

October 7, 1998

To: Andrea Kane

From: Karin Martinson 

Re: Paper on Serving Non-Custodial Fathers under Welfare-to-Work Grants

Enclosed is the paper on serving non-custodial fathers in the welfare-to-work grants program that you requested from Demetra Nightingale. This paper is still in draft form, although we hope to finalize it soon. Please let me know if you have any comments on the paper. I can be reached at (202)261-5841.

10/7/98

**DRAFT**

**Serving Non-Custodial Parents Through Welfare-to-Work Grants:  
Labor Market Characteristics, Employment Barriers, and Service Strategies**

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## Executive Summary

The Welfare-to-Work (WtW) Grants Program, authorized under the Budget Reconciliation Act of 1997, presents an important opportunity for states and localities to provide employment services to non-custodial fathers. Programs for non-custodial fathers are largely an overlooked aspect of welfare reform and one that could potentially improve the well-being of poor children. By including the non-custodial fathers of children on cash assistance as a target group for the employment services funded by the WtW grants, the program seeks to boost the employment and earnings of these fathers and to pass some of the fathers' increased earnings on to their children in the form of child support. It is hoped that poverty among children will be reduced if they receive support from both of their parents. In order to provide assistance to programs and organizations developing programs for non-custodial fathers, this paper provides information on their employment barriers, current and past programs serving this group, and strategies for providing effective services.

The non-custodial fathers targeted by the WtW grant program face a range of barriers to employment. Research shows that low-income non-custodial fathers -- a group similar to those targeted under the WtW grants -- are disproportionately composed of poorly educated minorities with limited work experience. Many lack the skills and credentials increasingly required by employers. Non-custodial fathers are also limited by the lack of jobs in urban areas, lack of access to social networks, job discrimination, and past and current legal problems. Finally, the child support enforcement system itself contains disincentives for these fathers to find work and make child support payments. This system has traditionally focused on increasing child support collections, with little assistance given to fathers who are unemployed. In addition, rules which limit the amount of child support families on cash assistance can receive from non-custodial

fathers (the state can retain child support payments as reimbursement for welfare costs) and large levels of child support debt accumulated by many fathers also discourage them from finding work and supporting their families.

While some states and localities are increasingly focused on the needs of non-custodial fathers, until recently there have been only limited efforts to improve the employability of poor non-custodial fathers and their ability to pay child support. Only a modest number of programs have systematically targeted non-custodial fathers for employment or other types of services and very few operate at a significant scale.

Because services for this group of fathers have not been widespread, the WtW program represents an important opportunity to improve their employment prospects and the economic well-being of their families. To do this, programs are needed which not only assist fathers in becoming prepared for and locating stable employment but also facilitate their efforts to pay child support and become involved with their families. Past experience indicates that achieving these goals can be challenging but that several strategies are likely to lead to effective program services:

- ***Develop appropriate work-focused employment services.*** It is important to develop a range of employment services -- particularly those that combine work and skill-building. While job search assistance activities are important for some fathers, due to a lack of work experience and job skills, they are likely to be inadequate for others. Experience also indicates that these fathers are interested in finding income-producing employment relatively quickly and some resist making commitments to longer-term skills training or education programs. Given these factors, on-the-job training (OJT) programs are an important service option for program operators to consider. Because past programs have had difficulty developing OJT positions beyond a minimum scale, in order to make this component successful, it is important to have adequate staff dedicated to developing and monitoring these slots and to involve the private sector in the development of this component.
- ***Provide post-employment services.*** Many non-custodial fathers work sporadically or part-time and very few have sustained employment, indicating they may have difficulty moving up the career ladder. To help them keep jobs once they find them, fathers may

benefit from ongoing program support once employed -- such as job and other types of counseling and transportation and other support services.

- ***Develop appropriate recruitment mechanisms.*** A primary challenge facing WtW programs is the recruitment of a sufficient number of fathers into the program. This has proven to be a challenge in past programs since these fathers generally have little connection to established systems or networks. Difficulties have been encountered in this area regardless of whether recruitment was done on a mandatory (through referrals from the courts) or voluntary basis (marketing the program in the community). In order to serve a significant number of fathers that meet the WtW program targeting requirements, it will be difficult to rely solely on voluntary mechanisms to recruit fathers. Rather, program operators will have to coordinate the efforts of the child support agency, the welfare agency, and perhaps the courts to identify fathers who are appropriate for the program.
- ***Provide family-focused and special supportive services.*** Some programs serving non-custodial fathers have discovered that employment services alone are not likely to be sufficient to induce all of them to participate intensively or to make a lasting difference in their employment and payment patterns. Programs also are needed to address other factors that lead many non-custodial fathers to resist working and paying child support. It appears that fathers benefit from and appreciate services geared toward enhancing parent-child relationships, improving parenting skills, and navigating a relationship with the mother and the child support system. Some programs have experienced success with a "peer support" component which uses a structured curriculum to address these issues.
- ***Provide incentives to prevent fathers from dropping out.*** Past programs for non-custodial fathers have consistently had trouble maintaining regular attendance and preventing fathers from dropping-out. Experience indicates that emphasizing both a "carrot and sticks" approach could improve participation levels. On the positive side, attractive services (such as support groups) and reduced child support payments during program participation can be important. Negative consequences -- namely, the threat of incarceration due to unpaid child support -- can also be used.
- ***Draw on the expertise of community-based organizations.*** Some community-based organizations have had significant experience serving fathers and addressing their needs. WtW programs could benefit from this expertise -- particularly in the areas of pre-employment preparation; family services that engage fathers, mothers, and children; and brokering communication between the fathers and the child support system -- as they develop services for fathers.
- ***Create partnerships with the child support system and other involved parties.*** One of the most important lessons from current programs is the critical importance -- but also the inherent difficulty -- of building local partnerships to provide services to fathers. These partnerships are vital -- particularly if the program seeks both to increase employment and

child support payments. Depending on the nature of the program, collaboration between the child support system (which includes the courts), the employment and training system, and community-based organizations -- each of which has different organizational missions, funding sources, and administrative procedures -- may be needed to provide the necessary services for this population. Experience shows that operating programs that link employment and child support require a sustained level of attention from program managers in all involved agencies -- and particularly the child support agency -- as well as a commitment to work through the issues that emerge on an ongoing basis. The complexity of these institutional linkages should not be underestimated, and may require upfront investments which acknowledge and seek to reconcile differences in perspectives.

It is important to note that not all services appropriate for non-custodial fathers can be funded by WtW grants. In particular, family-focused services or stand-alone education and training are not allowable activities under the WtW grants. However, program operators may be in a position to leverage funds from other sources to provide these other activities. Other funding sources that could be used to provide services to non-custodial fathers include Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) dollars, Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA) funds, Pell grants, and Perkins vocational education dollars. The new Workforce Development Act will make it easier for states and localities to combine resources from these different programs (this new law does not address the use of TANF dollars).

While providing services to non-custodial fathers can be challenging, programs which increase both the earnings and child support payments of non-custodial fathers are a critical area for administrators to channel their energies. There is much to be gained in terms of reducing poverty among children if programs can achieve these dual goals.

## I. Introduction

The Welfare-to-Work (WtW) Grants Program, authorized under the Budget Reconciliation Act of 1997, is an important component of federal welfare reform and represents the only federal funds specifically designated for work-related activities for welfare recipients and the non-custodial parents of children on welfare. WtW, with \$3 billion in federal funds, was enacted to complement the major welfare reform provisions authorized in 1996 under the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA), particularly the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) block grant. States have considerable flexibility to use the TANF block grant funds for cash welfare payments to families with children, work activities for welfare parents, and related services which those parents may need to move from welfare to work. The WtW grants complement TANF in that these funds are specifically designated for work-related activities and not for cash welfare payments. In addition, WtW funds are targeted on specific groups within the welfare population; they cannot be used for all welfare recipients, but instead are targeted on those who are the least employable.

In addition to those receiving cash assistance, WtW specifically includes non-custodial parents of children on welfare as a target group for employment services. Research shows that about one-quarter of all non-custodial parents do not pay child support because they are poor themselves and cannot afford to support their children without further impoverishing themselves or their families.<sup>1</sup> By providing resources for employment services, the WtW program seeks to boost the employment and earnings of these fathers, with the expectation that some of those increased earnings will be passed on to their children in the form of child support. By receiving

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<sup>1</sup>R. Mincy and E. Sorensen. "Deadbeats and Turnips in Child Support Reform" (*Journal of Policy Analysis and Management*, Volume 17, No.1, 44-51, 1998).

support from both their mothers and their fathers, it is hoped that the extent and depth of poverty among children will be lessened.

While the WtW grants are an important resource for serving non-custodial parents, it should be noted that these grants are only one source of assistance available for serving this group. In addition to serving custodial mothers, TANF dollars and Title XX funds which have been transferred to the TANF block grant can be used for non-custodial fathers. The Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA), while not specifically focused on poor non-custodial parents, is the largest federal job training program intended to increase employment and earnings among economically disadvantaged youth and adults. In addition, Perkins vocational education funds and Pell grants can also be used to provide assistance to these fathers. The recently enacted Workforce Investment Act of 1998 makes substantial changes to the structure of services funded under JTPA, adult education, and related programs; however, the same categories of low-income persons are still eligible for these services.

In order to assist programs and organizations in developing policy interventions to serve non-custodial fathers, this paper provides an overview of the WtW grants program provisions specifically related to non-custodial parents, describes the characteristics of these non-custodial parents and their employment barriers, provides information on current and past programs designed to improve the employability and earnings potential of non-custodial parents, and presents service options and strategies for serving this population through the WtW grants program.

## II. Overview of the Welfare-to-Work Grants Program

This section provides a brief overview of the WtW grants program with a specific focus on features that are relevant to designing programs for non-custodial parents -- targeting and allowable activities.<sup>2</sup>

Under the WtW program, the federal government is distributing \$3 billion in fiscal years 1998 and 1999 to help move hard-to-employ welfare recipients and non-custodial parents into jobs. Three quarters of the funds are allocated to states based on a formula and one quarter is distributed competitively based on applications submitted to the Department of Labor (DOL). Both formula and competitive grants target the same populations and can be used for the same types of activities.

**Allowable Activities.** The WtW funds can be used for a range of activities that are designed to move individuals into jobs, with an emphasis on jobs that have the potential for increased earnings. The funds can be used broadly for employment-related activities including: wage subsidies in the public or private sector; on-the-job training; job readiness; job placement services; post-employment services; job vouchers for job readiness; placement or post-employment services; community service or work experience; job retention services; and supportive services. Grantees are allowed quite a bit of flexibility in designing welfare-to-work strategies geared to the needs of the local labor market and economy.

There is one important restriction regarding the use of funds: WtW funds cannot be

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<sup>2</sup>For more details information on the WtW grants program, see D. Nightingale and K. Brennan, *Accessing Welfare-to-Work Grant Program Funds: Opportunities for Community-Based Organizations Serving Fathers*, (Washington, DC: The Urban Institute, 1998) and *Fact Sheet: Welfare-to-Work Grants* (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Labor, 1997).

utilized for stand-alone job training or education. However, they can be used for training or education once a person has begun work, either as a post-employment service in conjunction with work or as a work-based activity. WtW funds can also be used for paid and unpaid community service or work experience jobs, including public subsidized employment in the public and non-profit sector and traditional on-the-job training.

**Target Population.** Both the formula and competitive grants must be used to fund services for the hardest-to-employ welfare recipients. The legislation is fairly prescriptive on most of the participant targeting criteria, but leaves room for some discretion at the program level for defining a few of the target groups. At least 70 percent of the funds must be used for: (1) long-term TANF recipients or recipients who are within one year of reaching the TANF time limit and who also have two of three legislatively specified problems: less than a high school education and low reading or math skills, substance abuse problems, or “poor work history<sup>3</sup>”, or (2) non-custodial parents who have two of the same three legislatively specified problems and have a child who is a long-term TANF recipient or is within one year of reaching the TANF time limit, or (3) an individual with two of the three barriers (described above) but is no longer receiving TANF because they have reached federal or state imposed time limits. The education factor is most specific and the work history factor is the least specific, to be defined by the state or local programs. Up to 30 percent of the funds can be used for TANF recipients or non-custodial parents who have “characteristics associated with long-term welfare dependency” such as teenage parents, persons with poor work history, or high school drop-outs. WtW funds can be used to

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<sup>3</sup>The WtW regulations define “poor work history” as having worked no more than 13 consecutive weeks full time in unsubsidized employment in the prior 12 months.

serve the targeted groups of custodial parents on TANF, non-custodial parents, or both the custodial and non-custodial parents together.

Many states and localities are already planning to use much of their WtW formula grants for employment-related programs for non-custodial parents, and several of the first round competitive grant applications are also proposing to target fathers. Michigan, for example, plans to use all of the state's formula funds for non-custodial parents and non-custodial parents are a primary target for all of Wisconsin's formula funds. Of the 51 competitive grantees selected for the first round of funding, seven have also chosen to specifically target non-custodial fathers for services.<sup>4</sup> For example, the Milwaukee County Private Industry Council (PIC) and the Los Angeles County PIC will offer services to address the legal barriers of the noncustodial fathers. In Milwaukee County these funds will be used to help fathers remove legal barriers to employment such as problems with child support orders and payments, motor vehicle violations and license restrictions, and special issues relevant to ex-offenders. Peer support and attitudinal training are also key components the Los Angeles County program.

### **III. Characteristics and Employment Barriers of Low Income Non-Custodial Fathers**

Information on the demographic and economic characteristics of non-custodial parents and the size of the eligible population are critical to designing programs that will effectively serve this population. Because the vast majority of non-custodial parents are men, this paper focuses on non-custodial fathers.<sup>5</sup> Unfortunately, much less is known about the fathers of children who

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<sup>4</sup>Based on estimates provided in the grant applications, approximately 20 percent of the individuals served by the WtW competitive grants are non-custodial fathers.

<sup>5</sup>Data from the Bureau of the Census shows that only 14 percent of non-custodial parents are women. See L. Scoon-Rogers and G. Lester, *Child Support for Custodial Mothers and Fathers: 1991* (Washington,

receive welfare than about their mothers. Indeed, data are not even available on the number of non-custodial fathers with children on welfare. Nonetheless, it is important to get a sense of the characteristics and number of fathers targeted by the WtW grants -- those with a child receiving cash assistance who meet certain targeting requirements (based on work history, education, length of the child's cash assistance receipt, and other factors). Analysis of the 1990 Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP) -- a nationally representative survey -- is used to provide rough estimates on the characteristics and number of fathers that could be served in this program.<sup>6</sup>

### **Demographic Characteristics**

Calculations of SIPP data were conducted by the Urban Institute to examine information on the economic and demographic characteristics of low-income non-custodial fathers in 1990.<sup>7</sup> These data are presented here to provide a general understanding of the characteristics of the group served under the WtW grants. Non-custodial fathers targeted by the WtW grants are likely to have very similar characteristics to this group of low-income fathers. This section also draws on data from the Parent's Fair Share (PFS) demonstration project which provided employment and training and child support services to the non-custodial parents of children who received cash assistance (more information on PFS is presented in later sections of this paper).<sup>8</sup> This

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DC: Bureau of the Census, U.S. Department of Commerce, 1995).

<sup>6</sup>1990 is the most recent period for which data are available.

<sup>7</sup>Low-income non-custodial fathers are defined as those fathers with family income below the poverty threshold for their family size or personal income below the poverty threshold for a single person. The SIPP data in this paper were prepared by Elaine Sorensen of the Urban Institute.

<sup>8</sup>For information on the PFS demonstration, see F. Doolittle, et al., *Building Opportunities, Enforcing Obligations: Implementation and Interim Impacts of Parent's Fair Share*, (New York, NY: Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation, 1998) and D. Bloom and K. Sherwood, *Matching Opportunities to Obligations: Lessons for Child Support Reform from the Parents' Fair Share Pilot Phase*

demonstration was conducted in seven sites around the country. Although not nationally representative, the PFS data do provide information on a population comparable to the one served under the WtW grants.

Low-income non-custodial parents share many of the characteristics of other disadvantaged populations, including custodial parents receiving TANF. Overall, while it is important to recognize the diversity of this population, low-income non-custodial parents are disproportionately composed of poorly educated minorities with limited work experience. As shown on Table 1, the average age of the fathers is 31, with almost three-quarters over the age of 25. Almost half of the fathers are African-American, and one-third are Caucasian. Roughly forty percent of them had never married, and over one-third were currently married.

A vast majority of low-income non-custodial fathers worked or looked for work in 1990 but very few had stable employment. Only ten percent worked full-time, year round (and remained poor despite working). Another 45 percent worked intermittently. Finally, a sizable proportion of the parents -- approximately one-third -- did not work in 1990 but looked for work. Overall, over half of the fathers were employed at some point during the year and those that were employed worked approximately 30 weeks out of the year.

As one would expect, the earnings for this group of parents is very low. On average, low-income non-custodial fathers earned less than \$4,000 annually. The hourly wage was relatively low -- averaging \$5.40 per hour in 1990 dollars. About half of those who worked were employed in blue-collar occupations; about one-quarter were employed in service work.

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(New York, NY: Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation, 1994).

**Table 1**  
**Selected Characteristics of Low-Income Non-Custodial Fathers, 1990**

Characteristic	Low-Income Non-Custodial Fathers
Average Age	31
Age	
18 to 25	26%
25 to 34	41%
35 to 44	26%
45 and over	7%
Race	
White, non-Hispanic	35%
Black, non-Hispanic	48%
Hispanic	15%
Marital Status	
Currently Married	37%
Previously Married	24%
Never Married	39%
Labor Force Activity	
Work Full Time, Full Year	10%
Worked Intermittently	45%
Did Not Work, but Looked for Work	33%
Not in Labor Force	12%
Average Weeks Worked (for workers)	30
Average Hourly (for hourly workers in 1990 dollars)	\$5.40
Average Personal Income	\$3,932

(continued on next page)

Table 1 (continued)  
**Selected Characteristics of Low-Income Non-Custodial Fathers, 1990**

Characteristic	Low-Income Non-Custodial Fathers
Occupational Distribution	
Managerial/Professional	7%
Technical/Sales/Clerical	14%
Service	23%
Agriculture	6%
Craft/Repair	8%
Operators/Laborers	42%
Educational Attainment	
Less than 12 years	45%
12 years	37%
13 to 15 years	13%
16 years or over	5%
Average Years of Education	11
Ever Participated in JTPA	6%
Percent Who Paid Child Support	17%
Average Child Support Payment (for those who paid child support)	\$1,854
Child Support Payments as Percent of Personal Income (for those who paid child support)	50%

Source: 1990 Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP)

Note: Low-income non-custodial fathers are defined as fathers who have annual family income that fell below the poverty threshold for their family size or have annual personal income that fell below the poverty threshold for a single person.

## Labor Market Barriers

The above section clearly shows that low-income non-custodial parents are at best employed on a sporadic basis, and when they do work it is for relatively low wages. There are several factors that affect the ability of this group of fathers to find employment that will allow them to support themselves and their families.

One major impediment to the gainful employment of low-income non-custodial fathers is their relatively low levels of educational attainment and basic skills. As shown on Table 1, a significant proportion -- approximately 45 percent -- have not completed high school and only 10 percent graduated from college, for an average of only 11 years of education. In addition, results from the National Adult Literacy Survey show that this group has low basic skills. This survey found that two-thirds of a comparable population of low-income men -- those who receive Food Stamps -- scored in the two lowest levels of the skills test (out of five levels) compared to one-half of the adults in the general population.<sup>9</sup> Individuals at these levels are likely to have difficulty with higher level reading and problem-solving skills that employers value.

Another factor affecting the job prospects of non-custodial fathers is that the labor market situation for less educated men has deteriorated over the past 25 years. The U.S. economy has experienced a rising demand for white-collar work and a declining demand for blue-collar work that has traditionally provided jobs for non-college educated men. This shift in labor demand is evidenced by the decaying circumstances of young men, particularly those with limited skills and education credentials. Over the past two decades, there has been a significant decline in real

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<sup>9</sup>P. Barton and L. Jenkins, *Literacy and Dependency: The Literacy Skills of Welfare Recipients in the United States* (Princeton, NJ: Educational Testing Service, 1995).

wages for men without college degrees.<sup>10</sup>

Clearly, many poor non-custodial fathers lack the skills and credentials sought in today's labor market. Although technological change over the past few decades has eroded the wages of less-educated workers, the skill level demanded of these workers has increased. Jobs require more social, cognitive, and job-specific skills than in the past<sup>11</sup> and, given their education levels, it appears that many low-income non-custodial parents lack these basic skills that many employers are seeking.

Another problem many low-wage workers face is the location of jobs which fit their skills.<sup>12</sup> Job growth has tended to be in suburban areas, rather than in central cities where many poor non-custodial fathers live. Public and private means of transportation are often unavailable, making it difficult for central city residents to work in the suburbs. Relocating, while an option in theory, can be very difficult to accomplish in practice due to lack of transportation, limited information about new areas, a lack of social contacts and, potentially, residential segregation and housing discrimination.<sup>13</sup>

Discrimination in employment may also complicate the employment prospects for minority non-custodial fathers. There is growing evidence of employer discrimination against minorities in

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<sup>10</sup>R. Blank, "U.S. Labor Market and Prospects for Low-Wage Entry Jobs" (in *The Work Alternative*, D. Nightingale and R. Haveman, eds., Washington, DC: The Urban Institute, 1995).

<sup>11</sup>H. Holzer, *What Employers Want: Job Prospects for Less Education Workers*. New York, NY: Russell Sage Foundation.

<sup>12</sup>H. Pouncy and R. Mincy, "Out-of-Welfare Strategies for Welfare-Bound Youth" (in *The Work Alternative*, D. Nightingale and R. Haveman, eds., Washington, DC: The Urban Institute, 1995).

<sup>13</sup>H. Holzer, "Employers for Young African-American Males: Where the Jobs are and What Employers Want" (in *African American Males: A Practice Guide*, L. Davis, ed., New York, NY: Sage Publications, 1998).

hiring. Studies have found that discrimination is likely to be higher for African-American males compared to other groups, particularly those in suburban areas.<sup>14</sup>

Non-custodial parents also lack access to social networks that can be critical in locating employment.<sup>15</sup> A large fraction of jobs are filled by informal recruitment among employers who seek referrals from their current employees and other acquaintances. Many non-custodial fathers are not a part of these social networks which can greatly enhance employment prospects.

Finally, many low-income non-custodial parents also have criminal records and substantial legal problems which can impair their ability to find employment. Data from the PFS demonstration shows that approximately 75 percent of the non-custodial parents served in that program had been arrested since their 16th birthday and 46 percent had been convicted of a crime. A past history of criminal activity can further diminish the already limited employment prospects of these fathers.

### **How Many Fathers Could Potentially Be Served?**

This section provides an estimate of the number of non-custodial fathers that could be eligible for services under the WtW grants program. While data are not available to estimate this number directly, the number of targeted fathers can be extrapolated from other sources. Urban Institute calculations using SIPP data show that 2.5 million non-custodial fathers were defined as low-income in 1990. Also in 1990, there were approximately 3.8 million single-parent cash assistance cases. If one were to assume that all 2.5 million fathers had a child or children on cash assistance, then there would be about two-thirds as many non-custodial fathers as mothers on

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<sup>14</sup>H. Holzer, 1998.

<sup>15</sup>Pouncy and Mincy, 1995.

cash assistance.<sup>16</sup> This rough estimate makes sense -- one would expect there to be more mothers receiving cash assistance than low-income non-custodial fathers because some of the fathers of children on cash assistance are not low-income or are deceased.

This same ratio of fathers to mothers can be applied to the current TANF caseload to determine the current number of low-income non-custodial fathers with children who receive cash assistance. The most recent data indicates that there are currently approximately 3.0 million single-headed households receiving cash assistance.<sup>17</sup> Assuming the ratio of the size of the single-parent cash assistance caseload to the number of non-custodial low-income fathers is the same as it was in 1990, there would now be approximately two million low-income non-custodial fathers with children receiving cash assistance.

No precise data are available on how many of these fathers would be eligible for the WtW program because they met the targeting requirements. However, if one assumes that roughly one-third to one-half of these fathers fit these targeting criteria<sup>18</sup>, at minimum, approximately 660,000 to one million non-custodial fathers would be eligible for services under the WtW grants. Thus, there clearly is a substantial population of non-custodial fathers that could benefit from the WtW grants.

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<sup>16</sup>While this paper assumes all low-income non-custodial fathers had a child receiving cash assistance, if one assumed a lower proportion had child in these circumstances estimates of the number of eligible fathers could be reduced by this amount.

<sup>17</sup>Caseload data for single-parent families is only available through June 1997, while total caseload information (including two-parent and child-only cases) is available through March 1998. The single-parent caseload for March 1998 was estimated by applying the percentage decline for the entire caseload from June 1997 to March 1998 to the single-parent caseload in June 1997.

<sup>18</sup>Some unpublished federal agency reports estimate that about one-third to one-half of TANF recipients are likely to meet the targeting requirements and be eligible for WtW services.

## Low-Income Non-Custodial Parents and the Child Support System

The child support enforcement system is designed to accomplish several activities to assist children in receiving support from absent parents. These activities include: establishing paternity, establishing child support orders which detail the amount non-custodial parents are required to pay their family each month (usually done through the court system), collecting payments from non-custodial parents on behalf of their children, and distributing these funds to the custodial parents and their children. The 1996 welfare law made important strides in the child support enforcement arena, strengthening the tools for collecting child support from non-custodial parents who have income.

Data on child support collections shows that most *low-income* non-custodial parents have very little connection to the child support system and many do not contribute child support to their families. Currently, only a modest fraction of poor children in single-parent families receive child support payments from their non-custodial parents. In 1995, data shows that only 21 percent of families receiving cash assistance received formal child support payments from the non-custodial parent.<sup>19</sup> As shown on Table 1, calculations from the SIPP show that only 17 percent of low-income non-custodial fathers paid child support. Those low-income non-custodial parents who paid child support contributed approximately \$1,850 annually to their families in 1990, representing roughly one-half of their income.

Clearly, in many circumstances, the fathers' poor educational background and work

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<sup>19</sup>Data shows that, in 1995, 21 percent of families receiving cash assistance received a \$50 pass-through of child support paid by the non-custodial father. See below for more information on the \$50 pass-through. U.S. House of Representatives, Committee on Ways and Means, *1996 Green Book: Background Material and Data on Program within the Jurisdiction of the Ways and Means Committee*, (Washington, DC: U.S. Congress, 1996).

history is a major factor in preventing them from finding employment and contributing financially to the well-being of their children. However, as explained below, the child support system itself establishes many disincentives for non-custodial parents to find work, make child support payments, and become involved with their families.<sup>20</sup>

First, the child support system is geared toward collecting child support payments from employed parents and was not designed to provide assistance to non-custodial parents when they are unemployed. Because some non-custodial fathers work in "off-the-books" jobs or in some instances have income from illegal sources, judges and child support officials may have difficulty determining the accuracy of a non-custodial parent's claim that he has no earnings. Although the threat of incarceration may be appropriate for fathers who willfully refuse to pay support, it is likely to be counterproductive in helping fathers who truly do not have the means to pay. Judges may order non-custodial parents to seek work and report back to the court on these efforts, but courts and state child support enforcement agencies have large caseloads, and are often overwhelmed and typically lack the resources to monitor activities of this nature.

The child support system also does not allow in-kind services -- such as providing child care or some other service -- that the father may provide when he is not working to count toward the child support obligation. Finally, orders are generally not modified quickly enough when the father becomes unemployed making it very difficult for them to meet their obligations. Thus, little assistance is generally provided to fathers who do not pay child support because they are unemployed.

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<sup>20</sup>E. Sorensen and R. Lerman, "Welfare Reform and Low-Income Non-Custodial Fathers (*Challenge*, Volume 4, No. 4, 1998).

Second, non-custodial parents have little incentive to make formal child support payments when their child receives TANF. Under federal law, custodial parents on welfare must assign their right to child support to the state, allowing the federal and state government to retain as reimbursement for welfare costs, all formal child support payments. As a result, because little of their child support payment may actually reach their family and benefit their children, non-custodial fathers are often reluctant to pay their child support orders.

Prior to the passage of the 1996 welfare law, states were required to “pass-through” up to \$50 in collected child support to the family receiving cash assistance. While a small amount, this requirement did provide at least some incentive for non-custodial fathers to pay support. Under the new welfare law, states are free to continue the pass-through, eliminate it, or expand it; and most states have taken steps to reduce rather than increase non-custodial parents’ incentives to pay child support. Thirty states have eliminated the pass-through, further weakening the incentive to pay support, while 19 have maintained or reduced it. Just three have expanded the amount passed-through to the family (with Wisconsin passing through the whole amount).<sup>21</sup> Because so little or none of the child support payment may end up with the family, this can lead to a preference (on the part of both parents) for informal, direct payments that bypass the system.

A final disincentive to contributing child support to their families is the large amount of child support debt or arrearages accumulated by many non-custodial fathers. Child support debt can be daunting to non-custodial parents in low wage jobs. Because the non-custodial parent may feel they will never be able to pay off their child support fully even if they are working, these

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<sup>21</sup>J. Gallagher et al, *One Year After Federal Welfare Reform: A Description of State Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) Decisions as of October 1997* (Washington, DC: The Urban Institute, 1998).

arrearages may actually deter them from seeking stable employment, making child support payments, or establishing ties with their family. In the PFS demonstration, over 90 percent of the non-custodial fathers owed some amount of arrears. The average arrearage amount among the fathers was over \$4,000 and almost three-quarters had accumulated arrearages of \$1,000 or more.<sup>22</sup>

While some child support debt is the result of non-payment when the father has the ability to pay, debts among low-income fathers often accumulate when they do not have the resources to pay. For example, arrearages result when orders do not adjust quickly enough when the father becomes unemployed. In addition, most states allow awards to be set retroactively back to the birth of the child (if the parents were not married) or marriage dissolution and these orders often do not reflect the actual income or informal support provided at the time. States do have the ability to forgive arrearages owed to them, however, they do not have the ability to forgive child support debt owed to the family.

The combination of these factors can be enough to push a group of low-earning, sporadically working men further into the underground economy, diminishing the chances that they will find employment that will provide financial stability for their families. Clearly, programs that assist fathers in locating stable employment but also facilitate their efforts to pay child support and become involved with their families are needed. The WtW grant program is an important resource for achieving these goals.

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<sup>22</sup>Bloom and Sherwood, 1994.

#### IV. Programs for Non-Custodial Fathers

In order to provide background information to program operators developing a set of services for non-custodial fathers, this section presents an overview of current and past programs serving non-custodial parents.

In the past, very few public programs have specifically targeted low-income non-custodial fathers for employment and training services. At the federal level, non-custodial fathers are primarily provided with employment and training services through traditional programs for disadvantaged workers -- including JTPA, vocational education programs, and Pell grants. Services are often provided by community-based organizations, many of which may serve a range of disadvantaged workers. Although limited data are available on the extent to which non-custodial fathers participate in these programs, participation levels appear to be low. For example, one study found that only 6 percent of low-income non-custodial fathers participated in the JTPA program.<sup>23</sup>

Although the federal government does not have a program that provides employment and training to non-custodial fathers, a number of states have developed initiatives of their own. Some states have extended their former JOBS or TANF work programs to these fathers, others developed programs which were offered through the child support system, and still others have funded programs operated by community-based organizations.<sup>24</sup> While these state and

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<sup>23</sup>E. Sorensen, *Low-Income Noncustodial Fathers: Who are They and What are States Doing to Assist Them in their Efforts to Pay Child Support*, Washington, DC: The Urban Institute, 1997).

<sup>24</sup>For more detailed information on specific state initiatives see Sorensen, 1997; J. Knitzer and S. Bernard, *Map and Track: State Initiatives to Encourage Responsible Fatherhood*. (New York, NY: National Center for Children in Poverty, 1997); and *Promoting Responsible Fatherhood: An Update* (Washington, DC: National Governor's Association, 1998).

community-based programs have begun to emerge in recent years, they still remain small -- particularly when compared to the number of custodial parents receiving employment and training services.

While programs which serve non-custodial parents vary in their goals and scope, programs fall into four basic categories. As shown on Table 2, the programs generally vary along two basic dimensions -- the target group and the service strategy. In terms of the target group, as described more extensively below, some programs serve fathers who are ordered into the program by the courts because they are behind in their child support payments. Others target more broadly on young fathers and perhaps other individuals in disadvantaged communities. In terms of the service strategy, some programs only provide services to help participants find work. Others provide more "holistic" services that recognize that in addition to employment-related services non-custodial parents may also need counseling, instruction on parenting skills, and other support services.

Table 2  
Types of Programs for Non-Custodial Fathers

Target Group/Service Strategy	Work Oriented	Holistic
Court-Ordered	Employment services provided to non-custodial parents who are ordered into the program by the courts because they are behind in their child support payments	Wide range of support and work-related services provided to non-custodial parents who are ordered into the program by the courts because they are behind in their child support payments
Community-Based	Employment services provided to unemployed non-custodial fathers regardless of whether they have a child support order	Wide range of support and work-related services provided to unemployed or underemployed non-custodial fathers regardless of whether they have a child support order

There are also two demonstration projects focused on non-custodial parents -- one which has been operating for several years and one in its very early phases. These demonstration projects build on programs developed by states and community-based organizations. The Parent's Fair Share (PFS) demonstration project -- the only federal initiative that targets this population -- provides employment services, enhanced child support, and peer support to non-custodial fathers with children receiving cash assistance. This project, which operated in seven sites, began in 1992 and ended in 1996. Another major demonstration project -- Partners for Fragile Families (PFF) -- was recently started in 12 sites.<sup>25</sup> This demonstration program targets young fathers and focuses more on the establishment of paternity but also includes services to

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<sup>25</sup>For more information, see *Partners for Fragile Families Demonstration Project* (Washington, DC: National Center for Strategic Nonprofit Planning and Community Leadership, 1998).

help them meet child support obligations and obtain employment.<sup>26</sup>

In order to assist other entities developing their own programs under the WtW grants, the following sections present a discussion of the structure and services provided through these programs and also includes information on the limited research that is available on the effectiveness of the programs.

### **Recruitment**

A critical issue facing programs which provide services to non-custodial fathers is how to identify and recruit fathers into the program. This has proven to be a challenge to most programs since these fathers have very little connection to established systems or networks that simplify recruitment.

One method of recruiting appropriate fathers for employment and training services (used in the PFS demonstration as well as other state programs) has been through the court system. In this type of program, the child support system identifies and refers non-paying non-custodial parents to a court hearing. At this hearing, non-custodial parents who identify unemployment as the reason for nonpayment are ordered into the employment program and are essentially mandated to participate in the program. The fathers served in this type of program typically have a child support order in place and thus have already established a linkage with the child support system. The primary goal of the program is to help fathers become employed so that they can fulfill their child support obligations. In these programs, fathers can be referred back to a court or hearing officer if they do not comply and may ultimately face incarceration for non-payment of

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<sup>26</sup>Both of these projects receive funding from the Ford Foundation, which has played a major role in launching initiatives in this area.

child support.

The experience of programs using this method of recruitment indicates that there is often a large fall-off between the number of fathers who are initially identified as appropriate for the program and those who actually participate in the program. One issue that contributes to the drop-off is that the father may already be working, but in "off-the-books" employment that is not picked up by the child support system. In these cases, child support payments can be initiated but it is generally not appropriate to enroll the father in employment activities because they are working. In addition, it may not be possible to locate some fathers who are initially identified, some may not show up for the court hearing, and others may have legitimate reasons for not working (for example, they are disabled).

The other primary method that is used to recruit participants is through voluntary mechanisms. In this type of program, recruitment occurs by word of mouth or voluntary referrals from welfare offices, child support agencies, food stamp offices, schools, community-based organizations, and detention centers. Fathers are eligible to participate regardless of whether they have a child support order, and establishing paternity is often the initial and primary goal of these programs. In these programs, there are generally no sanctions for not meeting the program requirements. The PFF demonstration uses this strategy to recruit fathers and encourages them to voluntarily establish paternity.

### **Services Offered**

Past public and community-based programs have varied in the range of services they provide to non-custodial parents. Some programs are strictly focused on employment and training services and view employment of the father as their singular goal. As described below,

some programs also offer a range of more comprehensive services designed to achieve a variety of purposes beyond employment and paying child support including paternity establishment, stronger relationships with their children and families, and better parenting skills.

***Employment Services.*** The cornerstone of most programs for non-custodial fathers is employment and training services. Programs typically offer job search services which assist individuals in locating a job and also develop job search skills such as interviewing and resume writing. On-the-job training (in which participants are placed in a wage-paying job and receive training in an occupational skill with the employer receiving a wage subsidy to cover the costs), classroom education and training, and work experience have been provided to this population but on a more limited scale. As discussed more extensively below, some programs have had difficulty developing adequate numbers of appropriate on-the-job training slots, and fathers have shown limited interest in classroom education and training. In general, non-custodial fathers appear to prefer more work-focused than education-focused activities.

***Family-oriented services.*** Many programs for non-custodial fathers -- including PFS and PFF -- are built on the premise that employment and training service by themselves will not lead to changed attitudes and regular child support payment patterns for all participants. Therefore, in addition to obtaining employment, many programs offer a range of comprehensive services for fathers focused on supporting and improving their parenting behavior. The types of activities offered include:

- ***Support groups.*** Support groups offer non-custodial fathers an opportunity to share their experiences and concerns with others in similar circumstances. They also offer program operators an opportunity to work with participants on a range of other issues besides employment such as parental roles and responsibilities, relationships, managing anger, problems on the job, and coping with racism. In the PFS demonstration, the support groups (known as "peer support") used a structured curriculum to teach participants

about their rights and obligations as non-custodial parents, encourage positive parental behavior and sexual responsibility, strengthen participants' commitment to work, and enhance their life skills. PFS found this was a critical program component and one that was very popular among the fathers.

- *Mediation.* Often disagreements between custodial and non-custodial parents about visitation, custody, lifestyles, money, and the roles of other adults in their children's lives can discourage child support payments. Some programs, including PFS, offered opportunities for parents to mediate their differences using services modeled on those now provided through many family courts in divorce cases.

*Enhanced child support services.* A few programs, including PFS, have offered expedited establishment of paternity and child support orders and flexible rules that allow child support to be reduced when the individual is participating in the program. Reducing the level of child support owed while the father is participating in the program provides a financial incentive to participate. PFS also developed procedures for quick modification of support orders for employment or noncompliance with PFS participation requirements.

*Establishing paternity.* Some programs, such as PFF, focus on paternity establishment because this is the first step on the father's route to establishing a connection -- both financially and emotionally -- to his family. These services generally focus on explaining the benefits of establishing paternity to the fathers, guiding the father through the necessary steps to establish paternity, and providing support to families to help them manage the financial and relational aspects of paternity establishment.

### **Program Effectiveness**

Only limited research on the effectiveness of programs for non-custodial parents is available. Early results from PFS, the major demonstration program for non-custodial parents which was evaluated using a random assignment research design, shows mixed results with some

sites performing better than others.<sup>27</sup> As discussed above, PFS provided employment services (primarily job search services), peer support, mediation, and enhanced child support services to non-custodial fathers with children receiving cash assistance.

During an 18 month follow-up period, a referral to the PFS program increased the percentage of fathers who paid child support in three of seven sites (Dayton, Grand Rapids, and Los Angeles). In these sites, there was a 15 to 50 percent increase in the proportion of parents paying child support. There was also an increase in the average amount of child support paid in Dayton (55 percent) and Grand Rapids (20 percent) over the entire follow-up period. In two of the seven sites -- Dayton and Los Angeles -- the program increased the fathers' employment rates by 17 to 19 percent but there was no effect on overall earnings. The PFS study also found that the process of identifying appropriate fathers for the program before any referral took place -- which in most sites consisted of extra outreach and case review practices -- resulted in a 10 to 75 percent increase in the proportion of fathers paying child support and a 15 to 60 percent increase in the amount of child support paid. In part, this increase in child support payments occurred because the outreach activities led parents to inform the child support agency of previously unreported employment.

The study found that the programs which produced impacts exhibited a strong level of involvement of the child support agency and a strong peer support program which focused on the importance of supporting children. It also appears that the lack of employment and training services that met the needs of a substantial portion of the fathers -- particularly those that combined work with training and job retention services -- plus limited job opportunities in their

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<sup>27</sup>Doolittle et al., 1998.

neighborhoods, contributed to the lack of overall impacts on employment and earnings.

Title II of the JTPA program, while not specifically targeted toward non-custodial parents, serves disadvantaged men and women, and was evaluated in 16 localities between 1988 and 1991 using a randomized experimental design.<sup>28</sup> JTPA participants typically received four months of employment and training services, primarily classroom training, but also job search assistance and on-the-job training. This study found that JTPA increased earnings for both men and women, with those enrollees designated for a service strategy that emphasized on-the-job training and job search assistance experiencing larger impacts than those assigned to classroom training or other services.

## **V. WtW Program Issues and Service Strategies**

Because non-custodial fathers face several barriers to employment and services for them have not been widespread, the WtW program represents an important opportunity to improve their employment prospects and the economic well-being of their families. To do this, programs are needed which not only assist fathers in becoming prepared for and locating stable employment but also facilitate their efforts to pay child support and become involved with their families. Past experience indicates several strategies are likely to lead to effective program services:

### **Developing Appropriate Work-Focused Employment Services**

One of the key lessons from past programs serving non-custodial parents is the need to develop appropriate employment services for this group. Several factors indicate that it is

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<sup>28</sup>L. Orr et al, *Does Training for the Disadvantaged Work? Evidence for the National JTPA Study* (Washington, DC: The Urban Institute, 1995).

important to develop a range of employment services -- particularly those that combine work and skill-building -- that are suitable for these fathers.

First, developing a range of employment services is important given the relatively diverse types of fathers that can be served through the program. Many fathers have a very tenuous connection to the mainstream labor market and will need assistance to find a job. Other non-custodial parents have been employed in short-term and low-paying jobs and need assistance finding better paying and more stable employment. The range in the age of the fathers also indicates a need for different types of services. A relatively small portion (about one-quarter) of these fathers are relatively young (under the age of 25) and are at the point in their lives where they may be interested in making an investment in skill-building or training programs that will pay off in the future. However, older fathers may not be interested in these types of career-building activities and may be more interested in immediate employment that builds on work they have done in the past.

Second, experience indicates that programs need to provide more than job search assistance -- a primary activity offered in past programs for fathers. Clearly, job search assistance is a desirable employment strategy in certain circumstances. The service is of a limited time period, which makes it more likely fathers will participate in and complete the activity. It also can be provided at a relatively low cost. If successful, these job search activities can also provide immediate income (which is desirable from the point of view of both the father and the child support system). There are however several reasons why this strategy -- while appropriate for some fathers -- may not be sufficient for other fathers. Studies have shown that job search activities have only limited success for more disadvantaged individuals with marginal work

experience and that people obtain similar jobs and wages as they would have found on their own.<sup>29</sup> Thus, this strategy may be unlikely to help them into more stable jobs that could help them break the cycle of intermittent employment and earn enough to both support themselves and meet their child support obligations.

Finally, while their skills levels are relatively low and in need of upgrade, the experience from PFS and other programs indicates that non-custodial parents often have had negative school experiences and resist making a long-term commitment to classroom-based skills training or basic education programs. They also have a strong interest in finding income-producing employment relatively quickly. This means that programs that are able to combine training with work are most likely to be successful with this population. This emphasis on work is also well-suited to the design of the WtW grants -- where education and training are not allowable activities unless combined with work.

Given these issues, WtW program operators are likely to have the most success with programs that provide a range of services that include job search assistance as well as options that mix training with income-producing work. Services such as on-the-job training (in which participants are placed in a wage-paying job and receive training in an occupational skill with the employer receiving a wage subsidy to cover the costs), publicly funded jobs (where participants are paid a wage for employment in a community-based organization or public or non-profit sector), or training programs combined with part-time work may be particularly important in

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<sup>29</sup>J. Strawn, *Beyond Job Search or Basic Education: Rethinking the Role of Skills in Welfare Reform* (Washington, DC: Center for Law and Social Policy, 1998). L. Plimpton and D.S. Nightingale, *Welfare Employment Programs: Impacts and Cost-Effectiveness of Employment and Training Activities*, unpublished paper. J. Gueron and E. Pauly, *From Welfare to Work*. (New York, NY: Russell Sage Foundation, 1991).

developing effective services for non-custodial parents.

The major challenge for program operators is how to effectively develop these opportunities that mix work and training. Past programs have had difficulty building the capacity to provide on-the-job training beyond a very small scale and even less experience with publicly funded jobs or options that combine employment with training programs. Their experiences indicate several strategies programs need to undertake in order to be successful in developing these employment opportunities for non-custodial parents:

- *Job preparation services.* Because of the lack of employability skills among many participants, programs have had success with four-to-six week pre-employment programs that provide training on employer expectations, job performance, and other issues related to the world of work.
- *Staff dedicated to developing and monitoring OJT slots.* The experience of past programs indicates that considerable effort must be put into developing subsidized employment slots. Some programs have been successful by dedicating staff and resources to marketing OJT slots to employers (persuading them to hire and train participants in exchange for a wage subsidy), making appropriate matches between participants and employers, monitoring participants while they are on site and resolving any issues that may arise, ensuring that employers are providing quality training, and looking for guarantees of permanent employment after the training ends.
- *Involving the private sector.* Another clear lesson from past programs is the need to involve the private sector in the development of employment services. States are finding that involving the private sector is critical to their efforts to employ custodial mothers, and these same lessons apply to fathers. These efforts include involving the private sector in program planning and development, offering screening services and wage subsidies as an incentive for their participation, jointly developing options that allow work to be combined with a training program, and linking job training closely to local labor market needs.
- *Providing publicly funded jobs for the most hard-to-employ.* For those fathers who cannot locate unsubsidized employment and face too many barriers to be placed with a private sector employer, publicly funded jobs offer a way for these fathers both to gain work experience and meet their child support obligations. As with OJT, these subsidized positions can be difficult to develop and maintain and require sufficient staff and resources to be dedicated to these tasks.
- *Support services.* Non-custodial fathers are likely to confront a number of issues while

they are participating in employment services. Programs can assist them in resolving problems that may hinder participation such as job coaching, counseling, career guidance, transportation assistance, and legal services.

- *Leveraging other resources for training and education.* Because WtW funds cannot be used for stand-alone education and training, non-custodial fathers who need these services and are unable to integrate them with work could be served by combining WtW funds with TANF, JTPA and/or Perkins vocational education funds. The new Workforce Development Investment Act should make it easier for states and localities to combine resources from these different programs.

### **Providing post-employment services**

As discussed above, many non-custodial fathers likely to be eligible for WtW services have some connection to the labor force. However, many work sporadically or part-time and very few have sustained employment, indicating that these fathers may have difficulty retaining jobs or moving up the career ladder. These patterns of employment are similar to some women on welfare where evidence shows that temporary jobs, frequent layoffs, low pay in relation to work expenses, lack of experience meeting employer expectations, and personal or family problems all lead to dismissals and resignations.<sup>30</sup> However, it also is important to understand that many of the jobs in the secondary labor market for which low-skilled workers are qualified for are not stable -- there is much turnover due to no fault of the worker.

Some states and localities have responded by increasing the availability of post-employment services that help custodial parents keep jobs once they find them. Given their relatively sporadic employment histories, it is likely that non-custodial fathers will confront these

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<sup>30</sup>A Hershey and L. Pavetti, "Turning Job Finders into Job Keepers" (*The Future of Children: Welfare to Work*, Volume 7, No. 1, Spring 1997). R. Brown et al, *Working Out of Poverty: Employment Retention and Career Advancement for Welfare Recipients* (Washington, DC: National Governor's Association, 1998). A. Rangarajan, *Taking the First Steps: Helping Welfare Recipients Who Get Jobs Keep Them* (Princeton, NJ: Mathematica Policy Research, Inc., November 1996).

types of problems and could also benefit from these types of services. Post-employment services that program operators may want to consider include:

- *Ongoing program support.* The assistance of a program staff person once participants becomes employed could help them retain their jobs. Programs can provide support by identifying problems that might threaten employment, detecting job loss rapidly, helping participants locate a new job if necessary, and assisting them in accessing education and training while they are working. Some programs use a hotline that program participants can use to quickly contact a staff person to assist them.
- *Job Counseling.* Some low-income workers may not have a good understanding of the expectations and requirements of the job or knowledge of workplace norms. Providing guidance, information, and mediation services may help defuse or solve conflicts and misunderstandings that can undermine job stability.
- *Other Types of Counseling.* As discussed above, low-income non-custodial fathers may have legal, substance abuse, or other types of problems that make job stability difficult. Providing assistance and appropriate referrals when needed could improve the ability of these fathers to stay on the job. It may be particularly important to develop mechanisms to provide legal assistance to these fathers. While many fathers have legal difficulties, very few past programs have the capacity to address problems fathers have in this area.
- *Transportation and other support services.* Providing supports to enable fathers to keep working is an important post-employment service. In particular, transportation assistance is needed given that getting to a job can be difficult -- particularly in inner cities (where jobs may be located outside the city) and rural areas. Fathers may also need assistance with other work expenses such as equipment or fees.

### **Developing mechanisms to recruit fathers into the program**

Given the experience of past programs for non-custodial parents, it is likely that a primary challenge facing WtW programs is recruiting a sufficient number of fathers into the program.

Many past programs have had difficulty in this area, whether recruitment was done on a mandatory or voluntary basis. Recruitment will be even more difficult under the WtW grants given that the father must have a child receiving TANF and meet certain targeting requirements.

Given these requirements, it will probably be difficult to rely solely on voluntary mechanisms to recruit fathers.

Rather, the structure of WtW grants indicate that program operators will have to coordinate efforts of the TANF agency, the child support agency, and perhaps the courts in order to identify sufficient numbers of appropriate fathers to serve in their programs. The TANF agency can provide information regarding whether these non-custodial fathers have a child receiving TANF for the appropriate length of time. The child support agency can provide assistance in determining if the father has established a child support order and is not paying support. It is more difficult to determine if the father is unemployed and in need of employment services -- a court hearing or meeting with child support staff may be needed to determine that the father is not paying because of unemployment.

As discussed above, there are fathers who work "off the books" but do not appear to be working according to checks done by the child support agency. As discovered in the PFS demonstration, this referral process can be a good way of "smoking out" these fathers (most will not want participate in employment services because they are working) and initiating child support payments. However, it further diminishes the group of fathers that is appropriate for the services provided under the WtW grants.

### **Developing mechanisms to keep fathers participating in employment services on an ongoing basis**

Past programs for non-custodial fathers have consistently had trouble eliciting regular attendance and preventing individuals from dropping out of employment services. Unlike welfare-to-work programs for custodial mothers where the attendance in activities can be linked to the receipt of cash assistance, there is no clear mechanism to keep fathers participating unless they choose to do so. WtW program operators can, however, adopt an approach emphasizing both "carrots and sticks" which could encourage high levels of participation by the fathers. On the

positive side, programs can offer services that participants find particularly attractive such as support groups. In PFS, this was a primary mechanism for encouraging fathers' ongoing participation in the program. In addition, reduced child support payments for periods in which the individual is in the program provides a financial incentive to participate. Finally, it is possible to use negative consequences -- namely, the threat of incarceration due to unpaid child support -- if the father does not participate as required. The PFS demonstration found that participation levels were increased depending on the nature of the "message" delivered by the program. In particular, the authority of its deliverer (a judge instead of a staff person), the site's ability to follow up on those who failed to respond, and real or perceived consequences of noncooperation all appeared to make a difference in participation levels.

#### **Providing family-focused and special supportive services**

Many programs serving non-custodial fathers have discovered that employment services alone are not likely to be sufficient to induce all of them to participate intensively or to make a lasting difference in their employment and payment patterns. Programs also need to address other factors that lead many non-custodial fathers to resist working and paying child support regularly. These experiences indicate that fathers can benefit from a broader range of services such as support groups geared toward enhancing parent-child relationships and improving parenting skills.

One issue for WtW grantees is that many of these special services are not allowed under the WtW legislation, which only allows expenditures on work-focused activities. If program operators are to provide these services to non-custodial fathers, funding would have to be made available from another source. However, given the resources already available for employment under the WtW grants, program operators may be able to leverage additional resources from

other sources to create a comprehensive program for non-custodial fathers. As discussed below, some community-based organizations sometimes have experience providing these types of services and could become a partner in developing a range of more comprehensive services. Past experience indicates that these additional services are critical for engaging fathers in the program and for promoting healthy relationships with their children. This in turn could lead to improved employment and child support outcomes for these fathers.

### **Engaging community-based organizations in the provision of services**

Some community-based organizations have experience that is important for program operators to draw upon as they develop service options for non-custodial parents. Program operators may want to place a high priority on involving organizations serving fathers, who are generally well-qualified to provide a range of supportive services because of their expertise on issues specifically related to this population. Services these groups may have experience in providing include pre-employment preparation and counseling; post-employment supportive services; family services that simultaneously engage fathers, mothers, and children; brokering communication between the men and the child support enforcement system; and identifying options that allow work and training to be combined.

CBOs can be engaged in WtW grant programs in several ways: by formally applying as a grantee for a competitive grant, by becoming a subgrantee of a WtW grantee, or by referring individuals to programs or agencies that are receiving WtW funds. For CBOs who have not worked closely with the JTPA system in the past, the current focus on non-custodial parents provides an important window of opportunity to not only increase services for the men with whom they work, but also to forge a close collaborative relationship with the workforce

development system.

### **Developing partnerships with the child support system and other agencies**

One of the most important lessons from PFS and other programs is the critical importance -- but also the inherent difficulty -- of building local partnerships to provide services to fathers. These partnerships are vital -- particularly if the program seeks to increase both employment and child support payments. Depending on the nature of the program, collaboration between the child support system (which includes the courts), the employment and training system, and community-based organizations -- each of which has different organizational missions, standards for the success for their clients, funding sources, and administrative procedures -- may be needed to provide the necessary services for this population. The PFS demonstration found that operating programs that link employment and child support require a sustained level of attention from program managers in all involved agencies as well as a commitment to work through the issues that emerge on an ongoing basis. The complexity of these institutional linkages should not be underestimated, and may require upfront investments which acknowledge and seek to reconcile differences in perspectives.

If programs are developed to encourage fathers to *both* become employed and pay child support, establishing linkages with the child support system are particularly important. WtW program operators should consider coordination with the child support enforcement system in several areas:

- *Understanding state policies regarding pass-throughs and arrearages.* Some states have undertaken efforts to increase the incentives to pay child support through the formal system by increasing the amount passed-through to welfare families or by offering leniency on accumulated arrears in appropriate circumstances. WtW program operators should develop a thorough understanding of these policies and when possible educate fathers on favorable child support policies. In cases where policies could be improved, WtW

grantees could become involved in efforts to enact the legislation in this area (changes in either of these policies would require legislative changes at the state level.).

- *Developing appropriate referral processes for fathers to establish paternity or child support orders.* Depending on how non-custodial fathers are recruited into the employment and training program, the program may be serving fathers who have not established paternity or child support orders. The WtW program operators could work with the child support agency to establish mechanisms that allow them to identify fathers without paternity or child support orders and make appropriate referrals so these can be established quickly.
- *Allowing flexibility over child support payments while participating in the program.* To encourage fathers to participate in employment-related services, as discussed above, one important strategy is to eliminate or reduce child support payments while the father is in the program. WtW grantees should work with the child support agency to develop policies that would allow awards to be adjusted quickly downward when the individual is participating in the program and increased if the father does not participate.

While providing services to non-custodial fathers can be challenging, programs which increase both the earnings and child support payments of non-custodial fathers are a critical area for administrators to channel their energies. There is much to be gained in terms of reducing poverty among children if programs can succeed in achieving these dual goals.

DOL

DOL - Work

→ may want to have set aside in next  
education for fathers...

10/19  
Fathers +  
Employment

One-stops

Veterans Employment

Family Medical Leave

Judge Ross

Could we send list to IVD directors

Access + Visitation grants

\$10 mil/yr

Partners for Fragile Families

13 sites across the country

→ may want to expand

Fair Share

→ demo over

Child Support Collaboration grants

## Special Improvement Grants

- ~~want~~ to now give out over 1 yr
- want to give out every couple of months

## Paternity Establishment

## Public Education Campaign

## Responsible Fatherhood Projects

- young never married dads who just established paternity
- model varies by state (some include emp)
- ACF/ASPE working on evaluation model

## Sykes

- Hard demo re = young couples modeled after responsible fathers
- Community action agencies are working in this area.

→

TANF

→ identifying promising practices  
(workbooks etc)

→ are working on program guidance

Linda H.

→ new Kathy Edin study ~~on TANF~~ non-custodial fathers

→ housing

→ food

\*

→ Data from Federal Interagency Forum  
on Child & Family Statistics (June 1988)  
(on ASPE web site)

→ Annie Casen entry on father  
Nat'l Ctr on Fathers & Families  
has extensive

Nancy Weir / DOJ

Mott / Ford / HHS / Public Work Film

→ incarcerated + ex-offender fathers

→ 60% men in jail are fathers  
700,000

- setting up demos
- feasibility study
- 3 forums upcoming

## Judge Ross

- want to match with all case registry w/ prisoners database
- ~~wants to make sure AN~~
- uncertain that averages build up

## DoJ / Bureau of Justice Assistance

- in institutions
- probation
- linkage from prison to community
- ↳ Corrections Options
- ↳ fund aftercare

Videos "It ain't Love"

~~BS~~

→ National Institute of Corrections

## Nancy Heit

"Show Your Love" / Boston Univ.  
 produced for Family Reunion Conference  
 Dan Kauffmann 617/353-7740  
 (Nancy)

## Dept of Education

- Focusing on literacy & fatherhood
- planning to do grants in those

## USDA

Matt Crispino

ETT in Food Stamps

~ \$850 m

80% for ABOP<sub>s</sub>

States tend to contract out

Linda M.

Urban Institute has SIPP contract in Jan/Feb 1999

- ability to pay
- ability to provide health ins

Dennis L.

- Need index

FLUP - Pat Arnaudo  
Publication

- ↳ committed to publishing best practices  
→ Hartford model
- ↳ have clearinghouse  
1-800-955-2232

Andrea Kane

10/12/98 02:28:04  
PM

Record Type: Record

To: See the distribution list at the bottom of this message  
cc: Cynthia A. Rice/OPD/EOP  
Subject: Meeting on Father, Employment & Child Support

As discussed at the July 21st meeting of the Interagency Group on Fathers Issues, we want to bring together an interagency group on the cross-cutting topic of increasing employment of fathers, which in turn has implications for child support. Based on that meeting, we know that ED, HUD, DOL, DOJ and HHS have related initiatives. We would like to schedule a first meeting on this topic for **Friday, 10/16 at from 11a.m. - 12:30 p.m.** Most of this first meeting will be devoted to sharing information about existing or planned initiatives. Please respond by email to let me know whether this time works for you or whether someone else will represent you, or call Damond Watkins at 456-5523. We will confirm and provide a location in the next day or two (probably at the White House Conference Center so clearance won't be needed). We are also calling others in your agency for whom I don't have email addresses (HHS: David Ross, Don Sykes, Diann Dawson. DOJ: Allyson Stollenwerck, Wendy Patten). I'm coordinating this meeting with Cynthia Rice's ongoing Child Support group. If there are others who should attend, please let me know.

Fathers work group -- this would take the place of our regularly scheduled conference call.  
Leanne/Jose -- thought you might be interested given issues related to incarcerated fathers.

Message Sent To:

Menahem\_herman @ ed.gov @ inet  
calvin\_nolphin @ ed.gov @ inet  
Jennings-Lynn @ dol.gov @ inet  
jmonahan @ acf.dhhs.gov@INET@LNGTWY  
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Nancy.Hoit @ npr.gov @ inet  
lmellgre @ osaspe.dhhs.gov @ inet  
Lisa M. Mallory/OVP @ OVP  
Pamela.Johnson @ npr.gov @ inet  
Joejoe @ erols.com @ inet  
Maureen H. Walsh/OMB/EOP  
Edwin Lau/OMB/EOP  
Anil Kakani/OMB/EOP  
Emil E. Parker/OPD/EOP  
Leanne A. Shimabukuro/OPD/EOP  
Jose Cerda III/OPD/EOP

# THE *JOBS-PLUS* DEMONSTRATION

## A COMMUNITY EMPLOYMENT PROJECT MANAGED BY THE MANPOWER DEMONSTRATION RESEARCH CORPORATION

Area	Jobs-Plus
Goal	to dramatically raise employment rates in urban public housing developments with high rates of welfare receipt and unemployment
Lead local organization/city	public housing authorities in Baltimore, Chattanooga, Cleveland, Dayton, Los Angeles, Saint Paul, Seattle
Role of other local stakeholders: welfare and JTPA agencies, employers, other public and community groups	a formal collaborative has been established with these groups to design and manage the initiative
Role of residents	formal role in collaborative and active leadership role
Program components	(1) employment and training best practices, (2) community supports for work, and (3) work incentives
Research agenda	early lessons on collaborative formation and program implementation; impacts on employment, earnings, welfare, and other measures; and benefit-cost analysis
Timeframe	1997-2003
Funders	U.S. Departments of Housing and Urban Development, Labor, and Health and Human Services; and the Rockefeller, James Irvine, Northwest Area, Surdna, and Casey Foundations

**Parents' Fair Share  
Program Implementation and Interim Findings**

Fred Doolittle  
Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation (MDRC)

October 2, 1998

### Parents' Fair Share's Three Goals

- **Increasing the employment and earnings of low-income noncustodial parents of children receiving welfare:** PFS faced a different challenge than programs serving custodial parents (usually women) receiving welfare, many of whom had little formal work history. Impacts in these programs were often achieved by getting more women into jobs or getting women who would have worked into jobs faster. In contrast, the great majority of PFS fathers had worked (though usually spottily and in low-wage jobs). Increases in the proportion working at all would be harder to achieve, so the program's goals included increased job retention and wage levels, as well as higher overall employment rates.
- **Increasing child support payments:** Many other studies have shown that the frequency and amount of child support payments are related to noncustodial parents' income; hence the goal of increased earnings is linked to the goal of greater child support. However, fathers' attitudes toward their parental responsibilities, the custodial parent, and the child support system (which, under most states' rules, does not pass payments on to families receiving welfare) also influence the payment of support. PFS sought to affect all of these things. It was also implemented as the CSE system was gradually evolving with the development of new methods to track employment and earnings and changes in rules on adjustments of orders, so that the "enhancements" to child support involved in PFS came on top of a changing base of standard enforcement.
- **Supporting and improving parenting behavior:** Noncustodial parents can help their children in a variety of ways beyond financial support, and PFS sought to help them become more involved as responsible parents, a personal goal of many of the fathers. But lack of money and at times contentious relations with the custodial parent had hampered many fathers' efforts to play this role. Supporting the importance of the effort was other research indicating that increased parental involvement may also contribute to greater payment of support, suggesting that the goals of the demonstration are interrelated.

**Parents' Fair Share**  
**Core Components of the PFS**  
**Program Model**

---

- **Peer support.** MDRC's background research and the pilot phase experience suggested that employment and training services alone would not lead to changed attitudes and regular child support payment patterns for all participants. Education, support, and recognition could be needed as well. Thus, demonstration programs were expected to provide regular support groups for participants. The purpose of this component is to inform participants about their rights and obligations as noncustodial parents, to encourage positive parental behavior and sexual responsibility, to strengthen participants' commitment to work, and to enhance participants' life skills. The component is built around a curriculum, known as Responsible Fatherhood, that was supplied by MDRC. The groups also could have included recreational activities, "mentoring" arrangements using successful PFS graduates, or planned parent-child activities. *most heavily participated in activity*
  - **Employment and training.** The goal of these activities is to help participants secure long-term, stable employment at a wage level that would allow them to support themselves and their children. Sites were strongly encouraged to offer a variety of services, including job search assistance and opportunities for education and skills training. In addition, since it is important to engage participants in income-producing activities quickly to establish the practice of paying child support, sites were encouraged to offer opportunities for on-the-job training, paid work experience, and other activities that mix skills training or education with part-time employment.
  - **Enhanced child support enforcement.** One objective of PFS is to increase support payments made on behalf of children living in single-parent welfare households. Although a legal and administrative structure already exists to establish and enforce child support obligations, demonstration sites were asked to develop new procedures, services, and incentives in this area. These included steps to expedite the modification of child support awards and/or flexible rules that allowed child support orders to be reduced while noncustodial parents participated in PFS and special monitoring of the status of PFS cases.
  - **Mediation.** Often disagreements between custodial and noncustodial parents about visitation, household expenditures, lifestyles, child care, and school arrangements — and the roles and actions of other adults in their children's lives — influence child support payment patterns. Thus, demonstration sites had to provide opportunities for parents to mediate their differences using services modeled on those now provided through many family courts in divorce cases.
- 

*Case management became part of program too*

**Parents' Fair Share**  
**Agencies Playing Key Roles in Implementing PFS**  
**by Site**

County	Lead State Agency	Lead Local Agency	Program Home
Dayton	Department of Human Services	Montgomery County Department of Human Services	Goodwill Industries of Miami Valley
Grand Rapids	Department of Social Services	Kent County Friend of the Court	Hope Network
Jacksonville	Department of Labor and Employment Security	Florida Department of Labor and Employment Security, Region III	DLES, Region III
Los Angeles	Employment Development Department	Los Angeles District Attorney's Office, Bureau of Family Support Operations	Los Angeles Department of Community and Senior Services
Memphis	Department of Human Services	Bridges, Inc. <sup>a</sup>	Bridges, Inc.
Springfield	Department of Transitional Assistance <sup>b</sup>	Spectra Management Services Corporation <sup>c</sup>	Spectra Management Services Corporation
Trenton	Department of Human Services	Union Industrial Home for Children	Union Industrial Home for Children

NOTES: <sup>a</sup>Formerly known as Youth Services USA.  
<sup>b</sup>Formerly known as Massachusetts Department of Public Welfare.  
<sup>c</sup>Formerly known as Springfield Employment Resource Center, Inc.

## Findings in Brief

- **Implementing PFS presented management challenges that went far beyond identifying agencies with experience in providing the program's services and seeking funding to support this effort.** At a minimum, the local partnership needed to include the CSE agency and the courts, employment and training service providers, and organizations with the capacity to provide peer support and mediation. At the core of the challenge, the intended partners began with different organizational missions and assumptions about their "clients," funding sources, administrative procedures, standards for rating their performance, and experience dealing with those facing a legal mandate to participate (as opposed to volunteers).
- **Some PFS services were easier to put in place than others.** In general, peer support, job club, extra case review at CSE offices to identify parents for PFS intake, and the offer of voluntary mediation were implemented across most sites. Implementation of "skill-building" education and training options and a quick follow-up when parents found employment or failed to comply with program requirements were more difficult to sustain over time. Further, because of difficulties in identifying potential PFS referrals from the child support caseload and getting them to appear for review hearings, five of the seven sites did not meet their enrollment targets, and, at times, program operations were hampered by this shortfall.
- **The majority of the noncustodial parents referred to PFS were living in poverty, or on the edge of poverty, with a recent history of moving from one low-wage job to another.** Thus, the challenge was to help these fathers find better jobs than they would otherwise have found or to secure more stable employment. This report is primarily based on a sample of 2,641 parents who were found to be eligible and appropriate for referral to PFS. Many faced substantial barriers to moving into better jobs in the mainstream labor market: nearly 50 percent lacked a high school diploma, and about 70 percent had been arrested for an offense unrelated to child support.
- **Slightly more than two-thirds of the noncustodial parents referred to PFS participated in at least one PFS activity.** The average participant was active for five months, with about one-half participating for one to three months and about one-quarter continuing to participate for four to six months. Participation was greatest in peer support and job search workshops. Virtually all those who failed to participate and did not have a

→ would it help to have a subsidized agency?

long-term "excuse" recognized by the program were referred back to the child support agency for further enforcement.

- **Parents subject to the extra outreach and case review involved in PFS intake, prior to any referral to the PFS program, made more payments to the child support agency than those subject to traditional child support enforcement.** Among other effects, the extra outreach and case review uncovered previously unreported employment, allowing the child support agency to institute wage withholding. In three sites where a special study of the extra review was conducted, the increase in the proportion of parents paying any child support ranged from 6 to 15 percentage points, and average total child support payments per parent subject to the extra review increased by \$160 to \$200 over the six quarters of follow-up.
- **Separate from the effects of this extra outreach effort, a larger number of parents referred to the PFS services and mandates paid child support than would have paid in the absence of access to the program.** Across all seven sites combined, the number of parents who paid support during the follow-up quarters increased by about 4.5 to 7.5 percentage points. However, these impacts on child support were mainly the results of substantial impacts in three of the seven sites. In two of these three sites, the average amount of child support paid per parent over the 18 months of follow-up also increased by a statistically significant amount.
- **Unfortunately, these increases in child support came without a corresponding increase in fathers' employment and earnings.** No site produced increases in employment and earnings that were consistent and statistically significant during the 18 months of follow-up for this report.

- 
- 1) Grand Rapids
  - 2) Los Angeles
  - 3) Dayton

Started 1992

**Parents' Fair Share  
Supplemental Information**

Fred Doolittle  
Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation (MDRC)

October 2, 1998

**Parents' Fair Share**  
**Impacts of Extra Outreach on Child Support Payments**  
**for Three Sites Combined**

Outcome	Extra Outreach Group	Standard Group	Impact
<b>Paid child support (%)</b>			
Prior quarter 1 <sup>a</sup>	19.1	19.1	0.0
Quarter 0 <sup>b</sup>	21.8	18.0	3.8 ***
Quarter 1	27.7	20.1	7.6 ***
Quarter 2	30.7	23.6	7.1 ***
Quarter 3	32.7	26.0	6.7 ***
Quarter 4	31.9	26.4	5.6 ***
Quarter 5	30.7	25.4	5.3 ***
Quarter 6	31.8	26.6	5.2 ***
Quarters 1-6	54.9	47.2	7.7 ***
<b>Amount of child support paid (\$)</b>			
Prior quarter 1 <sup>a</sup>	87	87	0
Quarter 0 <sup>b</sup>	98	83	15 **
Quarter 1	130	100	30 ***
Quarter 2	165	133	32 ***
Quarter 3	202	175	27 **
Quarter 4	204	180	24 *
Quarter 5	187	154	33 ***
Quarter 6	202	175	27 **
Quarters 1-6	1,090	917	173 ***
Sample size (total =6,844)	4,416	2,428	

SOURCE: MDRC calculations from child support enforcement (CSE) payment records.

NOTES: A two-tailed t-test was applied to differences between program and control groups. Statistical significance levels are indicated as \*\*\* = 1 percent; \*\* = 5 percent; \* = 10 percent.

The sample used for this analysis excludes the members of the program group who were given a weight of 0.

<sup>a</sup> Prior quarter 1 refers to the quarter before random assignment.

<sup>b</sup> Quarter of random assignment.

**Parents' Fair Share**  
**Impacts of Extra Outreach on Child Support Payments,**  
**by Site**

Outcome	Dayton			Grand Rapids			Memphis		
	Extra Outreach Group	Standard Group	Impact	Extra Outreach Group	Standard Group	Impact	Extra Outreach Group	Standard Group	Impact
<b>Paid some child support (%)</b>									
Prior quarter 1 <sup>a</sup>	31.2	31.2	0.0	21.3	21.3	0.0	4.1	4.1	0.0
Quarter 0 <sup>b</sup>	29.1	29.5	-0.3	22.8	17.5	5.4 ***	13.3	7.1	6.2 ***
Quarter 1	31.5	27.7	3.9 **	31.3	24.0	7.2 ***	20.1	7.8	12.3 ***
Quarter 2	39.6	31.1	8.5 ***	34.3	29.9	4.4 **	17.9	8.8	9.1 ***
Quarter 3	40.4	33.3	7.1 ***	38.4	33.6	4.8 **	18.9	10.0	9.0 ***
Quarter 4	39.1	33.6	5.5 ***	37.2	33.3	3.9 **	19.2	11.5	7.7 ***
Quarter 5	38.1	32.2	5.9 ***	36.4	31.9	4.5 **	17.1	11.3	5.8 ***
Quarter 6	39.7	32.4	7.3 ***	39.9	35.3	4.6 **	15.3	11.3	4.0 ***
Quarters 1-6	63.1	57.1	6.0 ***	65.9	62.7	3.1	34.9	20.0	14.8 ***
<b>Amount of child support paid (\$)</b>									
Prior quarter 1 <sup>a</sup>	151	151	0	91	91	0	18	18	0
Quarter 0 <sup>b</sup>	158	147	11	95	78	18	41	25	16 ***
Quarter 1	165	164	1	153	106	47 ***	71	29	42 ***
Quarter 2	229	191	38 *	191	166	25	76	36	40 ***
Quarter 3	274	252	22	251	221	30	78	46	32 ***
Quarter 4	290	248	42	246	233	13	74	53	21 **
Quarter 5	268	209	59 **	223	196	27	67	52	15
Quarter 6	279	242	37	262	227	35	61	51	10
Quarters 1-6	1,506	1,307	200 **	1,325	1,148	177 **	427	266	160 ***
Sample size (total =6,884)	1,432	792		1,519	874		1,465	762	

SOURCE: MDRC calculations from child support enforcement (CSE) payment records.

NOTES: A two-tailed t-test was applied to differences between program and control groups. Statistical significance levels are indicated as

\*\*\* = 1 percent; \*\* = 5 percent; \* = 10 percent.

The sample used for this analysis excludes the members of the program group who were given a weight of 0.

These estimates do not include the impacts of referral to PFS services.

<sup>a</sup> Prior quarter 1 refers to the quarter before random assignment.

<sup>b</sup> Quarter of random assignment.

**Parents' Fair Share**  
**Impacts of Referral to PFS Services on Child Support Payments**  
**for All Sites Combined**

Outcome	Program Group	Control Group	Impact
<b>Paid child support (%)</b>			
Prior Quarter 1 <sup>a</sup>	22.9	22.9	0.0
Quarter 0 <sup>b</sup>	32.4	39.0	-6.6 ***
Quarter 1	40.0	40.7	-0.7
Quarter 2	43.5	35.9	7.6 ***
Quarter 3	43.9	37.3	6.6 ***
Quarter 4	45.0	40.1	4.9 ***
Quarter 5	44.6	39.7	4.9 ***
Quarter 6	43.2	38.7	4.4 **
Quarters 1-6	72.7	69.1	3.5 **
<b>Amount of child support paid (\$)</b>			
Prior Quarter 1 <sup>a</sup>	99	99	0
Quarter 0 <sup>b</sup>	121	164	-43 ***
Quarter 1	168	176	-8
Quarter 2	190	172	18
Quarter 3	206	185	21
Quarter 4	258	260	-2
Quarter 5	269	241	27
Quarter 6	269	250	19
Quarters 1-6	1,359	1,284	76
Sample size (total =2,641)	1,334	1,307	

SOURCE: MDRC calculations from child support enforcement (CSE) payment records.

NOTES: A two-tailed t-test was applied to differences between program and control groups. Statistical significance levels are indicated as \*\*\* = 1 percent; \*\* = 5 percent; \* = 10 percent.

The sample used for this analysis excludes the members of the program group who were given a weight of 0.

These impacts are separate from the impacts of PFS intake.

<sup>a</sup>Prior quarter 1 refers to the quarter before random assignment.

<sup>b</sup>Quarter of random assignment.

Parents' Fair Share

Impacts of Referral to PFS Services on Child Support Payments,  
by Site

Outcome	Dayton			Grand Rapids			Jacksonville			Los Angeles		
	Program Group	Control Group	Impact	Program Group	Control Group	Impact	Program Group	Control Group	Impact	Program Group	Control Group	Impact
<b>Paid child support (%)</b>												
Prior Quarter 1 <sup>a</sup>	14.7	14.7	0.0	24.8	24.8	0.0	27.9	27.9	0.0	19.4	19.4	0.0
Quarter 0 <sup>b</sup>	14.5	19.7	-5.2	29.7	39.2	-9.5 **	45.4	46.9	-1.5	30.9	28.1	2.8
Quarter 1	21.0	29.6	-8.6 *	49.3	38.1	11.3 ***	45.7	48.4	-2.7	32.5	20.0	12.5 ***
Quarter 2	36.3	19.6	16.6 ***	54.3	32.2	22.1 ***	50.3	46.8	3.4	32.8	20.3	12.5 **
Quarter 3	33.9	20.8	13.1 **	56.6	38.5	18.1 ***	51.8	48.9	2.9	36.8	25.4	11.4 **
Quarter 4	34.3	23.9	10.4 **	57.0	40.5	16.6 ***	49.9	50.1	-0.2	42.2	33.6	8.6
Quarter 5	39.2	25.8	13.3 **	52.7	45.8	6.9	46.4	48.2	-1.8	40.9	32.9	8.0
Quarter 6	37.8	26.6	11.2 **	52.2	45.5	6.7	47.1	49.8	-2.7	42.8	31.7	11.1 **
Quarters 1-6	59.8	56.4	3.4	85.4	74.7	10.7 ***	79.4	77.1	2.2	62.6	54.6	8.1
<b>Amount of child support paid (\$)</b>												
Prior Quarter 1 <sup>a</sup>	60	60	0	88	88	0	121	121	0	83	83	0
Quarter 0 <sup>b</sup>	22	53	-31 *	106	125	-19	170	226	-57 *	266	305	-39
Quarter 1	88	111	-23	194	168	27	225	184	41	296	115	180 **
Quarter 2	97	80	17	258	144	114 ***	259	255	4	220	135	85
Quarter 3	132	106	25	252	171	81 ***	275	275	0	198	238	-39
Quarter 4	156	173	-17	298	235	63 *	318	315	3	373	373	0
Quarter 5	378	96	282 *	346	272	74	269	331	-62	241	271	-29
Quarter 6	231	132	99 *	287	378	-91	404	288	117 *	217	234	-17
Quarters 1-6	1,082	698	384 *	1,637	1,367	270 *	1,749	1,648	102	1,545	1,365	180
Sample size	161	166		259	250		228	210		154	155	

(continued)

Outcome	Memphis			Springfield			Trenton		
	Program Group	Control Group	Impact	Program Group	Control Group	Impact	Program Group	Control Group	Impact
<b>Paid child support (%)</b>									
Prior Quarter 1 <sup>a</sup>	14.9	14.9	0.0	31.6	31.6	0.0	22.3	22.3	0.0
Quarter 0 <sup>b</sup>	15.9	32.9	-17.0 ***	47.5	53.7	-6.2	37.1	43.0	-5.9
Quarter 1	24.8	34.8	-10.0 *	52.8	60.1	-7.4	42.8	46.6	-3.7
Quarter 2	28.3	23.7	4.6	49.7	56.8	-7.1	43.4	41.8	1.6
Quarter 3	27.3	24.7	2.6	44.9	54.2	-9.3 *	44.7	38.9	5.8
Quarter 4	28.4	23.6	4.8	48.4	53.9	-5.6	45.8	45.1	0.7
Quarter 5	28.4	25.6	2.8	49.8	47.8	2.0	47.5	41.2	6.3
Quarter 6	23.5	19.7	3.8	48.4	49.8	-1.4	41.0	37.9	3.1
Quarters 1-6	59.2	53.6	5.6	76.2	82.3	-6.1	72.6	75.5	-3.0
<b>Amount of child child support paid (\$)</b>									
Prior Quarter 1 <sup>a</sup>	36	36	0	158	158	0	125	125	0
Quarter 0 <sup>b</sup>	32	64	-32 **	125	168	-43	146	171	-25
Quarter 1	46	72	-27 *	157	243	-86 *	164	271	-107 **
Quarter 2	64	61	3	206	245	-39	159	230	-71
Quarter 3	74	75	-1	236	223	13	194	188	7
Quarter 4	77	64	13	272	342	-70	242	294	-53
Quarter 5	79	119	-41	316	289	27	217	232	-15
Quarter 6	73	60	13	343	275	68	251	263	-12
Quarters 1-6	413	452	-39	1,529	1,617	-87	1,227	1,477	-250
Sample size	150	146		186	191		196	189	

SOURCE: MDRC calculations from child support enforcement (CSE) payment records.

NOTES: A two-tailed t-test was applied to differences between program and control groups. Statistical significance levels are indicated as \*\*\* = 1 percent; \*\* = 5 percent; \* = 10 percent.

The sample used for this analysis excludes the members of the program group who were given a weight of 0.

<sup>a</sup>Prior quarter 1 refers to the quarter before random assignment.

<sup>b</sup>Quarter of random assignment.

**Parents' Fair Share**  
**Impacts of Referral to PFS Services on Employment and Earnings**  
**for All Sites Combined**

Outcome	Program Group	Control Group	Impact
<b>Employed (%)</b>			
Prior to quarter 1 <sup>a</sup>	46.0	46.0	0.0
Quarter 0 <sup>b</sup>	45.3	48.0	-2.7
Quarter 1	50.3	51.9	-1.6
Quarter 2	51.9	52.6	-0.7
Quarter 3	50.8	52.6	-1.8
Quarter 4	50.1	51.7	-1.6
Quarter 5	50.4	53.0	-2.7
Quarter 6	50.3	51.4	-1.2
Quarters 1-6	77.7	77.7	0.1
<b>Total earnings (\$)</b>			
Prior to quarter 1 <sup>a</sup>	793	793	0
Quarter 0 <sup>b</sup>	627	672	-45
Quarter 1	954	994	-40
Quarter 2	<del>1,155</del>	1,243	-89
Quarter 3	1,224	1,270	-46
Quarter 4	1,310	1,360	-50
Quarter 5	1,316	1,389	-73
Quarter 6	1,394	1,414	-21
Quarters 1-6	7,352	7,670	-318
Sample size (total =2,641)	1,334	1,307	

SOURCE: MDRC calculations from unemployment insurance (UI) payment records.

NOTES: A two-tailed t-test was applied to differences between program and control groups. Statistical significance levels are indicated as \*\*\* = 1 percent; \*\* = 5 percent; \* = 10 percent.

The sample used for this analysis excludes the members of the program group who were given a weight of 0.

These impacts are separate from the impacts of PFS intake.

<sup>a</sup>Prior quarter 1 refers to the quarter before random assignment.

<sup>b</sup>Quarter of random assignment.

TO: John Wallace  
FROM: Andrea Kane  
RE: DISCUSSION TOPICS RE: JOBS PLUS and PARENTS FAIR SHARE

CC: CR  
FMI  
John thought this  
would be helpful  
to put MORE'S mind  
@ ease.

Here is a rough outline of what we'd like to cover. As we discussed, this is intended as an informal information sharing and brainstorming session. Based on experience with similar sessions, I expect there'll be lots of free-flowing questions from participants. Given time constraints, I'd keep prepared remarks very brief and leave more time for discussion. Thanks in advance to you, Judy and the other MDRC participants. We appreciate your taking the time to do this, and look forward to a stimulating discussion.

### JOBS PLUS

- Brief summary of project: target population, sites, time frame, objectives (handing out the latest 1-2 page overview would be helpful)
- Early/emerging observations. For example:
  - relationships among local systems
  - response from residents, employers, other community players
  - what are the biggest gaps -- individual skills, resources, isolation?
  - what are biggest challenges to overcome?
  - what seems to be working well?
  - what are you learning about immigrant populations, those with limited English (St. Paul, Seattle, LA)?
- Implications for TANF, Welfare-to-Work grants, other federal initiatives such as WTW housing vouchers and Access to Jobs transportation funds.

### PARENTS' FAIR SHARE

- Brief summary of project: target population, sites, time frame, objectives (handing out the latest 1-2 page overview would be helpful)
- Findings/lessons:
  - Implementation issues
  - Institutional issues: role of courts, welfare/employment agencies, CBOs
  - Characteristics of participants -- do different strategies work better for different populations?
  - Early impacts on child support and employment.
  - How to evaluate increased role in children's lives (other than child support payments)
  - Reaction of mothers, domestic violence issues?
- Balance of child support, employment, and parenting components
- Implications for TANF, WTW grants serving non-custodial parents, child support initiatives, and initiatives to strengthen fathers' role in their children's lives.



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12/18/97 10:40:00 AM

Record Type: Record

To: Andrea Kane, Barbara A. Menard, Sarah S. Knight

cc:

Subject: HHS PRESS RELEASE

Date: December 18, 1997

For Release: Immediately

Contact: Michael Kharfen, (202) 401-9215

Headline: HHS APPROVES CHILD SUPPORT WAIVER FOR "DEVOTED DADS"  
PROJECT IN TACOMA, WASHINGTON ENTERPRISE COMMUNITY

HHS Secretary Donna E. Shalala announced approval of a child support waiver for the Tacoma, Washington Enterprise Community. This is the first child support waiver for an Enterprise Community. The project, "Devoted Dads," is an innovative public/private partnership to promote the responsible roles of fathers in the financial and emotional support of their children.

"Devoted Dads is a very exciting and important model for the nation to help fathers contribute to the healthy growth of their children," said Secretary Shalala. "The project also aims to ensure that fathers provide child support to their children as families move from welfare to self-sufficiency."

The project intends to reach non-custodial parents, particularly young and at-risk fathers. The goal is to determine whether the mix of public education and targeted services help young fathers achieve self-sufficiency and become active parents.

Key activities of the project include a public education campaign about child support obligations; a self-help and mediation program to resolve conflicts in meeting child support payments; peer education by young unwed fathers on paternity, child support and teen parenting to reach young people in high schools and community centers; and, comprehensive family services of parenting education and counseling.

"Devoted Dads is a special project because the community has rallied to bridge the gap between fathers and their children," said Olivia A. Golden, assistant secretary for children and families. "The federal government is working the right way to give communities the flexibility they need while achieving results by fathers assuming their responsibility to their children."

Tacoma is one of the 105 Empowerment Zones and Enterprise Communities established by the federal government to enhance community development by providing funding, tax incentives and technical support. The federal government also encouraged the communities to seek waivers that would cut through federal red tape.

The waiver allows the State of Washington to use federal funds normally used only for child support enforcement activities to support the project. The project will operate for 4 years and include a rigorous evaluation.

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Note: HHS press releases are available on the World Wide Web at: <http://www.dhhs.gov>.