than 17,000 participants in an Ohio JOBS student retention program (JSRP) that focused on encouraging entry into and success in two year and technical colleges and that operated between 1990 and 1995, researchers concluded that,

. . . program participation increased earnings 8.45%, while completion hiked wages by nearly 13%. . . the results indicate that encouraging post-secondary education for a subset of welfare recipients might help to boost earnings capacity and therefore long-term self-sufficiency<sup>19</sup>.

Under TANF, short-term training has been favored over education and training that takes longer to complete. While some short-term programs have been quickly declared a success, too often a minor increase in earnings is presented by researchers as significant while the issue of what constitutes long-term success is left unaddressed. Wage increases under TANF are often less significant when considered in terms of the goal of improving a welfare recipient's earning power, career mobility, and standard of living. Increased earnings resulting from work may be offset by a decrease in receipt of public assistance and therefore do not necessarily significantly improve an individual's standard of living. In Vermont, a study that compared the state's Aid to Needy Families with Children program (AFNC) with those involved in a training project, the Welfare Restructuring Project (WRP), found that the program had little impact on earnings. According to one analysis of the Vermont program,

the WRP group's higher earnings were largely offset by their lower cash assistance payments; as a result, except for a brief period during the third year of the follow-up period, average income for the WRP group was no higher than average income for the AFNC group. However, consistent with the program's goals, WRP group members derived a greater share of their income from earnings and a smaller share from public assistance.<sup>20</sup>

In this case the goal of increasing earnings had been attained, the participants were working and would probably soon be off the welfare rolls. These are primary goals of many state's TANF programs. However, even though the participant's source of income changed (from welfare to an employer) and they earned more, their earnings increased only \$696 a year, which amounts to less than \$60 per month.

Connecticut's TANF plan, Jobs First, touted as one of the best welfare-to-work training programs in the nation, offers another example of how research findings focused on earnings increases is sometimes overstated. Although Connecticut's program has earned high praise, one study found that 62 percent of parents involved in the state's Jobs First program could not get a job, and that 78 percent did not keep a job for six months<sup>21</sup>. Of those who did find work, 63 percent of parents found only a very low-paying job and were earning an income that fell below the federal poverty level<sup>22</sup>. Even though findings of an earlier study by the Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation (MDRC) are not completely consistent with these findings, they too found that Connecticut's Jobs First program ". . . generated almost no increase in employment or earnings for the most job ready."<sup>23</sup> The MDRC report also concluded that,

. . . in the first part of the study period, Jobs First substantially increased both welfare receipt and family income; as individuals began to reach the time limit, the program began to reduce welfare receipt and the income gains diminished.<sup>24</sup>

To place these findings in perspective, those employed in Jobs First worked an average of 34 hours per week, earning \$7.82 per hour<sup>25</sup>. Before taxes, this totals less than \$266 per week, less than \$1100 per

month, and less than \$14,000 per year (working 52 weeks of the year). Although this program has been judged by some to be a success, this salary does not lift even a two-person family living in the Northeast corridor out of poverty.

Given the reality that so many welfare recipients find themselves in low-wage work, the most job ready participants in Connecticut, Vermont, and many other states may have been better served had they been able to attend college. As Anthony Carnevale and Donna Desrochers demonstrated in *Getting Down to Business*, as the 1996 welfare reform legislation was implemented, nearly one-third of welfare recipients had skill levels similar to people with some post-secondary education (7 percent of them had advanced skills), while another third, with minimal remediation, would have been able to take advantage of vocational or community college education<sup>26</sup>. Although earning a certificate or degree may not be the best choice for all public assistance recipients and low-income single parents, the existence of a higher education option makes that choice available to those who are qualified and motivated, and who recognize the potential benefits a credential can offer. Although a bachelors degree will ultimately provide the greatest reward, we recognize that associates and vocational certificate programs that prepare students for a career, further education in the future, and offer immediate and seamless transfer to four-year programs are also important.

### **The Models**

Several fundamental lessons can be drawn from the models presented here. First, there does not have to be a conflict between emphasizing work or education. The models we describe often combine higher education with meaningful work experience. All model college programs and some of the legislation require satisfactory academic progress (usually a minimum of a 2.0 grade average) and the completion of a degree or program in a reasonable amount of time. Second, from a legislative or regulatory perspective, policy makers should consider mandating and supporting cooperative relationships between state administrative offices and programs whenever possible. For example, departments of human services are actively involved in some of the most promising education programs. Third, we must recognize and accept that typical public assistance recipients and low-income single parents face multiple barriers that are less common among the general college student population. Students, therefore, require assistance that is appropriate for their circumstances. Not only must they contend with issues and problems related to poverty, single parenthood, the demands of welfare bureaucracies, these students often:

- ▶ come from educationally disadvantaged backgrounds
- ▶ are first generation college students
- ▶ have learning disabilities (which can usually be corrected if diagnosed)
- ▶ have children and/or family members with special needs

- ▶ face recurrent family and health issues
- ▶ face difficulties getting reliable child care and transportation
- ▶ face recurrent financial crises.

Programs designed for and targeted toward public assistance recipients enhance their performance, improve retention and ensure access for a vulnerable and educationally disadvantaged population through provision of focused services. Such support helps them stay in college and complete their degrees in a timely manner.

Organizations run by those who have firsthand experience with the welfare system, and by committed advocates, play a pivotal role in ensuring access and equity. They have been able to organize and mobilize welfare recipients who are in college to become their own advocates and to share their personal experiences with policy makers. While welfare-oriented organizations are important players, women's organizations, colleges and academic departments, and legal aid centers have played a crucial role in establishing, expanding and protecting the college option in many states and counties, and on numerous college campuses.

Since welfare reform, some states have been laboratories for developing and testing new ways to provide higher education, social mobility opportunities, and supportive services to public assistance recipients and low-income workers in general. Currently, however, their work is in jeopardy on at least two fronts. First, President Bush's welfare reform proposal and the welfare reauthorization legislation that passed the House in Spring 2002, H.R. 4737, would make it impossible for many states and colleges to maintain the programs and policies they have already put in place to improve workforce development and social mobility opportunities through higher education. Under the House version of welfare reauthorization, education and training options would decrease to four months and work requirements would increase to 40 hours. Second, state budget crises threaten the continued success of proven and effective programs. In California, for example, critical programs for single parents and low-income students on all 108 of the state's community college campuses face budget cuts of at least 10 percent, but will more than likely undergo much higher cuts.

It is most unfortunate that access to higher education for poor students faces an uncertain future. There is overwhelming evidence that low-income students, including welfare recipients and single mothers, benefit from higher education. Evidence we present in this report shows that with the right supports, welfare students succeed, and that various states and local communities are committed to supporting the higher education option through the creation of innovative and successful programs. These interventions have enabled welfare recipients to earn degrees and find stable jobs which provide a living wage and that ensure long-term economic variability for themselves and their families.



## MODEL STATE LEGISLATION AND POLICIES

The 1996 federal welfare reform law had a significant impact on the ability of welfare recipients to attend higher education programs. The federal legislation neither guaranteed nor fully denied access to post-secondary education, but instead gave the power to the states to determine (within certain guidelines) the type and duration of education and training programs that welfare recipients could attend. However, it is evident from the programs established in most states that the primary emphasis was on moving women off welfare and into jobs. The “work first” model of welfare reform policy therefore signaled a triumph for those who believe that a labor force attachment-oriented model of public assistance is superior to that of a human capital development orientation. Specifically, under the earlier JOBS welfare legislation enacted in 1988, states developed a variety of innovative higher education programs for welfare recipients. Under JOBS, forty-seven states allowed at least two years of education and four years of education was possible in thirty-seven states.<sup>27</sup> The 1996 PRWORA legislation was a consequential backward step. Federal TANF rules limited education to a maximum of one year of vocationally oriented training and many states chose to allow far less. The emphasis shifted toward short-term training and skills building for immediate employment and away from degree programs that can lead to high wage jobs with benefits and long term economic security and self-sufficiency.

Some states and localities, however, recognized the importance of education and have worked creatively to ensure and, in some cases, expand access to higher education for public assistance recipients. This was possible largely because of the devolution of responsibility to the states to determine the specific provisions of welfare policies. States which met caseload reduction targets could choose to allow access to higher education and exempt a certain percentage of welfare recipients from some of the more restrictive provisions of federal welfare policy. The work of local reform movements, advocacy groups and low-income students themselves has been critical to preserving the higher education option in those states and localities where education remains possible for welfare recipients. This advocacy and the building of partnerships between universities, welfare agencies, legislators and welfare recipients themselves demonstrate the public recognition of the value of higher education in addressing the complex needs of families transitioning from welfare to self-sufficiency.

There is considerable variation in current state and local policies on access to higher education for public assistance recipients. States and localities vary in terms of time limits, requirements for participation and the amount of work activity required of college students, among others. According to The State Policy Documentation Project,<sup>28</sup> as of 1999, some states, such as Arizona, Michigan and

Texas, for example, allow recipients to participate in two and four year programs, either with or without additional work requirements, or in combination with other countable work activity. These states, however, place a 12-month limit on educational participation. Because it is impossible to complete a two- or four-year-year degree in 12 months, the ultimate utility of this approach is unclear. States such as Illinois and Kentucky allow 24 and 36 months of “stand alone” education activity respectively. However, students can continue in education programs longer if they participate in 20 hours of work activity in addition to school. Other states such as Alaska leave the decision of allowing students to remain in education more than 12 months to the discretion of local caseworkers. Still others, such as California, Ohio and New York, for example, leave decisions about allowing any participation in education (two- or four-year-year programs in the case of Ohio, only two-year programs in the case of New York) to the county. It must be noted, however, that no where does participation in higher education begin to approach even 25 percent of the welfare population, despite the strong evidence of the long-term economic benefits of education for low-income families. States have set limits on who can participate in education, often restricting it to below 10 percent of the welfare case load. Even in Maine where there is strong support for education, participation is limited to a maximum of 2,000 participants but to date only 795 women have been enrolled at one time.<sup>29</sup>

Under current welfare provisions, one of the key issues with regard to education is to what extent, if at all, participation in education programs and related activities can be counted as an acceptable activity to meet the 35-hour (or more) a week work requirement mandated by the federal legislation. States and counties have chosen a variety of approaches ranging from allowing no countable education activity, to permitting short-term job training or vocational programs related to a specific job in combination with other work activity, and to a more limited degree, to allowing full-time participation in two or four year degree programs to count as work. In some cases class time, internships and study time and other school activities have been counted as work. Maine, for example, has established a highly permissive policy in which welfare recipients can attend four-year degree programs and are exempted from the five-year time limits while attending school. Some states severely restrict access to higher education and training for welfare recipients, allowing public assistance recipients to participate in only six months or less of education or training. There is considerable variation from state to state and in some cases, from county to county, in terms of the types of higher education and training programs open to public assistance recipients under existing legislation.

Although there is a wide range in the established state policies which regulate access to education, there is also considerable variation between what may be legally permissible according to statutes, and what actually occurs in practice. A complete state by state, county by county study of the implementation of policies regulating access to education has yet to be compiled.<sup>30</sup> However, our purpose here is not to provide an exhaustive assessment of permissive and restrictive policies and their implementation at the state and local level. Instead, we are concerned with identifying those states and counties which

have succeeded in adopting legislation or instituting policy through administrative changes which allow access to higher education, and to outline the key components of this legislation. In this section, therefore, we identify and discuss examples of legislation which are the most permissive in terms of allowing access to post-secondary education and training programs, identifying them as models for future reform efforts and state and local initiatives. We will highlight these examples of model legislation that guarantees access to, and supports students enrolled in, post-secondary education.

Based on existing supportive policies and on concerns raised by various low-income students and other advocacy groups, we have identified several key policy components which should be addressed if legislation is to afford access to education for public assistance recipients and support those students while working toward a degree. However, legislation that support post-secondary education for public assistance recipients should include many or all of the following provisions:

- ▶ Provide access to vocational, two-year and four-year degrees;
- ▶ Allow adequate time to complete degrees or programs;
- ▶ Allow public assistance recipients to choose work or school;
- ▶ Explicit notification of right to higher education;
- ▶ School activity counts as work;
- ▶ Income disregards for financial aid and grants;
- ▶ Time in school “stops the clock” on receiving benefits;
- ▶ Additional services and subsidies to support college attendance.

These provisions are explained in more detail in the chart labeled “Key Components of Model College Option Legislation,” on page 14.

A recent effort to document state welfare and higher education policies by the Center for Women Policy Studies identified 49 states that allowed some form of higher education. The only exception was Oklahoma.<sup>31</sup> This by no means indicates the wholesale endorsement of access to post-secondary education for welfare recipients. As emphasized, there is considerable variation in what is allowable in terms of program duration (six months or less, a year, 18 months, two or four years), the type of program (short-term training, certificate, associates degree, bachelors degree or beyond), permissible subjects to study, and who is eligible to participate. In addition, even where the law allows access, only a certain percentage of welfare recipients can attend college, given federal guidelines requiring statewide case load reductions and limits in the state funding for such programs. In addition, there may be further limitations in those states which leave decision making to the county or even to the discretion of individual caseworkers.

## Key Components of Model College Option Legislation

### **Choice of/Access to Programs**

Each public assistance applicant or recipient has different needs and should have the choice of attending school without being limited as to the type of educational programs they can pursue. Students should be afforded access to two- and four-year degree programs as well as to vocational and other training programs in addition to whatever basic education or English as a Second Language training may be needed.

### **End Time Limits**

There should be no time limit on participation. Students should be allowed adequate time to complete degrees. Students should be able to complete prerequisite GED or other basic education in addition to an Associates or Bachelors degree. Programs should be sensitive to the needs and concerns of single-parent students.

### **No Tracking/Access to Education Regardless of "Work Readiness"**

Welfare recipients who are deemed "work ready" are often tracked into employment rather than given access to education or training. Applicants for public assistance benefits should have choice because often the jobs for which they are qualified or the jobs that are available do not pay a living wage or provide necessary benefits.

### **Explicit Notification of Right to Participate in Education**

Even where education is permitted, individuals applying for public assistance are often not made aware of their rights. Welfare agencies and case workers must be required to discuss employment and education options with applicants. Notification should be posted in welfare offices.

### **School Counts as Work**

Time spent in the classroom, doing home work, participating in internships and other school related activity should be countable work activity. Success in school involves more than just sitting in a class room. Students must have the time to study and complete assignments. Limiting the amount of non-school related work is especially important for parents balancing the demands of work and family.

### **Income Disregards**

Financial aid to low-income students must not be counted against them in the calculation of their eligibility for benefits. If school aid is factored in, students may be declared ineligible for critical benefits. Without necessary public assistance benefits in addition to school aid, students are forced to drop out.

### **Stop the Clock**

Time spent in school would not count toward the five-year federal time limit for receiving benefits. Stopping the clock prevents students from "timing out" of benefits before completion of education.

### **Provide Additional Support for School Activities**

Students often need additional subsidies to cover travel, daycare, book and other education expenses while in school. Additional subsidies and daycare programs sensitive to the needs of welfare students are critical to their success.

What follows in this section is not a comprehensive accounting of each state's policy. Instead, we focus on examples of the most permissive legislation that affords the broadest opportunity for welfare recipients to participate in post-secondary education. In particular, we are interested in states that emphasize access to two- and four-year degrees, which are critical to achieving self-sufficiency and are most likely to lead to living-wage jobs with benefits. Accordingly, the states highlighted here have programs that include the most desirable provisions and are the most responsive to, and supportive of students. These policies have been established by the passage of state legislation, executive orders and, in some cases, by administrative rule changes within state welfare agencies.

## **Maine**

In many ways, Maine's program, Parents as Scholars<sup>32</sup>, which was adopted through legislation enacted in 1997, can be considered the "gold standard" among state higher education programs for TANF recipients under PRWORA. It has already begun to serve as a model for other states attempting to create or expand access to post secondary education. In response to the 1996 reform, many states dropped or modified their post secondary education programs for welfare recipients, many of which had been developed under the Federal JOBS legislation. Maine and Wyoming were the only states that chose to continue funding post-secondary education for welfare recipients through the use of Maintenance of Effort (MOE) funds.

Under the PaS program, each year up to 2,000 TANF eligible students can participate in a two-year associates degree program or a four-year bachelors degree program. Their benefits are paid through the PaS program using MOE funds rather than TANF funds. For the first 24 months in the PaS program students are expected to be in school full-time with no additional work requirements. After 24 months, students can either add 15 hours a week of work site experience to full-time college attendance or combine class time, training study time and work experience to equal a total of 40 hours a week of participation. For every hour of class time, students are allotted 1.5 hours of countable study time. As students near the end of their academic program they are encouraged to develop resumes, search for employment and participate in other job-related skill building and can count this activity toward meeting participation requirements. Like other states, Maine requires that students make satisfactory progress toward a degree that will lead directly to employment. Individuals are eligible to participate if they would otherwise qualify for TANF, do not already have a "marketable" bachelors degree, and are assessed to be academically prepared to complete a degree. If applicants lack a high school diploma or other prerequisites, they can obtain them while under the state's TANF welfare program and switch to the PaS program later.

What makes Maine's program so distinctive is its utilization of state Maintenance of Effort funds to create a program which essentially "stops the clock" for TANF recipients who are in school. Participants in the Parents as Scholars program are exempt from Federal welfare time limits and work requirements while in school. While in the Parents as Scholars program, students receive cash assistance and other benefits equal to what they would have qualified for under TANF as well as additional supports and services directly related to facilitating a student's participation in school such as assistance with child care, transportation and meeting other school expenses such as academic fees and paying for books.

Maine's experience with allowing access to post secondary education for welfare recipients prior to PRWORA, the bipartisan support of the program, and the organizing efforts of a network of educators, activists and students culminated in wide spread support for the PaS plan. Maine recognized that without additional education, individuals leaving welfare would not be able to find the kind of living wage jobs which would lead to self-sufficiency, lift their families out of poverty and ensure that they would never need welfare again. Because of the greater flexibility in the use of MOE funds, Maine was able to tailor its program to meet the educational needs of its low-income single parents.

To date, the PaS program has yet to be fully subscribed; as of September 2001, 795 students were enrolled in the program. However, an evaluation of outcomes for program participants demonstrates the critical role education plays in leading families to self-sufficiency. PAS graduates had greater economic security through higher incomes and were far more likely to have jobs with benefits than other TANF leavers.<sup>33</sup>

Although potentially threatened by the current House version of welfare reauthorization, commitment to access to higher education through the PaS program remains strong in Maine. Senator Olympia Snowe has introduced the Pathways to Self-sufficiency Act in the Senate to ensure that states can continue to use federal welfare programs to support higher education programs like those in Maine. It is unclear, however, whether this measure will pass the Senate or whether a more permissive Senate version of welfare reauthorization would survive the conference committee to resolve differences between the two versions.

**Key Legislation:** Title 22 - Chapter 1054B, *Parents As Scholars*. Text of legislation can be found at <http://www.janus.state.me.us/legis/states>. Additional information may be found at Maine Equal Justice Partners, <http://www.mejp.org>.

## California

California, like New York, leaves the final rule making decisions to the county and limits post-secondary education to a maximum of 24 months. Unlike New York, however, California has a long-standing commitment to broad access to higher education for low-income and welfare students, through its comparatively well funded, low cost and high quality community college system. Prior to PRWORA, California established several key programs to encourage school participation for low-income and welfare students. In 1985 California adopted the Greater Avenues to Independence (GAIN) program which allowed qualified welfare recipients to attend up to two years of college while receiving public assistance. This program was later reinforced under the 1988 Federal JOBS legislation. In addition to the GAIN program, California had also established the Expanded Opportunity Program and Services (EOPS) and Cooperative Agencies Resources for Education (CARE). Both EOPS and CARE were in place prior to JOBS and PRWORA. EOPS was founded in 1969 and is a general program to support low-income students' access to and success in higher education. CARE was established in 1982, specifically to address the needs of low-income single parents in college. Over the years, CARE programs have been established at all of California's 71 community college campuses. Both EOPS and CARE attempt to address additional financial, academic, counseling and other support needs of low-income and public assistance students.

In 1997, California redesigned its welfare program and adopted the California Work Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids Act (CalWORKs). Importantly, \$65 million in state Maintenance of Effort funds were dedicated to the community college system for programs for TANF recipients. Under the provisions of this bill, TANF recipients can attend a maximum of 24 months of post-secondary education. Education programs must be pre-approved and in fields that will lead directly to employment. County case workers have the discretion to limit education to less than 24 months. In some cases, counties have placed more of an emphasis on short-term certificate programs, however, it remains possible to obtain an associates degree. CalWORKs offices were established on almost every community college campus, in addition to the county CalWORKs offices, to help facilitate and coordinate students' efforts to meet state and federal welfare to work requirements. While the coordination is far from perfect (students continue to experience sanctions, welfare applicants are not always aware of their right to attend higher education programs), statewide coordination and support for programs as well as the activism of students and advocacy groups has gone a long way to maintaining access to higher education for welfare recipients.

The programs which support low-income and welfare students' access to college, as well as higher education in general have, to date, been comparatively well funded and have enjoyed broad bipartisan support, however, the current state budget crisis could undermine some of these efforts if major funding

cuts and other legislative changes are made. Community colleges, in particular, are threatened with budget cuts and a proposal to more than double its tuition from \$11 to \$24 per credit. Comparatively, the University of California and California State Systems would enjoy modest budget increases under current proposals. This would negatively affect the most vulnerable low-income students and welfare students who rely on the community college system. Advocates and program officials, however, remain committed to supporting programs for single parents, low-income and welfare students.

**Key Legislation:** AB 1501, *California Work Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids (CalWORKS)*. The text of the original bill, from the 1997 legislative session is available at, <http://www.leginfo.ca.gov/pub/97-98>. Further information about the program is available at <http://dss.cahwnet.gov/cdssweb.gov/cdssweb>.

## Hawai'i

After the passage to PRWORA, Hawai'i instituted its First to Work program which set a 12-month limit on educational activities and restricted education to vocational programs. By the end of 1996 the participation rate of welfare students in post-secondary education in the Hawai'i state university system was very low: only 184 welfare recipients enrolled in Hawai'i's 10 state universities.<sup>34</sup> As a result, the Hawai'i Department of Human Services, community groups, and concerned state legislators began to examine the situation and proposed changes to be more supportive of access to higher education.

The first, and perhaps most important step was to amend Hawai'i's Department of Human Service rules to permit greater participation in education. The FTW program now allows TANF recipients who are assessed as ready for school, to choose education and training and no longer restricts education to one year. In addition, applicants to the FTW program must be notified of their right to pursue education. Students receiving public assistance can now attend two- or four-year programs, as long as they continue to remain in compliance with state TANF rules and are participating in a program that will lead to employment. Under the Full-time Educational Incentive Program, the overall work participation for full time students was reduced to 20 hours per week, with a minimum of four hours in paid employment. Class time, practicums, internships and externships all count toward meeting the 20 hours of work activity, although study time does not. If a student does not qualify for the full-time educational incentive or is attending school part time, the overall work participation rate is 32 hours from which educational activity hours are subtracted. The remaining time is filled with qualified work activity.

In addition to the changes in the First to Work program, negotiations and lobbying continued and ultimately resulted in the Bridge to Hope program which is a partnership between the Department of

Human Services and the University of Hawai'i system and is funded by the Hawai'i state legislature. The Bridge to Hope program supports TANF students enrolled at a University of Hawai'i campus by assisting with on-campus job placement to meet work requirements. The BTH program advocates recognized the difficulties for the (mostly) single-mother students trying to balance the demands of school, work and family, and argued that on-campus work placements are more compatible with school attendance and with the coordination of child care and transportation needs. In addition, the Bridge to Hope program generally works to assist students in negotiating the school and the welfare bureaucracies to meet any additional needs. Implemented as a pilot program in the Fall of 2000, enrollment jumped to 294 and, as of Spring 2002, 463 TANF students were enrolled in the Hawai'i University system.<sup>35</sup> While funding remains limited and does not yet meet the demand, the changes already in place have led to greater access to higher education for welfare recipients.

**Key Legislation:** HB 129. *Bridge to Hope*. Text available at Hawaii State Legislature Bill and Resolution Search at <http://www.capital.hawaii.gov/site1/search/billsearch>.

## New York

In New York state, access to post-secondary education is limited to twenty-four months, however, it is left to the county to determine whether, how long, and under what conditions welfare recipients can participate in post secondary education programs. Individual caseworkers ultimately have a considerable degree of discretion and, in general, their determination is based on whether or not they deem education necessary to an applicant's future employability. If allowed to participate in education, state rules require that individuals pursue a degree or certificate in a "recognized" field that will lead to employment in a specific occupation, and that students must remain in good academic standing. In addition, thanks in part to the efforts of activists and students, welfare students must be allowed the choice to fulfill any additional work requirements through work assignments on their campus.

Although New York state allows access to education, counties have chosen different approaches. Until recently New York City was an example of a locality which sought to limit access to education through the enforcement of complicated and at times contradictory local rules, despite more permissive state rules. This occurred despite the existence of several major programs in the City University system supported under the previous JOBS legislation, which sought to encourage college participation for recipients of public assistance. Prior to PRWORA, the COPE program, for example, supported low-income and welfare students with additional instructional and academic support, counseling, and other efforts to meet the needs of this student group.

After PRWORA and under the administration of Mayor Rudolph Giuliani, emphasis shifted from supporting education for welfare students to a work first approach, which was often incompatible with the pursuit of higher education. In New York City, access to higher education has been severely limited since 1996 and many welfare students who were in school have been forced to drop out. As a result, the number of students receiving public assistance in the City University of New York dropped precipitously from about 27,000 in 1996 to about 10,000 in 1999. As the Giuliani administration focused on reducing the welfare rolls and developing the Work Experience Program (WEP), New York City's work first initiative, many students on public assistance were told they could not be in school and continue to receive benefits, or were forced to accept work assignments which were incompatible with their education. Activities such as work-study, internships and class time were not considered countable work activity, and students' off-campus job placements made it difficult to fulfill the requirements of their academic programs.

Recently, student and community activism in New York City has led to a legislative effort in the City Council to set a new policy to support access to education and training. In response to the continued denial of access to education under the Giuliani Administration, a coalition of students, activists and educators have been advocating for changes, working together as the Coalition for Access to Education and Training (CATE). The coalition includes Community Voices Heard, Make the Road by Walking, New York Legal Aid, among others. Their efforts have culminated in Intro 93, which was approved by the city council and has survived a mayoral veto as of Spring 2003. Mayor Bloomberg has however, indicated that he may ask the state court to block the measure's implementation. The major provisions of the legislation include: guaranteed access to 24 months of post-secondary education for public assistance recipients; public assistance recipients and applicants must be notified of their right to education by case workers and notification must be posted in welfare centers; education activity will count toward 35-hour work requirement; countable education activity includes class time, internships and other related school activity, one hour of study time for each hour of class time; other work activities if necessary to meet the 35-hour work requirement must be compatible with school schedules and preferably be related to school activity.

Although this legislation has yet to be adopted by the City Council, it does appear to have broad bipartisan support. Activists continue to fight for changes which would allow access to education for longer than 24 months, and to have more educational activity count as work, however, the provisions of the current legislation in New York City represent a model both for the rest of the state and for other state organizing efforts.

**Key Legislation:** New York City Council Intro 93, *A Local Law to Amend the Administrative Code of New York City, in Relation to Education and Training for Public Assistance Recipients*. Text of bill number INT 0093-2002A, is available at <http://www.council.nyc.ny.us/legislation/index>.

## Kentucky

Under current Kentucky welfare policy, known as the Kentucky Transitional Assistance Program (K-TAP), TANF recipients can attend 24 months of post secondary education and will be exempt from participating in any other work assignments provided they are full-time students making satisfactory progress. In addition, students can continue after 24 months if they meet additional work participation requirements. After two years of school, students must meet a 30-hour a week work activity requirement and only 10 of those hours can be met by education. Formally, the state law enacted in 1998 (HB434) requires the state TANF agency, the Cabinet for Families and Children (CfFC) to: notify recipients of their right to education; ensure that caseworkers allow recipients to pursue education if they choose; and make sure that students have access to appropriate and necessary supportive services such as child care and transportation stipends among others. In addition, the CfFC provides support for school supplies and fees for registration, financial aid applications and student activities.

In Kentucky, as in most states, a “work first” focus has sometimes been at odds with efforts to provide greater access to post secondary education. TANF recipients and applicants have not always been informed of their right to education despite state directives to case workers to do so, and programs have not necessarily been funded to meet the need. Also, Kentucky failed to enact a more extensive post-secondary education program modeled on Maine’s Parents as Scholars Program. Various community groups lobbied and advocated for the Kentucky Education Assistance for Parents Program (KEAP) which would have, among other things, reduced the work requirement to 10 hours a week and eliminate it all together for low-income students who maintained a sufficient grade point average, expanded the availability of slots in education programs, offered additional child care and transportation subsidies to low-income students parents even for a period after they left welfare roles, and extended the 5-year time limit on benefits to six years. This would have been accomplished utilizing state MOE funds as in Maine. Although this program was ultimately not adopted, current provisions still place Kentucky well ahead of many other states in terms of allowing access to post-secondary education

According to the Kentucky Welfare Reform Assessment Project’s Working Group,<sup>36</sup> Kentucky continues to press for greater access to education. The working group notes that “participation in post-secondary education among K-TAP parents now runs about 9% each month, higher than in the JOBS program that preceded Kentucky Works . . . [and] higher than the rate of 6.4% for *all* Kentuckians 18 and up.”<sup>37</sup> In addition, \$2.5 million a year in welfare block grant funds have been allotted for the Kentucky Community and Technical College System for programs for TANF students.<sup>38</sup> Many education advocates are hoping to build on the success of post-secondary education programs in Kentucky. However, there is increasing concern that proposed changes in the Federal law would

foreclose opportunities to continue an education approach to reducing poverty and the need for welfare in Kentucky.

**Key Legislation:** HB 434, *An Act Relating to the Provision of Support Services for Low Income Parents in the Process of Achieving Self-sufficiency*, from the 1998 legislative session. Text of the bill is available at <http://www.lrc.state.ky.us/recarch/98rs/recarch/HB434.htm>. Further information about the Transitional Assistance Program (K-TAP) is available at <http://cfc.state.ky.us/help/KTAP.asp>.

## Illinois

Illinois has established access to and support for post secondary education through state legislation and executive action by the governor. In 1999, the outgoing Governor acted on a recommendation from the Illinois Women's Commission and implemented Illinois' welfare and higher education program through an executive order.<sup>39</sup> Illinois allows full-time post secondary education as an allowable work activity and time spent in school "stops the clock" on the five-year federal time limit for a maximum of 36 months while students work toward a bachelors degree, as long as they maintain a 2.5 grade point average (GPA) or higher. In addition, as long as they are in good standing, students will not have to meet any additional work requirements. Students who are enrolled in their first semester do not have to meet additional work requirements because they do not yet have a GPA. Similar to other state programs, TANF recipient students must be enrolled in an education program that will lead to employment in a specific profession and in an employment sector where there are available jobs.

The Illinois Department of Human Services is responsible for assessing whether TANF applicants or recipients are eligible to participate in higher education and base this determination on a number of factors, including: applicants' work and educational history, their ability to pursue and benefit from further education, career goals, and their ability to finance education and arrange transportation, child care and other family responsibilities. However, additional supportive services may be available, depending on the individualized plan.

After a student has established a GPA, Illinois rules have a somewhat complicated set of checks and sanctions with regard to school. While these are not necessarily the most desirable in terms of policies that allow access to education, they are not so onerous as to entirely prevent effective participation in school. If a student's GPA falls below 2.5, the following semester of school will be counted toward the federal five-year time limit but the clock will stop again once the student raises her GPA to the 2.5 threshold. After two semesters, if the student's GPA is still below 2.5, recipients can continue in post-secondary education as long as they maintain a 2.0 GPA and combine classes with other work activity

for 30 hours a week, with a minimum of 20 hours work activity while taking at least five credit hours of classes.

While there are some positive aspects to this plan, Illinois seems to lack the collaboration among state agencies, universities, advocacy groups, and welfare recipients, as is present in states like Hawai'i and Maine. As result, the degree to which applicants for benefits are aware of their right to education and the degree to which individual case workers consider education an appropriate work activity is unclear: by of March 2001, the Illinois TANF case load was over 40,000, but only 721 welfare recipients were enrolled in school.<sup>40</sup> Despite the limited results so far, there is continued support for access to higher education from student/welfare groups, organizations such as Women Employed and the Chicago Jobs Council among others. As is the case with other states, there is concern that proposed changes in reauthorization will be a setback to any efforts to improve the programs which currently exist.

**Key Legislation:** Executive order issued by Governor Edgar in January 1999. The text of the current state law is available in the Illinois Compiled Statutes, see in particular the Illinois Public Aid Code 305 ILCS 5, Sections 4-1 and 4-1.9 at

<http://www.legis.state.il.us/legislation/ilcs/ch305/ch305act5articles/ch305act5artstoc.htm>.

For further information see the Illinois Department of Human Services website at

<http://www.dhs.state.il.us/ts/fss/tanf.asp>.

## Wyoming

Wyoming is an interesting case to consider because despite strong policies supportive of access to higher education, there remains a pervasive ambivalence with regard to allowing welfare recipients to participate in post-secondary education. There are strong indications that barriers to participation remain because of failures in implementation and vacillating support. It is also important to keep in mind that the welfare case load in Wyoming was low to begin with and was reduced by 95% between 1997 and 2001. As of 2001, the case load in Wyoming was 400. Despite Wyoming's support of access to higher education through legislation, there remains a strong work first focus, which limited welfare recipients' participation in education.

Immediately after the passage of PRWORA, welfare students began to organize, forming a group called EMPOWER<sup>41</sup>, which fought to secure continued access to higher education in response to the fact that many college students were initially forced to drop out of school. In the Spring of 1997, there were 229 students receiving public assistance in Wyoming colleges but by the fall of that year, that number had

dropped to 82.<sup>42</sup> Key legislators in the Republican-dominated state supported allowing access to higher education, however, some legislators have argued that access to higher education contradicts federal reform. Despite the support of higher education, there remains a strong work first focus for Wyoming's rapidly dwindling welfare population.

Wyoming's current welfare program is called POWER. The state funds its education program for TANF recipients using Maintenance of Effort funds and at least technically allows students to pursue a vocational or bachelors degree. The state policy has several of the key features earlier identified as most desirable: students can count school attendance toward meeting work requirements; students can pursue a full four years of education; and school grants and scholarships are not considered income. Welfare recipients must complete an initial assessment to determine if post-secondary education is necessary for employment. Prospective students must also work 32 hours a week for at least 10 of the 16 weeks prior to beginning school, and they must meet the same work requirement after every two semesters of school.

**Key Legislation:** HB 186 , Statute 42-2 103, 103 and 109 in particular. For further information about POWER and its education provisions can be found at, <http://dfsweb.state.wy.us/POWER.HTML>.

## Recent and Pending State Policy Changes

Several states have recently taken steps to expand access to higher education in recognition that work alone has not been successful in reducing poverty or preventing families that do move off welfare rolls from having to return to public assistance. Weak state economies and high unemployment rates have made finding living wage, permanent jobs for welfare recipients all the more difficult. In response, some states have instituted programs, or are in the process of passing new legislation to allow greater access to post-secondary education for welfare recipients. These states are following the example of states that earlier instituted higher education programs, and are seeking new ways to help families achieve self-sufficiency. These changes are also coming in response to the organizing and activism of concerned community advocacy groups and low-income citizens.

Recent research continues to demonstrate the importance of education for finding and keeping a job and for raising families out of poverty<sup>43</sup>. Programs which have been staunchly work-first in their approach have begun to reevaluate education as a necessary part of long term job retention strategies. In addition, many states have found that although they have significantly reduced the welfare roles, poverty and economic insecurity remain a concern, even for those who are working.<sup>44</sup> In response to

economic conditions in their own states and the evidence of the limitations of welfare programs which do not address the educational needs of recipients, the states discussed below have either instituted or proposed new programs, or have allowed for changes in existing programs to allow TANF recipients to participate in higher education.

## Vermont

Because it initially received a federal waiver, Vermont has only recently had to implement its TANF reform plan. Vermont's Welfare Restructuring Project (WRP), a welfare reform demonstration project, ended in June of 2001. Prior to that date, Vermont enacted new policies to integrate the WRP with the state's new TANF plan. In 2000 Vermont passed Act 147, An Act Relating to Assisting Families to Attain Self-Sufficiency, which renamed the state's Aid to Needy Families with Children program, Reach Up. According to the provisions of Act 147, "separate state programs will be created for adults in post secondary education, parents who are not participating in work activities for the required number of hours when necessary to meet federal work participation requirements, and single parents with a child under the age of two (subject to a 24 month life time limit)." <sup>45</sup>

The Post-Secondary Education Program for Low-Income Parents was enacted in 2000 and, as of September 2001, 310 TANF eligible students were enrolled in post-secondary education.<sup>46</sup> Using Maine's Parent's as Scholars as a model, Vermont allows TANF eligible and other low-income parents to attend two- or four-year degree programs. While enrolled in the program, students receive cash assistance and other support services. TANF recipients who enroll must be pursuing their first bachelors degree, however, if they have another degree they must demonstrate that this degree does not enable them to pursue a job under current labor market conditions. Like their counterparts in Maine, students in the PSE program receive additional support to facilitate school attendance including a stipend for books and fees (other than tuition) and transportation. For those who are eligible, child care assistance may be provided through the Department of Social and Rehabilitation Service's child care program. The program would also bar parents from receiving benefits for five years after graduating from college.

**Key Legislation:** Act 147, *An Act Relating to Assisting Families to Attain Self-Sufficiency*, text of bill is available from the Vermont Legislative Bill Tracking System, for the 1999-2000 session at <http://www.leg.state.vt.us/database>. For more information see the Vermont Welfare Reform Page at, <http://www.dsw.state.vt.us>.

## Missouri

Recently, advocates and activists in Missouri helped secure the passage of state legislation which authorizes post secondary education as an allowable work activity for the full five years of welfare eligibility. Prior to the passage of this legislation, education and training was limited two years as determined by the Missouri Department of Social Services policy.<sup>47</sup> The new policy places no time limit on education and includes Adult Basic Education, English as a Second Language, vocational job training and Associates and Bachelors degrees. Students must be enrolled in a program that leads to a degree or vocational certificate and make satisfactory progress toward the degree. Class time and study time can be counted toward meeting weekly work activity requirements. Adopted in late 2001, the provisions have only been in place for a short time and the degree to which welfare recipients are informed of and are allowed to exercise their right to education remains to be seen. However, many Missouri advocates have called for a similar expansion in access to post-secondary education at the Federal level, rather than the limits which are part of the House reauthorization bill.

**Key Legislation:** HB 1574, *Temporary Assistance*, provisions of law available at <http://www.dss.state.mo.us/wreform/hb1547.htm>. Further information about Missouri's welfare programs is available at <http://www.dss.state.mo.us/wreform/index.htm>.

## New Mexico

In January of 2001, it became possible in New Mexico for TANF recipients to attend college through a new program called Education Works. TANF recipients can attend post secondary education for up to 24 months. Students must be enrolled full-time and participate in a total of 20 hours of work activity which will include education, training, study time and work experience. One and a half hours of study time are allotted for each hour of class time and work experience can include paid employment, work study, internships and practicums. Students who receive income from paid employment in addition to their participation in education, may also qualify to receive additional supportive services through the Federal TANF grant to cover child care, transportation and education related expenses. New Mexico's new program combines the use of MOE funds and TANF funds, limits unrelated work requirements for students and defines school activities as work for the purposes of meeting participation requirements.

**Key Regulation:** Title 8, Chapter 102, Sec.610.12, *Education Works*. Text of the regulation is available at <http://www.nmcpr.state.nm.us/nmac/cgi-bin/hse/homepagesearchengine.exe>.

Further information about New Mexico's welfare programs is available at :

<http://www.state.nm/hsd/isd.html>.

## Oregon

In Oregon, efforts are currently underway to institute a new post-secondary education program modeled after Maine's Parents as Scholars Program. Previously, public assistance recipients in Oregon could enroll full-time in a two- or four-year degree program, but would only be able to complete two years of education due to the two-year cap on receiving benefits. Oregonians can only receive benefits for 24 months in an 84 month period.

Under Oregon's current TANF policy, recipients can participate in up to 18 months of higher education or vocational training under certain specific conditions. Oregon's welfare to work program, JOBS, allows recipients to participate in education through the "self-initiated education or training program" (SIT). If not already involved in work activity under JOBS, and if enrolled in an education or training program for 30 days, making satisfactory progress and can complete the program in 18 months, welfare recipients can be enrolled in school, if they can show that they are unqualified for existing jobs paying at least \$1,118 a month.

New legislation has been drafted and a coalition of activists, policymakers and scholars are organizing support for the legislation. Under the terms of the proposed legislation, no more than 1% of the total TANF caseload can be enrolled in post-secondary education, however, the new measure marks a significant change in policy, providing two full years of post secondary education and other support to facilitate participation in education.

**Proposed Legislation:** HB 2450, *Relating to Temporary Assistance to Needy Families Program* (Parents as Scholars). Text of the bill is available at <http://www.leg.state.or.us/searchmeas.htm>. Further information is available at <http://www.orstudents.org/pas2003.pdf>.

## West Virginia

Since 1997, activists and advocacy groups in West Virginia have been fighting to expand educational opportunities for TANF recipients in their state, and within three years they have achieved two key victories. West Virginia passed two key measures which made significant changes in that state's welfare reform efforts. Spearheaded by the organizing efforts of West Virginia Economic Justice Project, the West Virginia Welfare Reform Coalition and groups such as the Direct Action Welfare Group (DAWG), put pressure on the Department of Health and Human Resources (DHHR) which led to the creation of a separate, state-funded program, the West Virginia Education Program (WVEP). In addition, in 2000, the state senate passed a law revising the West Virginia Works program to allow education and training to count as work activity for WVWorks participants.

Changing the state definition of work activity is critical because it affords TANF recipients in the WV WORKS program greater access to education. Perhaps more important, however, the state developed a new program, The West Virginia Education Program (WVEP), which set aside funds for a separate state program to support welfare recipients to attend college for up to four years. Under this program, class and study time would count toward meeting most work requirements. West Virginia Works limits education to 12 months; however, after completing the first year of education, TANF students can apply to transfer into the WVEP program to complete their education. While in the WVEP program, the clock for the five year time limits would stop and students would receive the benefits and services they would otherwise be eligible for as a TANF recipient.

**Key Legislation:** Information about West Virginia's welfare program, WVWORKS is available at <http://www.wvdhhrs.org> and WVEP at <http://www.wvdhhr.org/ofs/Policy/IMManual>. See also, West Virginia Code Section 9-9-1 at [http://www.legis.state.wv.us/state\\_code](http://www.legis.state.wv.us/state_code).

## Conclusion

According to an analysis by the Center for Law and Social Policy, under the provisions of the TANF reauthorization bill passed by the House in 2002, 40 states currently have education and training programs that would no longer be allowable under the House version of the bill.<sup>48</sup> Furthermore, if states did choose to continue these programs, they would face federal penalties. CLASP also notes:

At least 23 states allow more access than is countable toward federal work rates under the current law, something that is possible only because of the caseload reduction credit.

If in reauthorization Congress increases effective work participation rates by changing the caseload reduction credit and the rates themselves, and does not extend the time that training counts toward work rates, then these 23 states are also likely to have to reduce access to post secondary training and education.<sup>49</sup>

The states threatened with having to reduce access to higher education include most of those highlighted in this report.

Eliminating existing and effective programs fought for in the states would be a devastating set back not only to the policy makers and advocates who have worked to create innovative programs to address the complex needs of families moving from welfare to self-sufficiency, but also for welfare recipients themselves who have already taken bold and courageous steps toward lifting their families out of poverty by enrolling in college. These programs have been highly successful not only in raising wages and eliminating the need for welfare, but also in improving participants' self-esteem and their sense of their capacity to exercise full social, political and economic citizenship.<sup>50</sup>

Education is critical to long term employability and self-sufficiency and increasingly, even those who did not initially view education as a key component in welfare reform strategies have been forced to reconsider. Mixed strategies emphasizing education have been effective in many cases. This is especially true in the context of state economic crises and rising national unemployment rates.

One of the original goals of the 1996 welfare reform was to encourage state experimentation and for states to develop their own response to the welfare needs of its citizens. Those states that have chosen education as a path to reducing welfare and poverty, can point to the success of their own programs as well as to research by others, which demonstrate that access to education can be a critical component of effective policy. States that have developed post-secondary education programs, especially those that have done so recently, want to be able to continue them and give them a chance to have an impact.

Some of the post-secondary education programs highlighted in this report, such as Bridge to Hope in Hawai'i, Education Works in New Mexico, and Post Secondary Education Program in Vermont are just beginning to get up to speed. Others, such as the Parents as Scholars program in Oregon are still in the planning stages but are gaining momentum. These programs were established several years into PRWORA to address concerns which arose when work-first efforts failed to adequately address the complex needs of welfare recipients in their states. It would be a huge set back to force states to undo programs which are successful, working and are wanted by their constituents. To change welfare programs to such an extent that successful and effective programs such as Maine's Parents as Scholars program would no longer be possible, would also run counter to the logic of state experimentation and devolution which was so central to the 1996 legislation.



## MODEL COLLEGE PROGRAMS

What do public assistance recipients need to stay in, perform well, and graduate from college? Students who are poor, single, *and* receive public assistance face obstacles to successful and meaningful participation in higher education that makes them distinct in comparison to most students. A primary impediment involves the rules imposed by the TANF and the welfare bureaucracy. These rules vary by state, and sometimes by county and municipality, and frequently impose additional responsibilities and obligations upon already burdened students. Family responsibilities, domestic violence, learning disabilities, psychological illnesses, and periods of homelessness combined with poverty can make attaining economic viability through earning a post-secondary education credential very difficult.

The reports *Creating Social Capital at CUNY*<sup>51</sup>, *The Access Project's Year End Report*<sup>52</sup>, and *Parents as Scholars: Education Works*<sup>53</sup> show that focused post-secondary education programs that provide intensive services to single parents who receive public assistance increase retention rates and the likelihood of timely graduation. The reports also show that public assistance recipients who participate in focused programs earn grade point averages and graduate at rates comparable to their non-public assistance receiving peers. They fare much better than recipients who are not in targeted programs.

It is important to emphasize two key points. First, of the programs discussed here, most involve work-related activities and thus do not contradict the widespread view that work requirements must be central to welfare reform. Hybrid programs that mix education with work and other experiences have been shown to have a positive impact on earnings and (lowering) program costs, and it would be a mistake to fail to point out the work experience dimension in the programs profiled in this report. Moreover, earning a post-secondary credential requires the same behaviors and responsibilities as work, such as being on time, dressing appropriately, problem solving, and completing assigned tasks. Special higher education programs for low-income people tend to be discriminating in targeting work activities that are relevant to the participant's educational and occupational goals and family responsibilities. Secondly, as we have emphasized, the higher education option is not for all low-income people and institutions; it is a choice. But, where there is a sizable population of welfare recipients (or low-income parents) who might benefit from earning a higher education credential, it is crucial that there is an option to do so.

This section of the report details many model programs for public assistance recipients. Based on our investigation in dozens of states of college programs devoted to the needs of public assistance recipients, our criteria for a model program include but are not limited to:

**Subsidies or supports for**

- ▶ childcare
- ▶ transportation
- ▶ textbook, uniforms, classroom, and/or lab materials
- ▶ emergency financial support

**Links to departments within the home institution and to a range of outside organizations**

- ▶ working relationship with local welfare bureaucracy
- ▶ on-campus welfare bureaucracy liaison or case manager
- ▶ job and/or work placement capacities, including work study; the program should be in synch with local labor market needs
- ▶ connections to local industries, businesses, and nonprofits
- ▶ working relationship with the college's registrar and financial aid offices

**Faculty and/or counselor participation**

- ▶ provides special courses, seminars, training, and/or workshops on topics of interest to public assistance recipients
- ▶ provision of a strong academic curriculum
- ▶ mentoring (faculty can be recruited for this as a part of meeting their service requirements)
- ▶ has a strong counseling component that assists students in solving problems and planning and meeting goals

**Provide a range of skills and education options**

- ▶ provide remedial and basic skills training for those who need it
- ▶ prepare qualified and self-initiated students for bachelor degrees
- ▶ offer a range of degree or certificate options compatible with local labor market needs
- ▶ require work activities that enhance educational experience and employability
- ▶ a reliable assessment component that aids in matching students' skills and interests with appropriate education and training options
- ▶ prepare students to continue their education (e.g., transfer to a four-year school)

The services that a program can actually provide a recipient may depend upon state or county welfare rules and the resources and policies of the higher education institution. Importantly, as some of the exemplars described below demonstrate, there are creative ways to address these issues.

Our effort to categorize the programs presented here has not been exhaustive and is intended as a general guideline. Some of the programs listed could fit in more than one category. For instance,

COPE has developed into a welfare-to-work and occupation-oriented program, while at the same time it is nearly system-wide, i.e., there are COPE programs on ten of the City University of New York's community and senior college campuses.

The programs we report on are oriented toward degrees and certificates, and not short-term post-secondary education programs. Programs that assist students in getting associates and bachelors degrees are predominant. However, we do include a few programs that focus on granting vocational certificates where the credentials are to good-paying jobs that offer career and social mobility. We have not included some of the newer efforts to tailor the provision of post-secondary education to the needs of the working poor and/or single parents, such as career pathways and modularized programs. While these ventures are laudable and should be incorporated into the kinds of programs we explore, many of the new trends cluster around a few service occupations or single industry where wages are likely to be low, such as health care aid, customer service, or human services. Colleges, welfare departments, and other stake holders must be responsible for finding employment partners that pay good wages and provide benefits. Nonetheless, recipient participation in these college programs familiarizes them with the post-secondary education experience and can lay a foundation for continued learning. We have examined but not included innovative, but short term (16 weeks or less) programs focused on job training such as

- ▶ ***SOLVE***, a collaboration between Idaho State University, the Idaho Department of Labor, and the Idaho Department of Human Welfare
- ▶ ***Steps to Success***, a collaboration between the Oregon Adult and Family Services, Mt. Hood and Portland Community Colleges, the Oregon Employment Department, and other private and nonprofit partners
- ▶ ***Access to Better Jobs***, a collaboration between Sinclair Community College, Dayton, Ohio, and the Montgomery County Department of Social Services

In this section we present a liberal arts oriented programs, college-based, occupation oriented welfare-to-work programs, a community-based organization program, and six system-wide programs.

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## LIBERAL ARTS-ORIENTED PROGRAMS

Earning a bachelors degree is one of the most effective ways to achieve social and economic mobility. A liberal arts curriculum provides a flexible and solid foundation for critical thinking, participatory citizenship, and life-long learning. Together, bachelors degrees and liberal arts-oriented studies offer public assistance recipients and low-income students a reliable means to acquire the earning power necessary to lift them and their family out of poverty. Although critics charge that four- year programs can involve short-term opportunity losses (sometimes defined as a type of “cost”) and may take longer to provide returns, in the long run, the return is more lasting and dramatic, compared to associate degrees or vocational certificates.

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**HAMILTON,  
NEW YORK**

### **THE ACCESS PROJECT**, Hamilton College, Clinton, NY

The ACCESS Project is a multifaceted demonstration project at Hamilton College that assists and prepares low-income parents in their efforts to enter into career employment by completing college degrees and gaining career employment experience. Hamilton College is a small, selective, liberal arts college located in central New York. More than half of Hamilton College students graduated in the top 10 percent of their high school class.

“In our regular assessments, students also report increased self-esteem, confidence about their futures, increased motivation and an ability to focus, and a better work ethic. . . .”  
–ACCESS Project Year End Report, Adair 2002

Participants in ACCESS receive social service, academic, and career support. They also receive post-graduation and career placement assistance. ACCESS targets low-income parents who are TANF eligible because of their income status, but not all participants are TANF recipients. Ninety-eight percent of ACCESS students are first generation college students, 90% received public assistance at some point in their lives, and 80% of them reported multiple obstacles (e.g., learning disabilities, lack of child care or transportation) to earning a degree and/or participating in work.

The ACCESS Project provides a liberal arts education and social services within a career-oriented

framework. ACCESS partners with social service providers, the private sector, government agencies, foundations, and legislators which furnish the ACCESS program and its students with a wide range of supports and opportunities. The program places emphasis on public service commitments, citizenship, and social responsibility.

ACCESS is built upon the understanding that low-income parents need vital supports to get off to a good start in their college education and careers. Social service supports include assistance in securing child care, health care, transportation, housing, food, and family crises assistance. Academic supports include tutoring, skill building workshops, and career support includes internships and career counseling.

The ACCESS Project began in January 2001, with a cohort of 17 students, followed the next semester by an incoming class of 16, and a third semester class of 17. The students are faring well, as testified by their retention rates, grade point averages, career employment experiences, and family well being (see table 3 below). ACCESS students are recruited through a range of institutions that includes churches, childcare centers, social service agencies, and schools. They must then go through a selection process characterized by its careful scrutiny. In their first year in the ACCESS Project, students are prepared for transition into college. They are introduced to the basic skills they need to survive in and complete college, and receive eight Hamilton College credits for this first year. Their classes are small (16 students maximum). Near the end of the first year students received support in applying to Hamilton or other colleges in the region. Students work in "pre-career positions" for up to 30 hours per week (New York Assembly Bill A08475 defines internships as meeting TANF work requirements), enabling them to earn a salary and gain work experience that enhances their long term career employability.

**Table 3**  
**Retention & Grade Point Average of ACCESS Students**  
**Compared to Hamilton College Student Body**

Term	Retention Rate, 2001	Grade Point Average	
		ACCESS	Hamilton Student Body
1 <sup>st</sup>	80%	82.7%	
2 <sup>nd</sup>	91%	82.5%	83.5%*
3 <sup>rd</sup>	100%	80%	

**Source:** Adair 2001/2002.

\* this figure is for the first and second terms

The ACCESS Project utilizes a regional network of colleges and universities. This allows participants

a range of education options (e.g., Syracuse University, Herkimer County and Mohawk Valley Community Colleges). Some students choose to remain at Hamilton. In order to determine the impact of the ACCESS Project on participants, the staff has developed a comprehensive program evaluation that concentrates on academic, personal, family, and career outcomes.

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## NEW YORK, NEW YORK

**WELFARE TO CAREERS**, Medgar Evers College-City University of New York, Pace University, and Metropolitan College of New York (formerly Audrey Cohen College), New York, NY

Drawing upon their observations of the negative impact of TANF on public assistance recipients pursuing higher education credentials, a group of educators decided to collaborate in creating Welfare to Careers (WtC), a pilot project aimed at providing educational opportunities to parents whose income is 200% or less of the federal poverty level. By defining eligibility this way the program is available to public assistance recipients and poor parents who do not receive TANF services (WtC actually has few welfare client students). The project focuses on getting people out of poverty by providing a college education, work experience, and career training.

Participants in WtC are encouraged to pursue two- or four- year degrees, depending on their career aspirations. WtC is built on the understanding that their target population has needs different from those of the traditional student, and focuses on providing intensive support services (see text box)

which includes identifying problems and implementing intervention strategies. Program eligibility requirements are: New York City residency; US citizenship (or TANF qualified non-citizen); must be a parent whose child is less than 18 years old; gross income below 200% of the poverty level; not receiving TANF cash assistance.

### Support services provided by WtC include assistance with:

- ▶ tuition and books
- ▶ child care
- ▶ transportation
- ▶ career and academic counseling
- ▶ job placement
- ▶ tutoring
- ▶ access to after-school programs for children.

Welfare to Careers offers a different model in that it is a collaborative venture between three institutions, Medgar Evers College-CUNY, Pace University; and Metropolitan College, which have different missions and serve somewhat different populations. Medgar Evers and Metropolitan College provide the educational services while Pace University monitors and studies the overall effort. The WtC project aimed to enroll 180 students during the pilot period (90 at Medgar Evers and 90 at Metropolitan), and is currently full (182 students). Welfare to Careers is implementing some creative strategies that are likely to expedite the program's goals and enhance the successes of the target population. For example, Metropolitan College offers a three-year BA in business or human services. Medgar Evers College offers at least ten majors to WtC participants. While the program has set as a goal, a retention rate of 65%, so far it is exceeding this measure with a rate of 75 percent. Welfare to Careers works with the welfare bureaucracy and community agencies to provide additional services such as personal financial workshops, career preparation workshops, income tax preparation, and empowerment workshops (self-esteem, time management).

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## BEREA, OHIO

**SPROUT** (Single Parents Reaching Out for Unassisted Tomorrows), Baldwin-Wallace College, Berea, Ohio

SPROUT, located at Baldwin-Wallace College, a four-year liberal arts school, provides young single mothers with an environment and services that allow them to complete their college degrees in four years. Participants receive child care, counseling, and year-round on-campus residence housing. SPROUT aims to keep single mothers off the welfare rolls by enrolling them in college and setting them on the path to successful careers. The program is conceived of as assisting two generations at once: single mothers and their children.

Participants in SPROUT must pay for room and board, while their children live free. Four mothers, each with one child, share a large house. There are three houses able to accommodate 12 mothers. Plans are underway to open another

### **SPROUT Graduates have gone on to become**

- ▶ elementary school teachers
- ▶ a lawyer
- ▶ a chemist
- ▶ social workers
- ▶ an aide to an Ohio state legislator
- ▶ a computer programmer
- ▶ college staff members

house, which would lodge an additional five mothers and children. Housing expenses are paid through student loans and financial aid, with students owing about \$10k when they complete their degrees; qualified participants sometimes receive scholarships and owe nothing. There are no rent and utility charges during the summer months. On-campus child care is near the living residences, and when child care slots are filled, optional child care facilities are within a ten minute drive. Living with other SPROUT participants is one way in which important life lessons are taught. Abiding by house rules and organizing and carrying out chores provide lessons about cooperation and coordination. These lessons are relevant to work place experience.

Pell grant and state financial aid resources are vital means of financing participation in SPROUT, and because most participants are low-income, they receive sufficient financial aid. Other sources of potential financial support for SPROUT participants include Ohio's displaced homemaker funds and private grant money. SPROUT is well-connected to important departments within Baldwin-Wallace College, such as the institution's Learning Center and financial aid office.

The SPROUT Program was founded in 1990. Forty-seven women have been accepted since the program's inception; eight are current participants and 22 have graduated (six participants graduated outside the program.) SPROUT participants can choose to major in a number of liberal arts and science disciplines. Twice a month, face-to-face counseling sessions help women define their career goals and stay on track toward this end. Parenting counseling is also provided.

Vital to the success of SPROUT is its Advisory Board (composed of faculty, administrators, and Baldwin-Wallace staff) and a solid working relationship with the county welfare bureaucracy. Still, the Director plays the pivotal role in keeping the program operating efficiently, like so many other programs covered in this report. None of the SPROUT participants currently receive TANF cash assistance, although child care and health insurance are provided through the welfare bureaucracy. Through a special grant the program is able to provide each SPROUT participant \$100 for each of the nine months they are enrolled in school.

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**SAN FRANCISCO COUNTY,  
CALIFORNIA**

## **CalWORKs STUDENT-PARENT SCHOLAR PROGRAM**, San Francisco County, California

The CalWORKs Student-Parent Scholarship Program was created to assist San Francisco public assistance recipients who are in college, but who have come to the end of their 24 month welfare-to-work activities, and need and want to continue their education.

The CalWORKs Student-Parent Scholarship Program (CSPS) allows public assistance recipients to continue their education without a loss of income. Instead of continuing benefits, the student is awarded a financial aid grant. The grant does not affect Program eligibility. Participants are also

Between June 2000 and December 2002, 54 people have been referred to the CalWORKs Scholar Program. Forty-one have received grants.

eligible for child care (referred to as Stage 2 child care), and subsidies for books and transportation. The participant remains eligible for food stamps. Other supportive services include counseling, peer support, and mentoring provided by a professional experienced in the participant's career area. The CSPS Program has incorporated lessons from Maine's Parents as Scholars program.

The CSPS Program is the product of a collaborative venture. The San Francisco county Board of Supervisors and the San Francisco Department of Human Services created the program with input from student-parent advocacy groups. However, the Citizenship Scholarship Foundation of America (CSFA) and the student-parent advocacy organization, LIFETIME also participate in administering the program by serving as contractors. LIFETIME handles CSPS Program applications, referrals, and eligibility issues, while also providing peer mentoring services. The CSFA verifies eligibility with the appropriate education institutions, and administers the financial grant disbursement to the student. Although the program is a positive collaborative effort, participation requires considerable paperwork.

Information about the CSPS Program is provided by caseworkers and disseminated through flyers posted in places frequented by welfare recipients. Eligibility criteria for participation in the CalWORKs Student-Parent Scholarship Program are:

- ▶ prior (not current) recipient of CalWORKs cash assistance, or child(ren) still receives cash aid
- ▶ 24 month time out is looming, or has already occurred
- ▶ San Francisco County residence

- ▶ enrollment in a degree program at an accredited college or university
- ▶ maintenance of a minimum 2.0 GPA
- ▶ participation in graduate school possible if permission is granted by the DHS Executive Director

**Contact Information:** Hope Kamimoto, CalWORKs WtW Consultant, C002, 2-170; (415) 557-5742; [hope.kamimoto@sfgov.org](mailto:hope.kamimoto@sfgov.org) ; Or Contact LIFE TIME, 132 E. 12<sup>th</sup> St., Oakland, CA 94606; 510-452-5192

A nearly identical program, the **San Jose Student Parent Scholarship**, exists in Santa Clara county (Contact Cecilia Nunez-Massara, Management Analyst, Santa Clara County social Service Agency, San Jose, CA ; [nunez-massara@ssa.co.santa-clara.ca.us](mailto:nunez-massara@ssa.co.santa-clara.ca.us) ; (408) 491-6600

**DENMARK,  
SOUTH CAROLINA**

**PROJECT SINGLE MOTHERS ACHIEVING RE-EDUCATION & TRAINING for SELF-SUFFICIENCY (SMARTS),** Voorhees College, Denmark, South Carolina

Project SMARTS is predicated on the fact that many women with children who lack education credentials are consigned to “. . . unemployment, dead-end jobs, poor housing, low wages, and an insecure future.”

“Through Project SMARTS young women prepare to enter professional careers of the 21<sup>st</sup> century in a workforce that will expect job candidates to have at least a bachelors degree.”

Project SMARTS, located at Voorhees College, a historically Black college, provides comprehensive support to single mothers. Voorhees College was founded in 1897 by a former student of Booker T. Washington, Elizabeth Wright. Her aim was to develop a school for young African Americans. The school boasts a student-faculty ratio of 17-1. The Project is a collaborative venture between the South Carolina Department of Social Services and Voorhees College.

Applicants to Project SMARTS must meet the admission criteria for both Voorhees College and the Project. Admission requirements for Voorhees college include submission of proof of completion of high school (diploma or GED certificate), relevant test scores, and transcripts. For Project SMARTS,

participants must be defined as: low-to-moderate income; 18-30 years of age; caring for children between the ages of one and ten years; maintaining a minimum highschool GPA of 2.5. Participants must pursue a Bachelors degree. Options include BA and BS degrees in several fields that span the social sciences, mathematics, business, and the natural sciences. Participants must apply for financial aid, but have access to a range of support services which include subsidies for books, tutors, child care and housing. Housing is limited and offered on a first come-first serve basis. Other services associated with Project SMARTS include counseling (personal, academic, career, home ownership), job placement supports, and financial planning. For students who need it and are eligible, Project SMARTS assists them in accessing Medicare. The Project has developed relationships with two local nurseries which assist in delivering child care services. Project SMARTS also has an early Head Start component for parents who have children between the ages of one and four years.

**Contact Information:** Pamela Tomlin; Voorhees College, Project SMARTS, P.O. Box 678, Denmark, SC 29024; (803) 703-7089.

**LAWRENCEVILLE,  
VIRGINIA**

## **SINGLE PARENT SUPPORT SYSTEM**, St. Pauls College, Lawrenceville, Virginia

The aim of the Single Parent Support System program is to break the cycle of poverty by helping single parents acquire higher education credentials, while simultaneously furnishing a safe and stable environment for the parent's children. The Single Parent Support System (SPSS) assists single parents seeking bachelors degrees. Participants must attend school full-time, year-round, and complete their degrees within three to four years. However, they are provided the support to make this intimidating effort possible.

Student participants have access to a range of resources. There are single parent-focused tutorial and personal counseling services, as well as access to childcare and housing. Qualified applicants cannot have more than two children, nor children younger than two months or older than nine years. Students must apply for financial aid, and must meet the regular admission's criteria of the college.

Participants in SPSS are required to participate in a seminar oriented toward the program goals and the needs of single parents, but otherwise take the same courses and must meet the same standards as other St. Paul's Students. Students can pursue a range of business, behavioral science, humanities, and teaching-oriented majors. Students receive strong mentoring support. Each department has a faculty

advisor attached to the SPSS who advises SPSS students. Single parents participating in SPSS have performed comparably to the general St. Paul's student body.

St. Paul's College, a small private, church-based, historically Black College, was founded in 1888 as Saint Paul's Normal and Industrial School. The college emphasizes responsible citizenship, integrity, resourcefulness, and scholarship.

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## COLLEGE PREPARATION PROGRAMS

Some programs focus on preparing public assistance recipients and low-income single parents for college and provide intensive immersion in activities that get people ready for success in college. These programs are typically college-based and allow participants to matriculate at the host institution or move on to nearby two and four year institutions of higher education.(The Access Project could also fit this category).

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**La CROSSE,  
WISCONSIN**

### **SELF-SUFFICIENCY PROGRAM**, University of Wisconsin-La Crosse, La Crosse, WI

The Self-Sufficiency Program (SSP) serves the function of preparing TANF recipients and poor parents for two and four year degrees at area colleges. The program is unique in its woman-focused educational orientation, designated *Women's Ways of Knowing*. The idea is to introduce the students to women's perspectives on and experience with research, theory construction, and the connection between theory and lived experience.

#### **The Mission of the Self-Sufficiency Program**

"...to extend the availability of higher education to low-income parents by preparing them to be successful college students."

Self-Sufficiency Program requirements include an income of less than \$15,000 a year and a high degree of self-motivation. The SSP offers two semesters of college preparatory training for low-income parents, many of whom are the first members of their family to attend college. Offered by and through the Women's Resource Center at the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse campus, participants meet for three hours once per week. The first semester prepares students to think, write, and read critically. The second semester involves short courses in various topical areas such as Math and Computers. The courses, however, do not provide credit, and thus do not offer the full "boost" that comes with beginning college with credits.

Support services include preparing students for college-related experiences such as the admissions process, financial aid, note taking, and stress and time management. Free child care is also provided.

Graduates of the program go on to area post-secondary education institutions such as Viterbo College, Western Wisconsin Technical College, and the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse. Many SSP graduates pursue liberal arts degrees, but they decide what path to choose. Any former SSP student or graduate can return to the program and take math and computer instruction should they need a refresher.

The SSP was created in 1988 and has weathered the uncertainties associated with the constant need to raise sufficient funds to keep the program operating effectively. Toward this end the SSP has instituted a Board of Advisors. An especially innovative idea developed by SSP staff has been to invite local legislators to a luncheon where they get to meet staff and student participants. Despite the endurance and proven success of the SSP, it was almost derailed by the implementation of welfare reform in Wisconsin. Enrollments declined sharply, but recently the number of participants has begun to grow, as women recognize the value of education to their earnings, mobility, and family well-being.

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## WELFARE-TO-WORK AND OCCUPATION-ORIENTED PROGRAMS

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The programs documented in this section focus on preparing participants for work in targeted industries and occupations. While these programs are focused getting people into jobs, they make higher education a vital part of their welfare-to-work effort. These programs allow for extended training and study; some programs require two years to complete. The programs are models because of the support services they provide and because of their collaborative relationships with various organizations.

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### NEW YORK, NY

#### **College Opportunity to Prepare for Employment (COPE)**, City University of New York, New York, NY

College Opportunity to Prepare for Employment's (COPE) did not begin as an occupation-driven program. It initially supported a range of options including pursuit of liberal arts degrees. Welfare reform and the administration of Mayor Giuliani narrowed its focus to vocational occupations.

COPE's roots are in New York State's implementation of the JOBS program. COPE is a special program for public assistance recipients who attend the City University of New York (CUNY). The CUNY system has 20 campuses, ten of which have COPE programs. Established in January 1993, COPE is the product of a collaboration between the City University of New York and the New York Human Resources Administration's Family Independence Administration (HRA-FIA).

A recent unpublished study\* of 210 graduates of the LaGuardia Community College (LCC) COPE Program found that all were employed except one. The exception was studying full-time toward a bachelors degree in Atmospheric Studies.

- 42% of associate degree holders were earning \$20-30k
- 31% of associate degree holders were earning more than 30k
- 26% of COPE graduates went on to get bachelors degrees
- 73% of bachelors degree holders earned more than 30k
- 18% of bachelors degree holders earned more than 40k
- 6% of COPE graduates went on the pursue Master's degrees

\* Research conducted by Dr. Audrey Harrigan, LaGuardia Community College, 2002

COPE's mission is to provide students with the “. . . best comprehensive support and services while helping them to successfully meet the relevant requirements of the Human Resources Administration.”<sup>54</sup> COPE's primary goal is to assist public assistance recipients in meeting the both New York's Human Resources Administration's FIA requirements under TANF and CUNY's degree requirements. This strategy augments public assistance students' efforts to graduate and attain economic viability through employment.

Provision of supportive services for public assistance recipients enrolled in CUNY colleges offering vocationally-oriented degree programs is the primary function of COPE. The HRA-FIA designated vocational and occupation degree programs are: accounting; business administration; dental hygiene; early child education; gerontology, medical laboratory technician; micro-computing for business; nursing; office administration and technology; paralegal training; practical nursing; public administration; and radiology technology.

COPE originally offered an array of degree options that included liberal arts majors and allowed students to pursue baccalaureate degrees. Under welfare reform the New York City's implementation of TANF through workfare and the Work Experience Program (WEP) eliminated support for liberal arts studies and the promotion of baccalaureate degree programs. COPE now supports only those students who are in approved vocational or occupational degree programs, and which provide, maximally, the acquisition of an Associate degree. Because of HRA-FIA and TANF rules, COPE places time limits on degree completion. Students must make satisfactory progress toward their degrees (e.g., minimum of nine credits during first two semesters, and 12 credits third and fourth semesters, 15 credits per semester thereafter).

The services that COPE provides include (services vary slightly by campus):

- ▶ registration assistance;
- ▶ academic advising;
- ▶ personal counseling, e.g., parenting, budgeting, domestic violence, life skills;
- ▶ workshops and seminars on topics of interest to public assistance recipients;
- ▶ childcare and car service referrals;
- ▶ tutoring referrals;
- ▶ employment counseling, job preparation (e.g., letter & resume writing), and job placement referrals;
- ▶ advocacy and assistance in meeting welfare department requirements;
- ▶ a “job lab” with computers, printer, fax machine, and job listings;
- ▶ an onsite HRA-FIA liaison.

Under current law as of 2002, public assistance recipients attending an approved CUNY college are

allowed to count all classroom, internship, externship, lab, and federal work study toward meeting the 35-hour per week work requirement for 12 months. Thereafter, only five hours can be counted toward work requirements. The remaining 30 hours are to be spent in the WEP. The WEP, however, does not provide much in the way of job skills that enhance employability or earning power. COPE has creatively addressed this obstacle by ensuring that WEP assignments are carried out on campus or nearby, and that the assignment does not conflict with the student's academic schedule. Currently, there are approximately 6,000 students enrolled in COPE

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**SAN ANTONIO,  
TEXAS**

**Project QUEST Inc.,** (Quality Employment Through Skills Training) Alamo Community College District, San Antonio, TX

Created in 1992, Project QUEST is an award winning post-secondary education-oriented workforce development program aimed at the needs of the working poor and the business community of San Antonio. Many of Project QUEST's participants are from the ranks of the unemployed and/or public assistance recipients.

The mission of Project QUEST is to prove that investment in long-term training for economically and educationally disadvantaged citizens is a sound public policy. Participants must meet income guidelines, have a GED or high school diploma, and find barriers to gaining employment. Trainees have up to two years to complete their programs.

The program's strengths lay in its focus on individual participants and its interactive relationships with community organizations and local businesses. Its focus is driven by employer needs, but

- ▶ Since 1993, Project Quest has enrolled more than 1800 participants
- ▶ More than 50% have completed their training and found jobs
- ▶ 2001 graduates earned an average of \$11.30 plus benefits
- ▶ Graduates can expect substantial growth in annual

only employers in industries and occupations that pay living wages and offer social mobility. Project QUEST targets specific occupations and industries and then networks with employers.

Project QUEST provides specialized training in occupational areas that promise living wage employment, such as nursing, aircraft maintenance, and computer programming. These jobs require capabilities that depend upon solid math and English skills; therefore, remedial courses in these areas are available. The program furnishes financial assistance with tuition and text books, transportation, and child care, and offers counseling in areas that participants might need, such as money management and work attitudes. Project counselors assist program participants in finding services and income support that they are eligible for, such as Pell Grants, housing assistance, Medicaid, and TANF.

Participants meet regularly with counselors to share information and experiences. Like other programs detailed here, Project QUEST is built on the assumption that the removal of obstacles to participation in higher education enables the disadvantaged to focus on staying in school and completing their degrees in a timely manner. Participants are expected to make course work their priority. An important part of the intake process involves using a proven assessment model that matches jobs and candidates.

The industry-specific focus of Project QUEST programs typically requires participants to have two years of schooling and training. Project QUEST closely collaborates with local businesses and employers to develop training programs that produce graduates that can meet their needs. For example, local aerospace, information system, and health care businesses work with colleges to develop appropriate curricula. By communicating with the business community Project QUEST planners have an up-to-date sense of what short-term job trends are.

Two community groups, Communities Organized for Public Service (COPS) and the Metro Alliance (an alliance of local Industrial Areas Foundation groups), developed the idea of creating an alliance between business and academia. The action grew out of recognition that San Antonio's job market was changing and local residents, especially low-income ones, were not prepared to fill some of the better paying jobs. The community groups reached out to local business CEOs to learn about their business needs, especially what skills they needed in their employees. Their next effort involved getting local colleges to buy into the alliance by providing education and training that met industry-specific needs. Initial financial support was sought from San Antonio City Hall (\$2 million raised) and then Governor Ann Richards (\$2.5 million). As of 2002 Project QUEST had an annual operating budget of \$3.5 million, the vast majority of which is provided by the city of San Antonio's general fund; funds also come from federal block grants and private funders. The City of San Antonio invests in Project QUEST because officials recognize that nearly a quarter of their population lives in poverty, and that the return on the investment will be a higher tax base and good role models (Project QUEST participants are required to live and work in San Antonio for two years after graduation).

In 1992 Project QUEST won an Innovations Award from the Ford Foundation and Kennedy School of Government-Harvard University. Elsewhere in Texas, programs similar to Project QUEST have

been created: in Austin, Capital IDEA, Project VIDA in the Rio Grande Valley and Project ARRIBA in El Paso. Another similar program, JobPath has been created in Tucson, Arizona.

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## BALTIMORE, MARYLAND

### **School Counts Welfare-to-Work Program**, Baltimore City Community College, Baltimore, MD

Between 1997 and 1998 Baltimoreans United in Leadership and Development (BUILD), in collaboration with other advocates and public assistance recipients, successfully worked to get a higher education option under TANF in Maryland. Their aims were to prevent already enrolled public assistance recipients from being

In 1997 there were 865 public assistance recipients enrolled in Baltimore City Community College. By early 1998 the number had dwindled to 335.

forced out of college by welfare reform, and to ensure that public assistance recipients continued to have access to post-secondary education options. The result, albeit limited, was the creation in 1998 of a two-year pilot project called School Counts at Baltimore City Community College which allowed those already enrolled in college to continue their studies. According to a February 1998 document released by the Office of the Governor, participants are allowed up to 24 months participation in School Counts.

School Counts is a collaboration between the Maryland Governor's Office, the Maryland Department of Human Resources, Baltimore City Department of Social Services (BCDSS) and Baltimore City Community College. In 2000 an agreement reached between the BCDSS, BUILD, and Baltimore City Community College allowed School Counts to continue and expanded recipient access by allowing recipients not already enrolled in college to join the program.

In order to participate in School Counts, qualified TANF recipients must have a high school diploma or GED, register as full-time students, and have enough time remaining under the five-year life time limit to get the desired education credential. There is a range of certificate and associate degree options for participants to choose from; Baltimore City Community College has more than 75 associate degree

and certificate programs.

In order to remain in the program participants must maintain passing grades and take a work study job after their first semester in school (no work is required during the first semester). Transportation (mainly bus passes), child care assistance, and class and lab supplies are paid for through a combination of BCDSS support and work study earnings.

Work study plays an important role in the School Counts program. It provides a source of income, work experience, and aids in fulfilling the work requirement. Work study earnings do not affect a person's TANF grant. The earnings are to be used for college expenses. Administrators have actively worked to make sure that work study positions allow for flexible scheduling around class and personal needs. Internships and classroom time also count toward satisfying work requirements.

**Contact Information:** Betty Cotton, School Counts Welfare-to-Work Program, Baltimore City Community College, Room 7, Administration Bldg., 2901 Liberty Heights Ave. Baltimore, MD 21215; (410) 462-8330; [Bcotton@bccc.state.md.us](mailto:Bcotton@bccc.state.md.us)

**RIVERSIDE,  
CALIFORNIA**

**NEW VISIONS**, Riverside Community College, Riverside, California

Established in 1999, New Visions is a pilot program created to prepare public assistance recipients for college and better jobs. It is remarkable because it is an outgrowth of the Riverside County Department of Public Social Services (RCDPSS) welfare to work program that has received rave reviews for its success in putting recipients to work. Evaluations of the RCDPSS work first and similar programs (e.g., Portland Community College) have been interpreted to mean that investment in education alone does not “pay,” while strategies that combine work and education show the best work outcomes. RCDPSS had to date, primarily defined education as limited to basic education, ESL and GED classes and not higher education. However, the RCDPSS came to realize that getting public assistance recipients into jobs does not necessarily mean moving them out of poverty. The New Visions program seeks to “prove that [post-

**New Visions Mini-Occupation Programs include:**

- ▶ nursing
- ▶ medical technology
- ▶ early childhood education
- ▶ corrections
- ▶ police dispatching
- ▶ human services
- ▶ office administration
- ▶ construction & manufacturing

secondary] education, guidance, and a supportive environment are an effective solution to government dependence.”<sup>55</sup>

New Visions is a collaboration between the Riverside Community College (RCC) and the RCDPSS. Initially the program required participants to work at least 20 hours per week, alongside the 24 weeks of academic instruction and support services, and then one to five months in a credit-bearing occupational mini-program (participants cannot move to phase II until they are working 20 hours per week). It was soon recognized that the work requirement greatly complicated the lives of the participants, especially in regards to coordinating child care, school, work, and transportation. This issue is being addressed by experimenting with the provision of work study and non-work study jobs on campus, and work near to campus.

The New Visions program has two primary sections. The first phase of the program provides remedial education in math, English, and computer literacy. Unfortunately, these are not credit-bearing courses. The second phase of the program involves enrollment in occupational mini-programs which prepare participants for entry-level jobs in occupations that offer earnings growth and/or career advancement. The courses are flexible and provided in blocks that are repeated several times a day to fit with the tight schedules of participants.

Eligibility requirements for New Visions are: must be a GAIN (Greater Avenues to Independence, a workfare-oriented program established before the welfare reform legislation) recipient; have a high school diploma or GED; and work 20 hours per week. For now participants are randomly selected from among those who participate in the New Visions recruitment seminar.<sup>56</sup>

The program provides a range of support services that include child care, financial aid, job placement, work study, book loans, bus passes and parking permits, training courses, counseling and other services. New Visions is funded through the RCDPSS and a special state program for welfare recipients at California community colleges. New Visions coordinates its program with the county’s economic development agency and local business leaders to keep abreast of labor market developments.

**Contact Information:** Greg Aycock, Coordinating Counselor, New Visions, 4800 Magnolia Avenue, Riverside, CA 92506; (909) 222-8648; [greg.aycock@rcc.edu](mailto:greg.aycock@rcc.edu)

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## COMMUNITY-BASED ORGANIZATION COLLEGE PROGRAMS

A growing number of community-based organizations (CBOs) are recognizing that post-secondary education can be a valuable asset to the communities they serve. CBOs can also play an important role in getting information to TANF recipients and those who are TANF-eligible since they often interact directly with these populations.

An obvious potential benefit of having CBOs provide post-secondary education support is their location in the community where people live, and the capacity to provide other supports such as child care, counseling and mentoring, and access to computers, among other things. While many CBOs and non-profits are focused on providing adult basic education, English as a second language, and computer and other short-term training, there are some that provide valuable support for post-secondary education. One program is chronicled in the following section.

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### DORCHESTER, MASSACHUSETTS

**One Family Scholar Project**, Wellspring House, Gloucester, MA, & Project HOPE, Dorchester, MA

Two community-based organizations (CBOs), Wellspring House and Project Hope, have collaborated to create a unique higher education-focused program, One Family Scholar, that targets both formerly homeless and low-income women. At least half of the program participants have experienced homelessness. The One Family Scholar project places priority on accepting women with dependent children whose access to higher education is limited.

Wellspring has longstanding experience in adult education while Project Hope has long addressed family homelessness. The organizations are committed to enhancing the efforts of low-income families to become economically viable through the acquisition of the skills, education, and credentials needed to

Project Hope provides scholarships to low-income and/or formerly homeless women in the amount of \$10-15,000. The scholarship is used toward

- ▶ tuition, books, and fees
- ▶ transportation costs
- ▶ child care costs
- ▶ assistance with living expenses
- ▶ internet access & computer technology

pursue a career. The project is also a response to Massachusetts' restrictive TANF policies on higher education participation.

Through a fairly comprehensive scholarship, the program provides supports which include: financial aid for books, tuition, child care, living expenses, and mentoring. Another component of the project is a year-long leadership development training program focused on imparting advocacy skills to participants so that they can take part in dialogues on family policy. Participants are drawn from diverse ethnic, racial, and social backgrounds, with roughly one-half being drawn from inner city Boston and the rest from the suburban region of Boston's North Shore.

One Family Scholar began in 2000, admitting 14 women. During academic year 2001-2002 the number of participants increased to 25. Currently, during the 2002-2003 school year, there are 35 One Family Scholar participants. Participants can select from a number of career paths, which range from vocational-oriented occupations such as automotive repair to computer technology, to more traditional college disciplines like nursing, business administration and public policy. Most career paths require enrollment in either two or four year programs. Fellows are enrolled in colleges appropriate to their needs and goals; while community and technical colleges are predominantly represented, there are students enrolled at the University of Massachusetts-Boston. Funding for One Family Scholar comes from private foundations.

Applicants to One Family Scholar Project are drawn from the network of Boston area agencies known as the One Family Campaign. This advocacy coalition is focused on education, training, housing, and leadership development. Applicants are carefully screened and must submit an application, personal essay, and be interviewed by project staff as a part of the selection process. Screened applicants must then be reviewed by a selection committee.

Great emphasis is placed on leadership development. The academic year begins with a leadership retreat facilitated by experienced leadership consultants. At least two all day leadership sessions are held during the remainder of the academic year. The One Family Scholar project is in the process of developing a speaker's bureau that will provide fellows with additional advocacy experience. Fellows also attend and participate in conferences, such as the McAuley Institute's *Women as Catalysts for Social Change* (September 1999). The mentoring component of the project trains mentors who are then paired with participants. They meet at least once a month. Mentors are typically in the position to assist with arranging internships and allowing fellows to "shadow" them at work.

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web site: [www.onefamilycampaign.org/about\\_us/one\\_family\\_scholars.htm](http://www.onefamilycampaign.org/about_us/one_family_scholars.htm).

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## SYSTEM-WIDE MODEL COLLEGE PROGRAMS

Most of the programs featured in this section are the product of state legislation that reformed TANF to widen access to and participation of public assistance recipients in post-secondary education. All of the programs reported on below are connected to a statewide community college system or a community college and senior college system. Some states, such as Kentucky and New Mexico, are offering bold new post-secondary education models that can be accessed by people who are TANF-eligible, but not receiving TANF. Thus, income becomes the determinant of who gets access, broadening the prospective pool of applicants beyond public assistance recipients to include the unemployed, working poor, and displaced workers and homemakers. This is consistent with the growing recognition that TANF funds are being spent on an array of people broader than the category of cash assistance recipients<sup>57</sup>. Funds are increasingly being spent on people whose needs are similar to those of TANF recipients. Broadly defined, this includes promotion of parental self-sufficiency and assistance to needy children.

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### CALIFORNIA

#### **Extended Opportunity Programs and Services (EOPS), California Community Colleges System**

California provides an exemplary statewide model of targeting and assisting public assistance recipients and low-income students who are seeking college degrees, vocational certificates, or transfer options as a means of attaining economic viability. California's TANF program, CalWORKs, has included the community colleges in its welfare reform plan, allowing services like child care, work study, job placement and development, and curriculum development to be more readily accessed by recipients who attend the community colleges. Yet, a county-level welfare bureaucracy means that there is a great degree of variance in the kind of education and training that are allowed.

EOPS could serve as a national model for supporting students who have the distinctive needs associated with low-income single parents. EOPS was established in 1969 by the California State Legislature (Senate Bill 164 (Alquist)) to provide services to low-income and

#### EOPS services include:

- ▶ counseling & advisement
- ▶ financial assistance
- ▶ monitoring of academic status and progress
- ▶ conducting outreach & recruitment

educationally disadvantaged community college students to aid in their enrolling and succeeding in acquiring post-secondary education. It reaches out to a wider range of students than programs that only target public assistance recipients. All of California's 108 community colleges have an EOPS program. EOPS is required by state law to provide services that go "above, beyond, and in addition to" what is provided to the general student body.

Individual campus EOPS programs often go beyond state mandates to develop and implement exemplary services. For instance, at Cerritos Community College (Norwalk - Los Angeles County), EOPS personnel created a collaborative partnership with the college's student services department to identify courses EOPS students were having the greatest difficulty with, and to provide them additional educational attention. Cerritos EOPS also provides free psychological counseling on marital and family matters. EOPS at Grossmont College (El Cajon - San Diego County) collaborated with the campus book store to implement an electronic book service that expedites the disbursement of book funds. The College of the Canyons (Santa Clarita - Los Angeles County) EOPS has developed an effective peer advising system that delivers service according to the student's status (e.g., new, probation, high GPA).

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## **Cooperative Agencies Resources for Education (CARE), California Community College System**

Cooperative Agencies Resources for Education (CARE) is coordinated and administered by the Chancellor's Office of the California Community Colleges. The program evidences an institutional commitment to developing programs that strengthen the persistence and retention of students who are academically high risk. CARE was founded in 1982 through legislation (Assembly Bill 3103-Hughes) to assist "severely economically disadvantaged single parents break the cycle of welfare dependency."<sup>58</sup> It began as a product of collaboration between the California Community Colleges, the Department of Social Services, the Employment Development Department,

### CARE target population:

- ▶ Low-income
- ▶ Educationally disadvantaged, academically high risk (EOPS includes, but does not target parents; *whereas CARE serves only single heads of household*)
- ▶ Single parent
- ▶ TANF recipient (EOPS includes but does not target this population; *whereas CARE serves only TANF recipients*)
- ▶ 98.5% of CARE recipients are single

county welfare departments, and campus EOPS programs. CARE's mission is to assist long-term (receipt of welfare for at least one continuous year) single head of household AFDC recipients in becoming socially and economically mobile.

CARE is a supplemental service component of EOPS that is intended to augment and enhance the resources of the community colleges by furnishing auxiliary services and financial assistance to a segment of the EOPS student population: educationally disadvantaged single, low-income head of household parents who receive public assistance.

CARE emphasizes the development of peer support networks which enable program participants to share experiences, resources, and information. Depending on the needs of a campus' CARE population, the program functions to coordinate a range of services and so collaborates with other college programs, county welfare departments, legal services, welfare rights organizations, housing authorities, women's shelters, and a host of other programs and institutions. CARE provides services above and beyond EOPS:

- ▶ Grants and allowances for education-related expenses (childcare, transportation, meal ticket vouchers, and textbooks and school supplies)
- ▶ Counseling and advisement
- ▶ Additional educational support services which vary by campus
- ▶ Classes, seminars, workshops and student conferences focused on the unique educational and personal needs of CARE students

Students who participate in the CARE program can choose several higher education options: vocational certificates or licenses, associate degrees, and transfer to four year colleges. Nearly half of all CARE students desire to transfer to four-year institutions. CARE students have been shown to perform as about as well in school as other California Community Colleges students<sup>59</sup>. Their persistence and retention rates are nearly the same as non-CARE students, and their grades are comparable to non-CARE students. An earlier study of CARE data showed that nearly one-third of the participants in the 14 largest CARE programs earned a 3.0 cumulative GPA or higher.<sup>60</sup>

CARE began with 15 programs in 1982-83 and grew to 44 programs by 1990-91. Currently, CARE services are provided on all 108 of California's community college campuses. The program reflects the commitment of the state of California to widen access and equity in higher education to its most disadvantaged population. The commitment can be seen in the continual expansion of the program, along with the provision of the finances needed to operate it, which have included enrollment growth funds and cost of living adjustments.

CARE aims to improve the retention, persistence, graduation and transfer rates of its target population. However, in fiscal years 2002-2003 and 2003-2004, EOPS and CARE face significant budget cuts, along with all segments of education in California and hence, a potentially sharp reduction in funding, which will adversely affect service delivery.

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## MAINE

### **Parents as Scholars** (PaS), University of Maine System

Parents as Scholars (PaS) is a statewide program that assists the participation of TANF eligible people in two and four year college degree programs.

Maine was the first state to reform TANF's restrictions on participation in higher education. Earlier Maine law allowed public assistance recipients up to two years of education and training.

“A PaS graduate working 40 hours a week at the median wage of \$11.71 per hour will earn \$8,757 more per year than a welfare leaver without a college degree working 40 hours a week at the median wage of \$7.50 per hours” (Smith et al. 2002:9).

Reformers creatively charted a policy course that had yet to be tested. Advocates built support for and found resources to fund a Maintenance of Effort program (MOE) for TANF recipients who wanted to get college degrees. MOE programs are primarily funded by state and not federal dollars, and this allows for flexibility in creating TANF programs. By utilizing MOE provisions, Mainers were able to develop a post-secondary education-focused program for TANF recipients: PaS. The MOE approach offers one way to create post-secondary education programs that define going to school as meeting work requirements, and do not endanger a state's efforts to meet its work participation rate requirement. PaS was created through the legislation, Chapter 1054-B.

Because PaS is a MOE program, it is not regulated by the criteria of Maine's TANF. PaS provides cash assistance equal to what a person would get if they received TANF, and support services. Support services include assistance with child care, transportation, and if necessary, assistance with auto repairs. In order to participate in PaS an applicant must: 1) be TANF eligible; 2) not have a marketable

bachelors degree; and 3) receive a skills assessment. The skills assessment must show that the person's current skill level will not allow them to earn at least 85% of the state's median wage for their family size and that the family will significantly benefit from getting a degree.

**Table 4**  
**The Impact of Higher Education on the Earnings of TANF Recipients**  
**Compared to Welfare Leavers Without Degrees**

<b>Outcomes</b>	<b>Parents as Scholars Graduates</b>	<b>Maine Welfare Leavers Without Degrees</b>
Median Hourly Wage	\$11.71	\$7.50
Employer-Sponsored Health Insurance	71.4%	56.1%
Paid Sick Leave	60.7%	36.9%
Paid Vacation Time	67.9%	57.1%

**Source:** Smith, Deprez, & Butler 2002.

For the first 24 months PaS participants are allowed to attend school full-time. After 24 months participants must work at least 15 hours per week. However, campus work is available and career-related work-site experience is encouraged. Moreover, class time, study time (one hour of class time is considered equivalent to 1.5 hours of work), and training count toward work requirements. Importantly, participation in PaS does not count against the TANF federal time limits or work requirements because it is funded by state money.

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**HAWAII**

**Bridge to Hope**, University of Hawai'i System

Bridge to Hope is a Hawai'i Department of Human Service (HDHS) student employment program for TANF recipients attending one of the University of Hawai'i's ten campuses. It is a product of a

collaboration between the community, the university and the state welfare agency. Hawai'i's TANF program is known as First to Work (FTW).

First to Work provides support for child care, transportation, and education-related supplies, and offers some tuition assistance.

The Hawai'i Department of Human Services developed a new education policy for First to Work (FTW) participants, making it easier for participants to balance work, education, and family responsibilities. FTW Education policy mandates : 1) full-time students meet only 20 hours of program activities per week (e.g., 12 credit hours + 4 hours of paid employment + 4 hours other work = 20 hours); 2) part-time students meet 32 hours of program activities per week.

Participants must apply for financial aid and must enroll full-time in order to get a waiver that can reduce their work requirement. Participants have several education options, depending upon their goals: adult education, vocational education, or post-secondary education. Although the HDHS emphasizes a work attachment model, full-time participation in higher education is a component of the overall policy. Hawai'i FTW orientation now includes the college option as a part of the intake and assessment process.

Bridge to Hope (BtH) was implemented in fiscal year 2000-01 and was initially run on a volunteer basis by committed university faculty, program directors, and counselors. Each campus volunteer is a contact person who knows the basic rules of FTW and BtH. The volunteers coordinate each campus' student employment efforts and job searches. Currently, a single system-wide coordinator works part-time to ensure that there is continuity between campus programs. The system-wide coordinator is also a liaison between the colleges and the state of Hawai'i's Department of Human Services and advocates for FTW students.

Hawai'i had to reform its policies on education and training to support the college option (see section on legislation). Hawai'i is one of the few states that has an explicit higher education policy that is a part of its TANF plan. Advocates, HDHS, and University of Hawai'i officials noted that enrollment of public assistance recipients in college had been decreasing steadily, and welfare reform exacerbated the trend. The coalition took action to develop a higher education option that could coexist with TANF and FTW. They worked to develop legislation and regulations that allotted full-time students a total work requirement of 20 hours per week which combines credit or classroom contact hours and a minimum required four hours of paid employment. To make meeting this requirement this easier, BtH has worked to facilitate employment on campus.

Bridge to Hope is a pilot program that is in its second year of operation; it is not yet institutionalized. As such, it is a work in progress. Enrollment has steadily increased since the implementation of the program. As of March 2002 there were 463 FTW participants pursuing higher education, up from 294 in 2000. One hundred of the current participants are employed through the program. During fiscal

years 2001-03 the Hawai'i legislature funded BtH with an initial investment of \$150,000 for each year (SB 3123 for FY 2000-01; SB 1236 for FY 2001-03).

Currently advocates, led by the Welfare and Employment Rights Coalition, are preparing to approach the Hawai'i State Legislature in 2003 to request continued funding. With additional funding BtH plans to create a full time staff coordinator position, establish campus-wide program guidelines, and strengthen linkages between the program, the University of Hawai'i, and the Hawai'i Department of Human Services.

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## KENTUCKY

**READY TO WORK**, Kentucky Community and Technical College System, Kentucky

Kentucky made a remarkable about face in its stance toward welfare policy on higher education. Implementation of TANF in Kentucky immediately began to squeeze recipients out of college. Welfare activists and advocates banded together and wrote their own legislation that would have restored the college option the state had under the JOBS program, and would have provided up to four years of education and training. Support for the legislation was found in the state legislature, but the four-year provision desired by the citizen's coalition was expunged through negotiation. Initially the Governor's Office, notable politicians, and the state welfare bureaucracy did not support the legislation. However, the Governor changed his position, signed the legislation in 1999, and the state welfare bureaucracy came to be an ardent supporter of the higher education option.

Finally, up to two years of participation in post-secondary education was agreed upon. For this period the work requirement is exempted with education meeting the requirement. After this period, work study continues to count toward meeting work requirements. KTAP (Kentucky Transitional Assistance Program, Kentucky's welfare program) students are allowed a modest annual income disregard (up to \$2,500) that does not affect their KTAP grant.

Since then, Kentucky Governor Paul Patton has launched a public awareness campaign, *Education Works*, to highlight the value of lifelong education, and to encourage everyone with a high school credential to pursue college or technical training. Kentucky is among the top five states in spending

TANF and state funds on education and training.<sup>61</sup> The state now exercises the TANF provision that allows for expenditure on state definitions of education and training. In 2000 the state spent 4 percent of its welfare money on education and training, considerably higher than the national average, making Kentucky one of only five states to spend more than 3 percent of their budget on education and training. Kentucky's state budget currently contributes the funds needed to assure that necessary education and training funds are made available to at least seven percent of its KTAP recipients as a part of its effort to enhance self-sufficiency.

An outgrowth of the dialogue between public assistance recipients, advocates, and government officials on access to post-secondary education was the development of a partnership between the Kentucky Community and Technical College System (KCTCS) and the state welfare bureaucracy, the Cabinet for

- ▶ During Spring 2002 there were 1,348 identifiable KTAP recipients attending KCTCS colleges
- ▶ This figure reflects a 30% increase since 1999
- ▶ The RtW retention rate is 90%
- ▶ RtW students averaged a GPA of 2.63 (Spring 2002)
- ▶ Nearly eight percent of KTAP recipients are attending college, which is greater than the percentage of the general Kentucky population attending college
- ▶ As of Spring 2002, 237 RtW participants had moved on to four year institutions

Families and Children (CfC). Ready to Work (RtW) is a programmatic effort to assist KTAP recipients who attend Kentucky Community and technical colleges in successfully acquiring certificates and associate degrees, as well as offering short-term training and support in getting diplomas. They can choose from a range of options, from nursing to business technology. Ready to Work participants are provided the option of pursuing programs that allow transfer to four year programs. This option has been expanded with eight four-year colleges, including the University of Louisville and the University of Kentucky, now having CfC Ready-to-Work contracts.

The RtW program is now woven into a statewide network of community college districts that includes 27 KCTCS colleges. The KCTCS departments of financial aid are vital to the success of the program as they contribute their own funds to match work study aid. RtW initially focused on furnishing additional resources for work study slots which KTAP recipients filled. This was understood to assist them in meeting their TANF work requirements. But work study also now serves the function of providing work experience by attempting to place students in private and public sector positions relevant to their area of study.

The scope of RtW is now comprehensive and offers a range of support services: tutoring, mentoring, counseling, job development, job placement, and post-placement services. The program has a strong assessment component that aids recruitment and retention. Other vital support services include transportation and child care (provided through the CfC and other agencies). There are seventeen

coordinators (two are part-time) who function as liaisons between the students, colleges, local case managers, and CfC. Of Kentucky's sixteen community college districts, only one, Henderson District, does not have a RtW program.

Ready to Work has actively recruited KTAP recipients, which is evidenced by the growth in the number of students served since 1999 (70% increase). Recruitment and retention responsibilities are shared by RtW coordinators, KTAP case managers, and local CfC offices. Importantly, last year CfC extended qualifications for RtW to TANF eligible students. RtW won a Model Program award from the American Association of Women in Community Colleges.

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## NEW MEXICO

### **Education Works Cash Assistance Program** (EWCAP), New Mexico Department of Human Services

In 2000, the New Mexico Department of Human Services (NMDHS) presented the Education Works program regulations to the state's Welfare reform oversight committee. Unlike the other programs discussed in this section the Education Works Cash Assistance Program is not located on college campuses; rather it provides a regulatory framework for TANF recipients who pursue the college option. Importantly, EWCAP is available to people who are TANF eligible but do not receive TANF.

EWCAP is a state-funded program that does not use federal TANF dollars. Rules governing who can participate are:

- ▶ must enroll as a full-time student (based on the higher education institutions' definition)
- ▶ participants cannot already have a bachelor's degree
- ▶ participants can earn only one degree through EWCAP
- ▶ participants can take part in EWCAP for up to a total of 24 months
- ▶ participants enrolled in New Mexico Works cannot be simultaneously enrolled in EWCAP

In some ways EWCAP builds upon the model of Parents as Scholars in Maine. Participants who are allowed into EWCAP receive cash benefits equal to what they would get through the state's TANF program (New Mexico Works). They are required to apply for all financial aid for which they are qualified. Other benefits

potentially available to EWCAP participants are food stamps and Medicaid; some participants with earned income may receive support services associated with the TANF block grant. (Their earned income would probably be work study.)

Applicants seeking entry into EWCAP must first be assessed by the NMDHS, and complete a work participation agreement and an Individual Responsibility Plan (this outlines the applicant's potential to succeed in higher education and how the credential will assist getting full-time, paid employment). EWCAP participants must provide the NMDHS with proof of final grades at the end of each term, as well as evidence regarding application for and receipt of financial aid. Participants are required to maintain a 2.5 GPA each term in order to remain in EWCAP, and must meet class attendance requirements (if students do not get a 2.5 GPA they have a one semester probationary period to return to the standard). EWCAP students are required to work between 20 and 30 hours per week (depending on whether they are single or married). Work study, internships, laboratory or field work, practicums, training, and any paid employment all count toward fulfilling work requirements. Each hour spent in class counts as one and one-half hours toward meeting work requirements. Participation in EWCAP does not count against New Mexico's 60 month TANF receipt limit.

Education Works started in December 2000, growing to about 400 cases by October 2001. Reports indicate that TANF clients leaving the program with degrees got jobs with higher salaries and benefits than those lacking degrees.

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## MODEL ORGANIZATIONS

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The 1996 welfare reform legislation restricted the states' capacity to determine how much post-secondary education to allow qualified recipients. Local coalitions and organizations have formed throughout the country to counter the effects of this policy and to urge new legislation that will promote effective measures whereby welfare recipients can access the education they need to move permanently off welfare. In some cases, individual organizations or coalitions already existed and were welfare advocates. These groups mobilized to include welfare reform on their agenda. This section provides profiles of organizations which serve to assist people on public assistance to negotiate the welfare requirements while pursuing a college degree and work to effectively change the legislation to increase welfare recipients to post-secondary education.

The following criteria have guided our selection of model organizations:

- ▶ Groups founded by and/or largely staffed by people with experience of being welfare recipients. In some cases, both criteria apply
- ▶ Organizations that create alliances with academic departments, college administrative offices (e.g., financial aid), employers, state agencies, state legislators and legal aid services
- ▶ Organizations that are not only monitoring but are actively involved in ongoing activism and advocacy
- ▶ Organizations that have had successful outcomes at the state and local levels
- ▶ Organizations that train welfare recipients for leadership and advocacy roles, and encourage welfare recipients to give public testimonies at hearings and town hall meetings

We acknowledge that many organizations meet the above criteria but are not included in this report. However, space limitations have forced us to limit our coverage significantly.

The organizations profiled here highlight the successes that can be achieved as a result of organizing, advocacy, and coalition building. Collaboration among groups concerned with social justice, children and family policy, poverty eradication and women's empowerment gives a stronger public voice to the higher education option. Organized groups are better able to influence policymakers. Despite the clear benefits associated with organizing, coalition-building and consciousness-raising efforts, our research on ways to promote the college option for TANF recipients shows that there remain significant barriers to organizing

low-income students and building coalitions.<sup>62</sup> Students receiving public assistance are often unaware of new laws; caseworkers are either not familiar with new laws themselves, or unwilling to educate recipients of their rights. In addition to lack of knowledge among recipients, welfare advocates face the difficulty of trying to convince policy makers of the devastating effects of welfare reform on recipients' college enrollment, without sufficient data to support their claims. Perhaps the most significant barrier to getting low-income students organized is the overwhelming burden that their poverty presents them with. The sheer volume of the problems associated with being poor often obscures the benefits of organizing to effect structural, long-term change.

Despite these difficulties, however, the current profiles of model organizations illustrate our findings from earlier work: there are certain strategies that creative welfare advocates and student organizers have employed to bring about change. These include being vocal about the value of a college education to facilitate economic mobility, disseminating information widely among the target population, getting welfare recipients themselves involved in organizing tasks and in presenting demands for new legislation, and mobilizing resources among interested allies. The groups profiled in this section of the report have utilized these strategies and more. The profiles have been written to highlight their efforts and successes, and those lessons learned from efforts that fell short of the targeted outcome, but yielded valuable information on the process.

We begin by highlighting the grassroots organization, Low Income Families Empowerment Through Education.

## CALIFORNIA

### **LIFETIME: Low-Income Families' Empowerment Through Education**

LIFETIME is a grassroots organization whose origins can be traced to a group of single mothers who regularly met in the kitchen of the organization's founder, Diana Spatz, to discuss their plight as welfare-receiving students trying to complete their degrees. Under welfare reform caseworkers were telling them that they could not complete their degrees *and* continue to receive public assistance. The message was clear: drop out of

#### **Investing in Higher Education Lasts a LIFETIME!**

Of former welfare recipients with a college degree:

- ▶ 90% earn average wages of \$25,000/year
- ▶ Up to 11% earn over \$30,000/year
- ▶ 23% go on to get graduate degrees

*From LIFETIME Website: <http://www.geds-to-phds.org>*

college if you want to continue receiving public assistance. These single mothers challenged the policies through a range of tactics. For example, they studied the welfare regulations and showed caseworkers exactly what the rules said and what was left open. Caseworkers were often so unfamiliar with the rapidly changing rules that they actually were unaware of the options for participating in post-secondary education. LIFETIME members put up flyers on Oakland and San Francisco area campuses to bring the higher education issue to the attention of the thousands of student recipients. And they focused on strategies that led to Alameda and Contra Costa counties becoming state leaders in implementing supportive TANF higher education policies. The group incorporated as a nonprofit organization and have worked statewide and nationally to reform TANF higher education policy. They have proven themselves adept at building coalitions with a range of civil society groups and at gaining political support from Democrats and Republicans.

Through leadership development, advocacy training, and political education, LIFE TIME works with student parents to organize for public policies that help parents move permanently off welfare and out of poverty. LIFETIME offers low-income parents funding for school expenses, the opportunity to learn money management skills, instruction on their rights under the CalWORKs program, information about scholarship programs, career experience through college work study positions available at LIFE TIME, and the guidance of peer advocates who, through their own experience, provide help in dealing with the welfare department and achieving education goals.

LIFE TIME has been involved in numerous successful campaigns to help women get their education, despite welfare reform. Past efforts include having served as a resource to Assembly member Dion Aroner to have higher education and training count as a welfare-to-work activity. In addition, LIFETIME members successfully advocated for homework and study time to be counted as an allowable work activity in several Bay Area counties. Current projects include the "Education Works!" campaign, an effort to make poverty reduction a policy goal in the upcoming round of welfare reform and "The Student Parent Scholar Campaign," whereby student activists in San Francisco and Santa Clara counties advocate for the creation of county scholarship funding to help CalWORKs and other low-income parents earn college degrees.

On February 22, 2002 LIFETIME partnered with several advocacy groups to sponsor a town hall meeting at the Chico City Council Chambers. The town hall meeting was attended by Wally Herger, chair of the House Ways and Means Subcommittee on Human resources and more than 200 of his constituents. At what has been described as the most largely attended event ever held at the City Council Chambers, families on welfare gave testimony about their experiences under welfare reform. The powerful testimonies provided first-hand accounts of the effects of the welfare reform. Specifically, student parents testified of the difficulties involved in meeting the current requirements while attempting to persist in their education efforts and fulfil their parenting roles. Local and national publications reported on the event, describing it as an outstanding and effective strategy used to raise public awareness and inform policy makers. LIFETIME members who participated in the event described the experience as personally empowering, to have the

opportunity to give voice to their personal experience and to know that they spoke for millions of women throughout America who are just like them. As one staffer declared, “People need to know, and I was helping to get the word out!”

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## NEW YORK

### Coalition for Access to Training and Education (CATE)

Families United for Racial and Economic Equality (FUREE) is a multiracial, woman led membership organization made up of low-income and no-income workers. Most of FUREE’s members are receiving public assistance, and are predominantly women of color. A founding member of the Coalition for Access to Training and Education (CATE), FUREE worked with

We are organizing to affect the welfare system so that all people’s work is valued and all people have the right to not only choose their own destinies but to earn the economic means to live out those destinies.

From FUREE’s website

other pioneer members, Welfare Rights Initiative, Welfare Reform Network, and the then Legal Aid Society to introduce the Access to Education and Training bill, Intro #93. CATE member organizations base their work on the expertise of women on public assistance. Other community advocacy organizations who comprise CATE are the Welfare Law Center, ACORN, Community Voices Heard, Community Food Resource Center, the New York Immigration Coalition and the Urban Justice Center (formerly Legal Aid Society).

The Coalition was formed as an outgrowth of the member organizations’ work with women on welfare, and the realization that policies put in place by the administration of Mayor Rudolph Giuliani were severely restricting women’s access to education, and did not provide them with opportunities to work toward economic security. For example, women who attended Beacon Center Programs were limited to attending classes only two days each week. Women complained that they were being talked down to by teachers at certain centers, and that they were not being trained in English proficiency or being adequately prepared for earning a GED. To bring public attention to these injustices, FUREE organized a take-over of the offices

of Seth Diamond, Deputy Commissioner of the Human Resources Administration (HRA), following which the women who had complaints about their Beacon Centers were transferred. There was little change, however, in the quality of the training offered. In 2000 CATE formed to draft and introduce Intro #93, the CATE Bill, that would count hours spent in education and training (including homework) toward the welfare work requirement and allow welfare recipients 15 business days to find an education or training program.

CATE members were hopeful that the bill would have passed late in 2001. However, after the disaster of September 11 the CATE Bill was no longer a priority in New York City's legislative agenda. In January 2002, the bill was reintroduced, sponsored by Bill DeBlasio and Gifford Miller. The coalition is anticipating a third hearing, during which they expect the bill to pass. According to Ilana Berger, "We know that this is just the first phase of the battle. We are committed to do the work leading to them putting the law into effect."

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## Welfare Rights Initiative

Welfare Rights Initiative is a student activist and community leadership training organization, located at Hunter College - City University of New York (CUNY), that promotes access to education and training for families supported by public assistance. WRI is staffed and driven by women college students who have firsthand experience of public assistance. WRI gives voice and visibility to the positive role models that are mostly women raising families in poverty.

"In 1995, 28000 welfare recipients were enrolled at the various City University of New York campuses. Since Giuliani's WEP program took effect, that number has dropped to under 8,000 . . . Faced with being forced to drop out, students organized." Organizing, Issue #24, July 2001.

Launched in 1995 at the Hunter College Center for the Study of Family Policy, WRI has grown out of three troubling aspects in the debates over welfare reform: the absent voice of welfare participants; the negative stereotypes of poor women that dominate decision-making, and the failure to envision a public policy that enables advancement out of poverty. WRI believes it is necessary for those who have firsthand experience of poverty to be included in the design of a better welfare system and a broader, humane social policy.

Recent changes in welfare policy make it nearly impossible for women supported by public assistance to

access education and training programs. Since 1996 more than 23,000 students in the City University of New York (CUNY) alone have been forced to drop out of school because of new “workfare” laws. There remain approximately 5,000 students at CUNY who receive public assistance and who attend college full time in spite of poverty and obstacles put in their way by the welfare system. WRI has created several means to engage these students in proactive education and community organizing strategies. By offering college credit, connecting participants to civic leadership opportunities and providing peer inspiration and support, WRI helps people move from being victims of the welfare system to becoming agents for change.

WRI’s programs are strategically designed to make it feasible for women to shed the inflicted shame of poverty and welfare, to gain economic independence, become effective representatives of their communities, and contribute to creative systems level change. WRI seeks to infuse the voices of women with firsthand experience of poverty into relevant program and policymaking processes. WRI models the open, inclusive, democratic decision-making process it aims to influence in the broader public policy arena.

WRI’s work encompasses five program areas: public education, legal advocacy, peer social service delivery, legislative organizing and community leadership training. Programs and services are strategically coordinated to achieve two goals: to cultivate WRI’s grassroots organizing base; and to build coalitions among individuals and groups who have the potential to move its mission beyond the grassroots level.

- ▶ At the core of WRI, a COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP TRAINING program provides college credit and equips students as organizers, trainers and agents of empowerment on college campuses and in their own communities. WRI is currently training their eighth cohort of enthusiastic women students in WRI’s intensive, two-semester Community Leadership program.
- ▶ A LEGAL ADVOCACY project, run jointly by WRI student leaders with students of CUNY Law School. The program has provided legal advisement to insure continuous matriculation for 1,800 students who would otherwise have been forced out of college and into a dead-end workfare activity.
- ▶ STUDENT LEGISLATIVE ADVOCACY promotes student voices in public policy decision-making. After building a statewide coalition among advocacy groups, CUNY/SUNY college presidents and conservative community and business leaders, WRI achieved a tremendous victory when the New York State legislature passed its Work-study and Internship Law. The law counts work-study and internships as work activity and permits countless students to pursue a college degree as a means to economic security.
- ▶ The WRI SPEAKERS BUREAU engages students who have come to recognize and value their firsthand poverty expertise to testify at public forums and hearings, conduct classroom presentations and workshops throughout the city and state.

- ▶ SHARED HOPES EMPOWERED (SHE) is expanding WRI's membership constituency by including high school girls who might not otherwise recognize a pathway to leadership or an opportunity to pursue college as a route out of poverty. SHE trains campus-based leaders as trainers, to help build bridges for girls to recognize their authentic voice and rightful inclusion in the public-policy decision-making that determines their life chances. SHE aims, in part, to enhance WRI outreach and impact.

WRI is demonstrating that mobilization from the bottom up remains a tremendously important strategy for social change, especially when resources are dedicated to the hard work of training, organizing and empowering students receiving public assistance to advocate for themselves and others for systems level change. WRI was involved in getting an internship and work study bill passed in June 2002 (renewed for two more years in 2002). The legislation allows internships and work study assignments to count toward fulfilling workfare obligations.

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## MICHIGAN

### Coalition for Independence Through Education

In Michigan, a statewide group of educators, researchers, advocates, student parents, and college administrators make up the Coalition for Independence Through Education (CFITE). CFITE advocates for welfare recipients' access to post-secondary education as a means toward self-sufficiency. Initially, Michigan's Work First requirements included no allowance for post-secondary education besides vocational training to be counted toward work requirements. CFITE worked alongside other advocacy groups to get the 10-10-10 program approved by legislature, whereby 10 hours each of class time and study time would count along with 10 hours of work to meet the 30-hour requirement.

#### **FIA and Work First Message about Education:**

"It was more important for me to work at a \$6 an hour job for the rest of my life than to get an education that was going to get me off welfare forever."

*Low-income Student Survey respondent.*

*See full report at <http://www.umich.edu/~cew/cfite.html>*

In February 2002, the Coalition for Independence Through Education authored a report titled, Access and Barriers to Post-Secondary Education Under Michigan's Welfare to Work Policies: Policy Background and Recipients' Experiences. The report details Michigan policies on post-secondary education for low-income parents receiving public assistance and the effects of these policies on student parents in that state. The report contains results of the Low Income Student Survey (conducted by the Center for Civil Justice in conjunction with CFITE) and recommendations for improving Michigan's Work First Program.

The Survey was completed by ninety-eight student parents throughout Michigan's post-secondary system, all of whom received need-based assistance from Family Independence Agency (FIA)-administered programs. Results of the survey indicated that an overall lack of information and negative messages about education as a means to achieve self-sufficiency were deterrents to participation in education and training. Respondents, more than half of whom attended college at least part-time, revealed that the struggle of complying with work requirements while pursuing a college degree negatively impacted their academic performance and parenting abilities. To illustrate the result of these difficulties, 28% of respondents reported having to drop out of school because they couldn't meet work requirements and go to school at the same time. Respondents were either misinformed: 18% were told by their Work First orientation leader that higher education could not be counted as work activity; or uninformed: more than 80% reported that their FIA and/or Work First caseworkers did not mention counting education hours toward their work requirements.

In the report, CFITE demonstrates the significant economic benefit to the state and to welfare recipients that can be achieved when the state invests in post-secondary education for welfare recipients. In addition, they recommend that recipients' access to high quality, licenced child care be promoted and expanded, and that both FIA and Work First agencies improve the delivery of information regarding education options.

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## KENTUCKY

### **Kentucky Welfare Reform Coalition**

The Kentucky Welfare Reform Coalition was instrumental in the drafting, amendment, and passage of HB 434, a comprehensive bill that supports TANF recipients in the pursuit of a college degree. Under the provisions of this legislation, recipients of K-TAP (Kentucky's TANF program) may participate in post-secondary education without meeting additional work requirements, for as long as the activity is countable

under federal law (currently twelve months), and as long as they meet the educational institution's standard of satisfactory progress.

Following the enactment of the bill, the state TANF agency expanded the twelve months to twenty-four. After the 24 months, K-TAP recipients are required to participate 30 hours a week in a combination of work, work-study, practicum, or internship in order to continue post-secondary education. Ten of the 30 required hours may be spent in education activities.

The Kentucky Welfare Reform Coalition credits its success on two key factors. First, the member organizations were a diverse group, consisting of community-based organizations working on a range of social justice issues, representatives from universities, technical and community colleges, faith-based communities, and legal advocates. This broad-based participation helped build widespread interest in and understanding of the issue, eventually leading to broad support for the bill in the House and Senate. Second, a number of K-TAP recipients worked with the Coalition in the drafting of the bill. K-TAP participants identified the issues and named the policies that needed to be put in place to support their access to higher education. In addition, they gave personal testimony about the effect of welfare reform on their lives at meetings organized by the Coalition participants in several locations throughout the state.

HB434 also requires the state TANF agency, the Cabinet for Families and Children, to notify recipients of their option to pursue education and training, including higher education. Supportive services for student recipients include childcare, transportation, payment for school supplies, car repairs, and fees for registration, financial aid applications and student activities.

Kentucky is recognized as one of the leaders in providing access to post-secondary education in support of welfare recipients' move toward self-sufficiency. Advocates within the state acknowledge that, given the constraints of the TANF legislation, Kentucky made some progressive choices. Anne Joseph, director of the Kentucky Task Force on Hunger, one of the founding organizations of the Coalition, remarks, "I know of individuals who have encountered problems in the local offices, so implementation of the legislation still has to improve over time. We're not arbitrarily handing out bouquets, but the state has shown a strong commitment to higher education."

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## **Women in Transition**

“A very big mis-perception is that people don’t want to learn, that welfare recipients don’t want to better themselves. That’s just absurd.” So ends an article by Brian Gomez titled “Welfare overhaul not welcome,” published in the Lexington Herald-Leader on June 19, 2002. The quote is attributed to Jennifer Jewell-Hudson, director of the Women in Transition program, an organization of TANF recipients and other low-income women who work to foster just social welfare policies and increase opportunities for families.

Ms. Jewell-Hudson was one of about thirty women who attended a women’s studies lecture on welfare and women in poverty, held on the campus of the University of Louisville in 1998. Another woman attending that lecture, Lory Anne Griffy, stood up and shared her knowledge of efforts in the Kentucky General Assembly to allow KTAP recipients to satisfy their work requirements by attending college with the group. She also spoke on the need for policy to address larger issues of poor women going to school. Following the passing of the law, Ms. Griffy worked with the Women’s Studies Program at University of Louisville to develop the “Women in Transition” intern/scholarship, which enabled women to fill the gap between the twelve hours of work-study students were allowed and the twenty hours of work required. Jennifer Jewell-Hudson was one of the first recipients of the WIT award; she finished her undergraduate studies and completed a master’s degree on welfare.

Organized by Ms Griffy, the intern/scholarship recipients became a peer/mentor support group for Kentucky Transitional Assistance Program students who were moms pursuing a post-secondary education. The group named themselves Women in Transition. Since then, WIT has continued to meet monthly and has branched out to include all low-income women, regardless of educational goals, and has moved off campus to encourage more participation of those not attending college. Early activities include attending conferences on welfare reform issues, testifying before legislative subcommittees in Frankfort, and being interviewed by local newspapers and by the Cabinet for Families and Children.

Women in Transition is in the process of developing their organization. They recently created a board of directors and formalized committees to work on their focus issues. As part of their organization-building efforts, WIT has formulated a budget and fund-raising plan, and has submitted three grants to seek funding. With no paid staff and dedicated, effective volunteers, WIT has made substantial progress. They collaborate with other organizations like the Women’s Studies Program at University of Louisville to empower and organize poor and low-income women to work toward social change and to inform them about community resources. Other areas of advocacy include childcare, caretaker wages, sharing scholarship information and providing assistance with community college admissions. WIT conducts “myth-busting” workshops on the campus of University of Louisville, through which they debunk stereotypes about welfare recipients. The workshops target people not directly affected by poverty and make use of editorial cartoons, stories, and a budget exercise to change entrenched mind sets. Through these activities, WIT continues to unite women

of similar circumstances for mutual support, empowering them through education and leadership development.

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## OHIO

### Ohio Empowerment Coalition

A project of The Contact Center of Cincinnati, The Ohio Empowerment Coalition (OEC) is the statewide welfare rights coalition of recipients, former recipients and advocates. The OEC has membership from Cincinnati, Dayton, Columbus, Southeast Ohio, Cleveland, Akron, Canton and Warren, and together they work to impact welfare policies in the state of Ohio. The Welfare Rights Coalition (WRC), another project of The Contact Center, is made up of welfare recipients and former recipients who are working to improve the lives of welfare recipients in Hamilton County. They describe themselves as being the voice of those affected by welfare and welfare reform.

In October 1999 The Contact Center of Cincinnati retained Applied Information Resources (AIR, Inc.) a public policy research organization, to conduct a study of the effect of welfare reform on recipients' lives. The study included data from Hamilton County Department of Human Services, focus groups of persons who had been on welfare in 1997 when Ohio implemented its welfare reform, and survey instruments completed by focus group participants. The focus groups included discussions of recipients' experiences with job searches, childcare, education and training. The report, titled "Welfare Reform in Cincinnati, Ohio: At What Price Success?" may be downloaded from <http://overtherhine.org/contactcenter/99survey>.

According to the report, focus group members said that based on the jobs available and the pay available for those jobs, they "needed more education and training in order to gain employment that would improve their lives and lift them out of poverty." Participants also noted that they "currently held low-paying, unskilled service jobs that would not help them get out of their precarious economic predicaments." The key recommendation of the report, based on the focus group responses, is that Ohio revise regulations that prevent recipients from continuing in technical or college programs for more than one year.

Member groups of the Ohio Empowerment Coalition administered the Ohio Welfare Sanction Survey to welfare recipients who came to them for assistance. The survey was also distributed through the Contact

Center's monthly newsletter, which is distributed to more than 950 individuals and agencies. Key findings from this survey showed that miscommunication and caseworker errors accounted for a large percentage of the sanctions and that being sanctioned lead to enormous hardship for families.

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## WASHINGTON

### **Welfare Rights Organizing Coalition**

The Welfare Rights Organizing Coalition (WROC) is a Washington State-based organization, made up of current and former TANF recipients. WROC's mission is to address economic and social injustice by educating and empowering low-income parents. WROC members have taken on the challenge to empower people receiving public assistance to work for positive changes in the welfare system, so that the system is more responsive to their needs, and treats them fairly and with dignity. WROC is based on the belief that successes in their work with the welfare system will empower public assistance recipients to apply those same skills toward making positive decisions in their own lives.

In 1997, Washington State followed the federal lead and replaced the welfare-to-work program with a work-first model. This reduced benefits to include only one year of vocational training as an approved work activity for recipients of public assistance. WROC organized and managed to get students who were on public assistance from September of 1997 to June of 1998 covered under the pre-1997 rules. Unfortunately, 25% of those students who had been enrolled during 1996 to 1997 dropped out on their caseworkers' advice before WROC was able to get to them to advise them of their rights.

In 1998 WROC members approached their local Senator, explaining that they wanted their work-study hours to meet the work activity requirements. The Senator introduced legislation to remedy it. In response, DSHS modified the program, to count 16 hours of work-study as 20 hours of unsubsidized work – a rule change that did not require legislation. In the following year, WROC worked to get legislation approved to count internships and practicums as approved work activities. They were successful in getting the second year of work-study approved. Childcare, however, was still limited to one year.

In 2000, a new initiative to allow education and training for a limited category of jobs was introduced, under which DSHS allows recipients who qualify for this "high wage, high demand" category up to one year for

a certificate program, a second year of a two-year program or a fourth year of a four-year program. To date, only 122 people have been approved for this benefit, partly due to the limited number of jobs that fall into this category, and in part because caseworkers are not properly informed of the rules.

This year, WROC's legislative agenda will focus on getting childcare benefits approved for a second year. In addition, they plan to address problems associated with the high wage, high demand program. Jean Colman, WROC's director, says she would assign "Washington State a D+ for its efforts to increase self-sufficiency for people on welfare." Despite the coalition's efforts and successes, Washington State remains one of the few states where very little legislation has passed to significantly enable low wage working parents to compete for better-paying jobs. Caseloads have been reduced but there has been no meaningful decrease in the poverty level. "It infuriates me" she continues, "how we've gone 180 degrees from where we were six years ago."

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WISCONSIN

## Welfare Warriors

Welfare Warriors are single mothers in poverty who came together in 1986 to create a voice for mothers in poverty through street activism, advocacy and a newspaper, the Mother Warriors Voice. The Voice, a 16-year-old, 28-page publication that includes no ads, reports on activist movements for social justice worldwide. The Voice validates mothers in poverty and mobilizes communities to organize for social justice. Each quarter, 16,000 copies of the Voice are printed and distributed across the US, with subscribers also in Canada, Ireland, Mexico and Africa.

Welfare Warriors have created multiple outlets for their message. They have written about 30 songs to

### **Welfare Warriors on the Consequences of Welfare Reform:**

By the time Clinton passed the TANF bill in 1996, over 16,000 moms had been forced to quit school in the Milwaukee area alone.

Wisconsin spent \$548 million for 100,000 families before Welfare reform. By 1999, WI was spending \$710 million for only 7,000 **families!**

Milwaukee's infant mortality rate increased by 37% since 1997 when TANF began.

make their voices heard and, in addition, they organize public protests, street theater, photo bus tours, prayers, candle light vigils, and marches. They make T-shirts and bumper stickers and pins. They create new language to help people understand the reality of unwaged and low-wage workers. A word they created, "motherwork," has begun to be used in the US, Canada, Ireland and Northern Ireland. Their slogan "Motherwork IS Work" is now on T-shirts and pins and bumper stickers.

Welfare Warriors are fighting for a government-guaranteed child support program that would provide cash support for all dependent minors, similar to social security survivors benefits but without the requirement that the parent be dead and have accumulated work quarters. They argue that with a guaranteed child support program, moms could work, go to school, remarry, or stay home without losing any benefits; without the costly policing structure of the current welfare system, funds could go directly to families and thus, have more far-reaching effects.

For the Global Women's Strike on March 8, 2002, Welfare Warriors initiated a campaign to "Boycott Big Business, Buy Small" with a Photo Bus Tour of eight big businesses (Wal-Mart, Taco Bell, Walgreen's, a nursing home, a daycare center, Manpower Temp Agency, and a YWCA), and reasoning that war is the biggest business of all, the military base. At each business they held a protest and sang songs, like "Bloated Big Business has no Shame." Then they created a color photo poster with each business pictured and beneath the photo they listed the wages of the CEO and the wages and benefits of the workers forced into poverty by working for the company. Next, they held a press conference and skit to unveil the poster. WW is now distributing the poster around the country to explain how big business benefits by welfare reform and to encourage folks to buy from small businesses. Wages for low-income workers have dropped by as much as \$1.50 an hour as a result of millions of moms taking any job anywhere for any pay. Welfare Warriors are dedicated to getting recognition and pay for all caregivers, guaranteed government support for families in poverty, and living wage jobs from corporate America.

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Website: [http:// www.welfarewarriors.org](http://www.welfarewarriors.org)

ILLINOIS

## Women Employed

Women Employed (WE) is a member organization that was formed in 1973 and is dedicated to the economic advancement of women through service, education and advocacy. Since it's founding in 1973, WE has been a national advocate for effective equal employment opportunity enforcement and has worked on

increasing women's access to education and training, leading to better employment. They describe themselves as being “a champion of reform of the workforce development systems and welfare policies, and developer of programs to address specific barriers to career-path employment and family-supporting wages for low-income adults.”

Women Employed maintains that education and training is the route to improving the economic situation of all women, too many of whom remain poor. WE initiated the Campaign to Increase Women's Access to Education and Training to highlight the challenges women face and to propose strategies for improving women's access to education and training in Illinois. In their campaign

**Education affects a woman's earning potential:**

Average yearly income for a woman with

- ▶ High school education, \$23,061
- ▶ Associates degree, \$30,919
- ▶ Bachelors degree, \$41,747

<http://www.womenemployed.org/facts/education.html>

agenda WE points out that in order to increase low-income women's access to post-secondary education the financial and logistical barriers they face must be addressed. They propose the following strategies for dealing with this problem: expand state scholarships to include students attending college less than half-time; increase funding for educational support services such as child care assistance; expand cooperative education and internship opportunities; and create flexible-schedule certificate programs. WE includes in their campaign agenda a focus on increasing education and training opportunities for people on welfare. They point out that current welfare policies discourage recipients from obtaining skills needed for long-term, family supporting employment. To solve this problem, WE proposes Illinois focus welfare policies on helping welfare recipients become self-sufficient and encourage policies that make it easier for TANF recipients to combine work and education.

Women Employed continues to build on its education and training initiatives, which have already achieved significant successes. WE led the effort to restore Illinois' subsidy that provides child care assistance to more than 3,000 low-income parents participating in education and training. They continue to work on legislation to maintain state funding for this program. WE is currently conducting a student survey that will provide data necessary to urge legislators to protect and strengthen the Monetary Award Program (MAP) to support students who are attending classes less than full-time. In addition, WE continues to work on proposed bills to increase aid available through the Illinois Incentive for Access (IIA) grant, which provides small subsidies for expenses not covered by the MAP grant. Women Employed has authored publications, including Promoting Education and Training for Welfare Recipients (March 2000) and Welfare Basics: The Facts about Welfare (September 2001). Several informative documents and briefs may be downloaded from the website.

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**NATIONAL**

## **Welfare Made a Difference National Campaign**

The Welfare Made a Difference (WMAD) National Campaign is a public education and legislative action campaign that focuses on documenting the experiences of people who have received welfare and identifying their recommendations for improving the welfare system.

Started in 1999, the campaign is a national coalition effort of more than 200 organizations and individuals and is coordinated by Community Food Resource Center. In an effort to shape the country's debate around welfare, the WMAD National Campaign seeks to challenge the stereotypes about who receives welfare as well as illustrate through people's stories the direct impact policies have on families receiving assistance. Through sharing personal stories of diverse groups of past and present welfare recipients, the campaign presents alternative images of welfare participants to the media, the American people, and to Congress. The Campaign seeks to illustrate the value of a supportive welfare system and the consequences of punitive welfare policies.

WMAD has maintained a consistent presence in Washington, D.C. since September 2000 by bringing members together to meet with members of Congress. They have made more than 500 Congressional visits in an effort to bring the voices

of people who have experience receiving welfare into the TANF reauthorization debate. In addition, WMAD has:

- ▶ Mobilized national network of former and current welfare recipients to publicly share their experiences receiving welfare.
- ▶ Developed policy agenda from themes emerging from campaign participants' testimonials.
- ▶ Organized national days of action to bring campaign messages and policy agenda to Congress and local communities.
- ▶ Developed media strategy to challenge pervasive stereotyping of welfare recipients by writing and placing op-eds and doing outreach to reporters.
- ▶ Created public education materials including two national issue booklets: "Welfare Made a Difference: Investing in People to End Poverty" and a domestic violence issue specific booklet, "Welfare Made a Difference: Escaping Violence, Finding Safety."

### **WMAD Policy Agenda:**

We believe that the three elements of equal importance to a welfare system that would truly alleviate poverty are access, adequacy, and opportunity.

WMAD just created a 27-minute video, “Once Upon A Time... Welfare Made A Difference.” The video features four women (from Utah, Florida, New York, and Maine) who tell their dramatic stories of how welfare served as a lifeline for their families. The video includes an introduction by former welfare recipient and Congresswoman Lynn Woolsey. Their plan is to distribute the video nationally through colleges, faith-based groups, and community organizations.

**Contact Information:** Liz Accles, National Campaign Coordinator, Welfare Made a Difference National Campaign, 39 Broadway, 10<sup>th</sup> Floor c/o CFRC, New York, NY 10006. Tel: (212) 894-8082 Fax: (212) 616-4990. Email: [wmadcampaign@yahoo.com](mailto:wmadcampaign@yahoo.com). Website: <http://www.wmadcampaign.org>.

## **Legal Aid Organizations and Poverty Law Centers**

Across the nation, legal aid societies and poverty law centers have extensive experience working on issues related to welfare reform and higher education policy under TANF. In some cases, they have been and continue to be actively involved in reform efforts, serving as valuable members of coalitions and as consultants and advocates. Many of the organizations that have been successful in winning changes in state policies, as well as those which are currently leading reform efforts, have relied on the assistance of legal aid lawyers to help draft legislation and to assist with testimony at local and state hearings. Advocates in these organizations also work on behalf of individual public assistance recipients. Because there are so many of these organizations, and because their degree of involvement in TANF higher education policy varies, we have limited our listing to several key organizations that are actively involved in local and state-level aspects of TANF higher education policy reform and can serve as models in this regard. These organizations are a valuable resource and can provide information about how they address higher education policy within the context of welfare reform.

### **Bay Area Legal Aid.** San Francisco (and surrounding counties), California

In addition to direct legal service and advocacy on the behalf of welfare recipients navigating the CalWORKs system, Bay Area Legal Services participates in a variety of activities including education, outreach, training and advocacy regarding welfare issues.

**Contact Information:** Steven Bingham, (415) 982-1300. San Francisco Office: 50 Fell Street, San Francisco, CA 94102. (415) 982-1300. Central Support Office: 405 14<sup>th</sup> Street 9<sup>th</sup> floor, Oakland, CA 94612. (510) 663-4755.

Website: <http://www.baylegal.org>, for information about CalWORKs: <http://baylegal.org/servicespbf.htm>

**Kentucky Legal Aid**, Bowling Green, Kentucky.

Lawyers for Kentucky legal aid provide direct legal counsel and advocacy for welfare recipients and other low income Kentuckians. They work with other advocates on statewide welfare issues, in particular issues regarding self-sufficiency and access to higher education.

**Contact Information:** 520 E. Main St. P.O. Box 1776, Bowling Green, KY 42102-1776. (270) 782-1924

Website: <http://www.accesstojustice.org/ctls.html>.

New website under construction: <http://klaid.org>.

**Maine Equal Justice Partners**, Augusta, Maine.

MEJP has worked in partnership with numerous groups to develop, advocate and implement the Parents as Scholars legislation and program in Maine. They serve as a resource for and continue to advocate and work with public assistance recipients in Maine's Parents as Scholars program and other welfare recipients.

**Contact Information:** 126 Sewall Street, Augusta, ME 04330. (207) 621-8148.

Website: <http://www.mejp.org>.

**New York Legal Aid Society**, New York, New York.

Recently, New York Legal Aid lawyers were instrumental in helping to draft New York City Council legislation, Into 93 ( the CATE bill) which was recently approved by the city council and has survived a mayoral veto. They have worked along with community groups and welfare recipients to organize and advocate for increased access to higher education for public assistance recipient in New York City.

**Contact Information:** The Legal Aid Society Civil Division-Civil Administration, 199 Water St. 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor, New York, NY 10038. 212-440-4300.

Website: <http://www.legalaid.org>, and for the Public Benefits Education Project,

<http://www.lasweb.legalaid.org/revson>.

**Western Center on Law & Poverty**, Los Angeles and Sacramento, California.

The WCLP is currently working on various legislative and other legal efforts to protect the rights of welfare parents, including the right to pursue and complete education and training programs. They also work with advocates and provide fact sheets and training materials on time limits, CalWORKs and other issues and programs.

**Contact Information:** 3701 Wilshire Blvd. Ste 208, Los Angeles, CA 90010, and 1225 8<sup>th</sup> St., Ste. 415; Sacramento, CA, 95814. Los Angeles: (213) 487-7211. Sacramento: (916) 442-0753.

Website: <http://www.wclp.org/index.html>.

**Welfare Due Process Project**, Lincoln Nebraska.

The Welfare Due Process Project advocates and protects the rights of welfare recipients in Nebraska. They work with welfare recipients and state agencies to identify problems as well as strategies to improve service delivery to welfare recipients. The Due Process Project also monitors and collects data about welfare families and state welfare issues. They are currently working on challenging state supreme court decision that prevents welfare recipients from pursuing a four year college degree.

**Contact Information:** Rebecca Gould, Staff Attorney, Lincoln, Nebraska. The Due Process Project of Nebraska Appleseed. 941 O Street, Ste. 105, Lincoln Nebraska. (402) 438-8853.

Web site: <http://www.neappleseed.org>.

**Workfare Advocacy Project of the CUNY Law School**, New York, New York.

The Workfare Advocacy Project (WAP) collaborates with other welfare rights organizations to represent welfare recipients who are students in the CUNY system. They also work on broad advocacy efforts to achieve legislative and administrative changes in welfare services and programs to better address the needs of public assistance recipients, with a particular concern for access to higher education.

**Contact Information:** WAP, City University of New York, School of Law at Queens College, 65-21 Main Street, Flushing, NY 11367. Deana Levister, 718-340-4475



## CONCLUSION

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### **Lessons Learned from Model Legislation, College Programs, and Advocacy Organizations**

This report highlights a range of model legislation, college programs, and advocacy organizations that facilitate public assistance recipients and single parents acquisition of post-secondary education credentials. One key finding of this research on existing reform legislation and model higher education programs is that conflicts between work and college can be reconciled through innovative strategies that enable families to leave welfare rolls, and ensure the long term economic viability of families. These strategies include allowing work requirements to be fulfilled through college attendance, practicums, and internships, insuring that work placements are on or near campuses, providing reliable convenient and affordable child care for students, and finding work activities that are relevant to needs of local labor markets and individuals' personal career aspirations.

An examination of state legislative efforts that have reformed TANF policy to allow participation in post-secondary education highlights the importance of the contribution of local citizen groups to policy formation. These efforts represent devolution at its best. Local politicians and administrators, working with local constituencies, have decided for themselves what options should be available to welfare recipients. Unfortunately, however, the potential federal government roll back of these accomplishments -- by restricting what states can do under a reauthorization of welfare reform -- would be a glaring contradiction to rhetoric and practice to date of welfare reform in the context of devolution. The post-secondary education-friendly reforms that occurred since the implementation of PRWORA have been reasonable and well thought out, and they are consistent with each state's political culture and prevailing political climate.

The college programs identified here have clearly defined missions and are sensitive to the needs of a marginalized segment of the general student population: poor, single parents who face numerous obstacles to participation in post-secondary education. These programs are committed to excellence in higher education with a concern for access and equity. They understand the needs of their target population and provide the intensive supports and services that substantially increase the chances that students will perform well, graduate, and get jobs that pay well and increase social mobility. Access to child care, transportation, and mentoring are examples of these vital supports. Some of these programs predate PRWORA and have been able to withstand the sea change in policy. Over all, there is considerable evidence to support the assertion that these programs have been highly successful, however, there have been too few efforts to study them systematically.<sup>63</sup>

The advocacy organizations we profile are experienced in working on welfare and post-secondary issues and can provide valuable insights to and serve as examples for policy makers. Some organizations consist primarily of “insiders” who are current or former welfare student-parents. They are able to provide the valuable experience and perspective necessary to fine-tune policy and program operations. Other groups are grounded in the issues because they work closely with welfare recipients as advocates and activists. At some universities, women’s studies departments and individual college faculty are key actors on welfare and higher education issues. The role of other advocates has also been critical. Legal aid and poverty law centers and women-focused organizations have played important roles in reforming policy on welfare and higher education. The law centers and legal aid attorneys have been strong advocates for individual public assistance recipients who have faced sanctions because they are in college. They have also been key players in broader efforts helping to draft new legislation and directing legal challenges to widespread unlawful practices.

In this final section we provide recommendations that are relevant to different actors who are in a position to shape welfare and post-secondary education policy. The key policy decision that we suggest is expanding access to higher education for welfare recipients and extending access to participation in these programs to the working poor. Such an extension would likely garner wider political support and may lead to better functioning programs than those which target only the very poor. Many college programs that support public assistance recipients and single parents came about in part because of college faculty and staff who recognized the special needs of this student population. Statewide programs that target poor people, in general, may be a way to build the necessary political and financial support. One model is California’s CARE program which targets people who may be eligible for welfare and other subsidies and support but who are not receiving it.

We believe that the following recommendations are a route toward that end. Our recommendations are organized as they relate to legislation, colleges, universities, welfare departments and funders.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### LEGISLATION

- ❑ **Laws Provide Broad Access to a Range of Education Options**  
The laws must be flexible in order to meet the diverse needs of welfare recipients’ needs. While GED, ESL, and Adult Basic Education are typically what is meant by “education,” there must be the option for those who are motivated to participate in certificate and degree programs.

- ❑ **School Counts Toward Meeting Work Requirements**

Participation in post-secondary education should count toward meeting work requirements. Class time, time spent studying and in school related internships, practicums and work study should be considered as participation in post-secondary education, and should therefore count toward meeting TANF work requirements.
- ❑ **No Limits on Time Spent in School**

There is a great deal of misunderstanding about why people go to community colleges and how long it takes various segments of the student population to get a certificate or degree. Limiting education to less than two years means reducing the opportunity for welfare recipients to earn degrees. Also, if a public assistance recipient starts out in a GED or an ESL class, they may exhaust their allowable education time without earning a vocation certificate or college degree.
- ❑ **Income Disregards**

Financial aid, Pell grants and other academic grants must be treated in a way that will not diminish a person's public assistance grant. If funding provided for school-related expenditures is subtracted from welfare benefits, then it becomes more difficult to remain in school. The Parents as Scholars similar programs are models in this regard.
- ❑ **Stop the Clock While in School**

As long as a student is making satisfactory and timely progress toward the certificate or degree, the 60-month limit on TANF receipt should be stopped.
- ❑ **Subsidies for Child Care, Transportation, Books and College-related Expenditures**

As emphasized in this report, these supports can make a tremendous difference in a single parent's progress toward acquiring a post-secondary education credential. TANF, Workforce Investment Act, and other federal and state funds can be used to finance these costs. TANF can be used to fund need-based financial assistance. States can even provide grants to community college participants. For example, the Massachusetts Community College Access Grant pays full tuition for students whose family income is below a certain level is an example.<sup>64</sup>
- ❑ **Explicit Directives to Caseworkers That Applicants Must Be Informed of Their Right to Education**

States like Kentucky have provisions that require caseworkers to inform applicants for public assistance education that post-secondary education is a work-related or career-related option. This does not mean that applicants must participate, only that they are aware of the option. Caseworker and college staff decisions whether or not to support participation in post-secondary education should be based on solid assessment.

❑ **Encourage Partnerships Between Institutions, Local Advocacy Groups, Colleges and Welfare Offices**

Policy makers should consider which groups, agencies, and programs might make effective partners, and by doing so, optimize service delivery and program outcomes. At minimum, the welfare bureaucracy and the institutions of post-secondary education should be partners. Other potentially important partners are businesses, non-profit organizations, and workforce-related organizations. Working on policies and programs in partnership will also help build effective working relationships in the long run. To date, one major problem has been a lack of communication between stakeholders and breakdowns in the implementation process. A process that involved all stakeholders – welfare recipients, college administrators, activists and advocates and welfare officials – can facilitate better policy and more effective implementation.

❑ **Extend Access to Post-secondary Education Supports**

Extend TANF and post-secondary education programs to people who are TANF eligible but who do not receive TANF. Income level and parenthood should become primary criteria for participation. This can potentially extend access to the working poor and marginal middle class.

❑ **Consider Other Funding Sources**

Consider, for example, using lottery funds, often earmarked for education, to support post-secondary education programs aimed at public assistance recipients, single parents, and low-income people in general.

## **COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES**

❑ **Support Existing Programs for Public Assistance Recipients and/or Single Parents**

There is a role for programs for public assistance recipients and/or single parents within the context of the mission of most colleges and universities. Many public assistance-oriented programs have been unable to survive the implementation of TANF. Programs that have weathered the changes associated with TANF have likely already demonstrated their capacity to function and serve their target population under conditions of duress. At minimum, post-secondary institutions should continue to support them, help them to identify additional sources of funding, and to partner with new stakeholders. It may also be wise to extend service to *all* single parents who meet certain income requirements.

❑ **Use Existing Programs and Resources Effectively**

Related to the previous recommendation, we suggest *not* retooling degree programs to fit a work-first philosophy, as has happened in several cases. This does not necessarily mean that programs should not focus more intensely on preparing participants for jobs. There should be a mix of work, post-

secondary education, and related experiences that will improve job retention and earnings. Higher education, however, must remain a prominent part of that mix. Where appropriate, the development of new programs that focus on recruiting, retaining, and graduating people from low-income and educationally disadvantaged groups should be encouraged.

□ **Financial Aid**

Need-based financial aid is not as generous as it once was. The range of financial aid assistance available to disadvantaged students must be improved and aid must be more flexible. Other benefits such as the federal Hope program and Lifetime Learning tax credits are less likely to benefit public assistance recipients because public assistance recipients are especially likely to enroll in, or be required to take courses that do not provide credits toward graduation. This may leave them with a credit bearing course load below that which is necessary to qualify for financial aid. Colleges and universities that have programs targeting low-income students should ensure that their financial aid department(s) work with and understand the needs of the target population. Timely disbursement of funds, emergency funds, and identification of additional sources of funding are important factors. Offices of financial aid and special programs for low-income and single parent students should work together to expedite communication and service delivery.

□ **Data Collection**

A major obstacle to identifying public assistance recipients and single parents as a distinct population is the lack of general and reliable data on them. This student population is seriously undercounted. Few universities and colleges track public assistance recipient enrollments; those who do not, often cite issues of confidentiality. However, colleges and university systems like the California Community College System and the City University of New York collect these data without infringing on confidentiality rights. Welfare bureaucracies should make these data available to institutions of higher education in order to facilitate necessary research.

## **WELFARE DEPARTMENTS AND PROGRAMS**

□ **Partnerships**

In support of post-secondary education options for public assistance recipients, welfare departments should partner with two - and four - year colleges, CBOs, workforce development agencies, economic development boards, and employers. Placing well-trained case managers or liaisons on campuses to assist students and college administrators would be an effective way to improve coordination between universities and local offices.

☐ **Individual Development Accounts.**

Provide stronger incentives to use Individual Development Accounts by offering greater matches for every dollar saved. Encourage a wider range of contributors, such as churches, foundations, community-based organizations, state government, and private enterprises.

☐ **Institutionalize Referral Processes**

Ensure that TANF recipients and TANF eligible people are able to access information about post-secondary education programs. Institutionalize referral processes through organizations that regularly interact with TANF and TANF eligible populations (welfare offices, CBOs). This should be mandated through legislation and/or departmental rules and directives.

## FUNDERS

☐ **Fund and Support Student and Community Advocacy for Higher Education**

Our research convincingly demonstrates that activism and advocacy around welfare and the college option is part of a broad range of vital organizing and activism in civil society.<sup>65</sup> Students and community groups have a critical role to play in policy debate. They often are able to provide the “insider” experience vital to appropriate policy development. Funders should support their activity.

☐ **Support and Encourage Networks/Partnerships Community Groups, Legal Aid, College Administrators and Student Groups**

Legal Aid has had an important role in several state reform efforts to establish more progressive policy on access to higher education. Student organizing has also been key and coalitions of community groups are always critical. Support of legal aid, poverty law centers and other organizations working on the issue is important. Coalitions of groups and networks should be encouraged and supported.

☐ **Fund Research That Examines Both the Impacts of Welfare Reform and the Effects of Higher Education on Single Mothers and Their Families**

Both quantitative and qualitative data are needed to fully document the impact of cuts in public assistance and the role of education as a route out of poverty. Research partnerships should include students, program administrators, research institutes and community groups at all levels of research process. It is important to emphasize that experimental and quasi-experimental research designs are not always possible and are ethically questionable when applied to research on welfare and the college option. There are reliable and valid research designs that are primarily qualitative, but that also incorporate some quantitative strategies.

□ **Support Initiatives for New Partnerships and Interaction to Reduce Adversarial Relationships**

Support initiatives to rebuild or create better relationships among welfare agencies, caseworkers, local community groups, and welfare recipients, in order to increase effectiveness and reduce adversarial “cultures.” Often, those involved in activism and on the receiving end of services are the most up-to-date on the provisions of current legislation or the program options available. At many community colleges, program administrators were better informed than an agency's front-line case workers. Briefings, meetings and training sessions that include agency administrators, case workers, college program administrators and welfare recipients help build trust, increase information, reduce adversarial culture and produce more effective policy implementation.



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