



**The National Association of  
Community Action Agencies (NACAA)**

**Executive Director**

John Buckstead,

**"Helping People to Help Themselves"**

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**Assistant to the President for Domestic Policy**

**Executive Office of the President**

**1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW**

**Washington, DC 20500**

John Leatherwood, *Treasurer*  
Hendersonville, NC

Dear Mr. Reed,

The National Association of Community Action Agencies (NACAA) will soon have a new information exchange tool on our World Wide Web home page: a user-friendly electronic conference room, or "WebBoard," through which Community Action Agencies from anywhere in the country can correspond and interact.

After the first of the year, NACAA will launch the WebBoard with a dialogue on welfare reform, and we would like the discussion to begin with a commentary on welfare reform by you.

Welfare reform is an appropriate and timely topic because of the speed with which the new law is being implemented, and the uncertainty that surrounds many of its provisions. Our members have expressed a great deal of interest in learning how other agencies in their own state and across the country are tackling implementation issues and sharing ideas, practices, and resources as they respond to welfare reform. Increased knowledge of developments at the state and national levels is necessary to ensure welfare reform success. This new communications device will help to alleviate the feelings of isolation that already exist in this uncertain environment. NACAA's WebBoard will open up exciting possibilities for interstate communications on welfare reform.

NACAA has been the mediator for such dialogues in the past and continues to share information on a timely basis through its World Wide Web homepage and frequent publications. However, the WebBoard will serve as a more immediate and interactive information exchange tool that will allow CAAs to do the best possible job of serving low-income families. To continue to build upon the dialogue process we began last year, we will call our WebBoard "National Dialogue on Poverty On-Line."

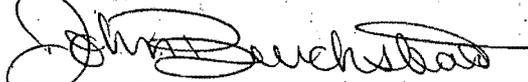
We would like to begin this dialogue with comments from a commentator of social welfare issues, such as yourself. We believe that opening the discussion with your comments concerning the new welfare legislation will draw the widest possible audience which will enhance the on-line conversation. We ask that your commentary consist of a

one to five page summary of your thoughts on welfare reform, your concerns and your hopes for the future of welfare in America. The commentary can be new or from previously prepared remarks.

Even if you cannot provide opening remarks to help get the dialogue started, I encourage you to follow the ongoing conversation among CAAs regarding welfare reform implementation. We would certainly welcome any contribution you would like to make to this conversation as it progresses. I would also expect that monitoring NACAA's welfare reform WebBoard would provide a valuable source of information on the grassroots implementation process. You can access NACAA's World Wide Web homepage at <[www.nacaa.org](http://www.nacaa.org)>.

My office will contact you soon to discuss this further with you. Thank you in advance for your participation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John Buckstead", written over a horizontal line.

John Buckstead  
Executive Director

Enclosures

March 21, 1997

*WR-Internet*

To: Bruce Reed  
Elena Kagan

From: Lyn Hogan  
Cynthia Rice

cc: Diana Fortuna

Re: Welfare Reform and the Internet Project

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The following is a proposal to give welfare offices around the country access to the World Wide Web and the Internet in order to access valuable information on employment, child care resources, available social support services, and other information relevant to both welfare recipients and caseworkers.

### **Proposal**

We propose to expand Internet access to high traffic welfare offices around the country. Providing Internet access to key welfare offices will accomplish several goals: 1) welfare recipients and caseworkers will have access to Internet job banks, including the Department of Labor's America's Job Bank; 2) welfare recipients and caseworkers will have access to other relevant information including training programs, job placement organizations, and child care resources; 3) welfare intake offices would be able to link to the DOL one-stop shops; 4) welfare recipients could market themselves on the Internet by posting resumes, and; 5) welfare offices around the country could share information on best practices.

### **Background**

There are approximately 6,500 welfare field offices in the country. About one third of those offices are already connected to the Internet or have adequate computer hardware to easily link to the Internet. To ensure that every welfare office has at least two computers connected to the Internet, we would have to provide hardware and software at a cost of approximately \$40,365,000 initially plus additional annual operating costs of \$14,235,000.

Through computer donations and executive orders we can defray most of the start-up costs. Further, by targeting high traffic welfare offices or those in high poverty areas, we can better target our scarce resources. However, even if computers are donated, operating costs will still be incurred.

## Actions

### I. Help Welfare Offices Connect to the Internet to Access Electronic Job Listings and Other Work-Related Information

- Expand Executive Order 12999 to cover welfare offices. EO 12999 streamlines the transfer of excess and surplus Federal computer equipment to the Nation's classrooms. By expanding this executive order to cover welfare offices in addition to classrooms, we can access available computers for some of the 6,500 welfare offices.
- Announce private sector commitments to donate computers and provide training, technical, and maintenance services. (These donations would hopefully come from a wide variety of sources including companies involved with Work Now, high tech firms that are members of the Association of Chief Information Officers, and a consortium formed by Software Technology Corporation of Georgia.)
- Direct Federal agencies to encourage their computer suppliers to donate used computers following contract refresh periods. (Refresh contracts with suppliers require those suppliers to update or "refresh" the government's computers on a regular basis.)
- Announce annual Presidential awards to companies that donate computers to this and other government efforts, and honor each company on the White House web page.
- Direct HHS and the Department of Labor to notify state welfare agencies how they could obtain donated computers and access job data banks. The agencies would also track how many donations were made.

### II. Expand Job Listings on the Internet and Increase Access to More Web Sites

- Issue an Executive Order directing federal agencies and government contractors to electronically file all job listings with America's Job Bank, increasing the number of job listings on the internet.
- Direct the Department of Labor to link America's Job Bank to OPM and any other private sector job banks that wish to be linked. America's Job Bank, a nationwide Internet job bank, lists approximately 750,000 openings, 95 percent of which are private sector, from state organized job banks and national entries. The OPM directory lists all available federal jobs. Software Technology Corporation in Georgia is running HeadHunter.NET, a fully

good

automated job search and posting service that provides free access to all job listings and allows recruiters, companies and businesses to post their listings at no charge.

- Direct White House staff to expand the White House welfare reform web site to provide links to America's Job Bank and other related web sites.

## Next Steps

Before announcing these actions, we would want to ensure that:

- Adequate private sector commitments can be announced.
- State representatives (i.e., APWA and NGA) will welcome the plan.
- Adding welfare offices to EO 12999 won't interfere with the Administration's computers in the classroom goals.
- Department of Labor is ready to execute new actions (i.e. link to other databanks).
- Plans are discussed with Software Technology Corporation and Speaker Gingrich.
- We have decided whether to target this initiative only to certain welfare offices and which criteria, if any, should be used.