
NORTHWEST AREA FOUNDATION DEVOLUTION PROJECT

INDICATORS FOR TRACKING WELFARE REFORM

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Welfare reform and related changes in federal and state support will have substantial implications for low-income families and communities. State welfare departments, academic researchers, and a number of national organizations are engaged in long-term research efforts designed to evaluate the impact of welfare reform and related policy changes. These efforts will not address the need for timely data that measures the impact at the community level. By monitoring the status of low-income families and communities over time, analysts and advocates can assess both the short and long term effects of welfare reform. The indicators described below are intended to serve as a tool for individuals and organizations interested in monitoring the impact of welfare reform. Taken in conjunction with surveys of service providers, caseload data, and formal evaluation studies, these indicators can provide some basis for assessing the success or failure of state and local efforts to implement welfare reform. The results of monitoring efforts can be used to:

- Inform policymakers, the media, and community leaders regarding the impact of welfare reform.
- Identify areas of potential concern or success that can be used to inform future policy deliberations.
- Identify areas or populations whose experiences under welfare reform differ from that of the state or the nation.

The scope of state and local monitoring efforts will depend on the availability of data. Most of the indicators described below should be available at the state level. In addition, a considerable amount of information may be available at the county level. A basic monitoring project can be divided into three categories:

1. **Social indicators:** Measurements of community well being, demand for services, and program utilization.
2. **Fiscal indicators:** Measurements of public spending and the adequacy of public resources to meet demands for services.

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3. **Survey and interview data:** Anecdotal information obtaining service providers', advocates', and low-income consumers' responses to simple surveys. This type of information provides a vital human side that complements data obtained from fiscal and social indicators.

Three additional criteria were also considered in developing the lists contained in each category:

1. **Availability of reliable data:** Nearly all of the information described below should be available from widely recognized, government data sources. By relying on generally accepted data sources, analysts and advocates can avoid questions regarding the reliability or accuracy of data and focus on findings and policy recommendations.
2. **Ease of obtaining the information:** Increasingly, public data is available over the Internet. Publications of the Census Bureau and Bureau of Labor Statistics are available from agency web sites, as are a significant amount of raw data. Other federal agencies, such as the Department of Health and Human Services publish caseload data for federally supported programs that are also available over the Internet. In many instances, agencies may be willing to provide data in spreadsheet format.
3. **Ability to obtain fairly up-to-date information:** Timeliness is a critical component of any monitoring effort. One significant problem with many research studies is the lag between the time data is collected and when the final research is released. The information described below should be available on a relatively quick turn around basis.

These criteria may or may not apply to all of the information listed below in every state. If you encounter problems obtaining information that you are fairly sure an agency collects, refer to your state's public records act, which governs the release of public documents. Alternately, a friendly legislator may be willing to request the information for you. In counties with very small populations or caseloads, it may not be possible to obtain county specific data if disclosure of the information might compromise clients' confidentiality.

HELPFUL HINTS AND CAUTIONARY NOTES

The impact of welfare reform will take years to measure. In many states, families will experience few immediate changes in the levels or availability of assistance. While some states have imposed strict and immediate work requirements, in other states, program changes will be phased in over months, if not years. In many instances, the most significant impacts will occur when families reach the five-year lifetime limit on assistance or when an economic downturn shrinks available employment options. To this end, it is important for organizations and researchers engaged in monitoring studies to remember the following:

1. Make sure that the time frame you are analyzing matches the impact you are trying to measure. For example, Minnesota's new statewide TANF program began January 1, 1998 with AFDC cases converting between January 1 and March 31, 1998. Therefore, any changes in hours worked and amounts earned prior to those dates are not directly attributable to the changes in the state's welfare program.

2. Be aware of any particular policies or factors that are unique to your particular state or locality. Washington State, for example, enacted a state-funded food stamp program to replace benefits for legal immigrants denied food stamps by federal welfare reform. It is important to know where your state's policies differ from federal law and to identify demographic or programmatic factors that may make the outcome of welfare reform look different in your state than in the rest of the country.
3. Be aware of seasonal differences in indicators such as unemployment rates. In rural areas, for example, unemployment rates are typically low during the summer harvest season and high in winter when there is less available work.

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

To avoid reinventing the wheel, and to take advantage of work that is being done elsewhere, it is important to be aware of other research in a state to evaluate the effects of welfare reform. States are required to report certain data to the federal government and most should be developing their own evaluation systems to at least determine whether the state is meeting federal program requirements. There may also be academic researchers looking at a topic. These researchers may be looking for input, be willing to share their findings, or willing to work with others doing research. Associations of county welfare directors and commissioners will also likely be interested in tracking and demonstrating the effects of the changes since they will be among those most potentially affected at a service provision level.

It is also important to think about how information will be presented once you have completed gathering and analyzing data. Good analysis without a thoughtful presentation and dissemination plan may give little fruit. Consider:

- What is the story to be told?
- Who is it to be told to?
- What are the best methods of reaching the targeted audience(s)?
- How can the information be presented in a way that will be easily understood?
- How will the information be given out?

Concise user-friendly information is likely to be used much more frequently than longer reports. Give thought to using a variety of mediums when disseminating your information.

I. SOCIAL INDICATORS

A state has a great deal of flexibility in determining the type of TANF (Temporary Assistance to Needy Families) program it administers over time. Federal requirements focus on restricted use of federal funding (e.g. time limits) and work participation requirements which states must meet. Because states are to be tracking impacts of welfare reform, it is important to be in contact with the state agency responsible for monitoring this information to ascertain (and hopefully influence) what information is being collected by the state. While the state and other researchers will be collecting information, those efforts will not address the need for timely data that measures the impact at the community level.

It is important to benchmark information. As FY1995 was the year before the federal changes, it is a specific benchmark year to compare many of the following indicators over time. Differences in impacts between counties may be important for future policy decisions, particularly in states that give counties a lot of flexibility in administering programs.

A. ACCESS TO JOBS/EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY

Welfare reform is predicated on the belief that work can and should replace assistance for those who are physically able to work. The new welfare law's work requirements and time limits are designed to move recipients rapidly from cash assistance into the workforce. As such, one of the key measurements of the success or failure of welfare reform efforts will be the extent to which individuals leave assistance for employment.

However, in assessing the success or failure of welfare reform efforts, it is important to measure the impact on the community at large. This is needed in order to assure that recipients are not simply displacing the formerly employed. Measurements of access to jobs include:

1. UNEMPLOYMENT RATE: The unemployment rate provides a simple measure of the relative availability of jobs. In areas or periods of high unemployment, welfare recipients will likely experience greater difficulty in locating employment. Low unemployment rates indicate greater availability of jobs or less competition for available jobs.

When analyzing unemployment rates, it is important to note differences between the rates by gender, race, age, and education, if possible. Differences between counties or regions are also important to capture the diversity of local responses necessary within the state.

The unemployment rate is available for states on a monthly basis from the Bureau of Labor Statistics. County level data, as well as breakdowns by gender and race, may be available from state employment departments. In some cases, county unemployment rates may not be broken down demographically for specific population groups.

Sources:

- **State Employment Departments**
State employment departments typically release data on a statewide and county-by-county basis. Many states also breakdown unemployment by gender, ethnicity, and age.
- **US Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics**
The Bureau of Labor Statistics releases state and metropolitan area employment and unemployment data on a monthly basis.

2. ENTRY LEVEL WAGES: Prevailing wage levels for entry-level jobs are an indication of whether employment provides sufficient income to support a family. It may be useful to compare the hourly wage for entry level jobs in a particular area to the hourly wage necessary to escape poverty or support a family. In most parts of the country, the federal poverty threshold does not adequately reflect the costs of supporting a family. The amount needed to support a family can be obtained by developing a minimum family budget that reflects the actual cost for housing, childcare, and other necessities for specific geographic areas. In California, for example, a single mother with two children working full-time needs to earn at least \$11.10 per hour to pay for a basic living expenses. Typical entry-level jobs include food service, office clerk, and retail salespersons. (See attachment A for an example of a minimum family budget).

Available wage data will vary significantly from place to place. Types of wage data that you may find available include average hourly wage, average manufacturing wage (usually significantly higher than average or entry level and probably doesn't reflect earnings of individuals leaving welfare for work), wages by job title, and average wage per job (unadjusted for hours or FTE). One good indicator is the starting salary for jobs expected to post significant growth in the foreseeable future. In a number of states, wage data is available by region by job title, but it is usually one to two years out of date, from the state employment department. Other potential sources include local economic development departments or chambers of commerce that survey local businesses.

Sources:

- **State Employment Departments**
Many state employment departments conduct wage surveys. The data from these surveys may be somewhat out-of-date.
- **US Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics**
The Bureau of Labor Statistics releases state annual wage information by state.
- **Other** potential sources include press reports and economic forecasts prepared by banks or state budget offices.

3. NUMBER OF HOURS WORKED: Data showing the number of hours typically worked in an industry or occupation can be used to estimate the income families may realistically receive from work. This is particularly important in areas where substantial numbers of available jobs are part-time. A job that provides sufficient income to support a family on a full-time (40 hour) basis, many not provide enough income to support a family if the typical work week is 30 hours per week. Average work weeks are also an important factor to use when evaluating the reasonableness of work requirements.

Sources:

- **State Employment Departments**
- **State Welfare or Social Service Departments**
States must develop systems to report the number of hours worked per week by welfare recipients and former recipients in order to determine whether they are in compliance with the federal work participation rates. This information should be available from state agencies. Some states may not currently have the capacity to gather this information and may not be able to make it immediately available.

4. ENTRY LEVEL JOB GROWTH: Net job growth provides a measurement of whether an area's economy is growing or contracting over time. Job in the number of entry level jobs can be used in conjunction with unemployment, population, and labor force data to more accurately assess the number of jobs that are likely to be available for individuals leaving welfare for work. This information should be available from state agencies. Some states may not currently have the capacity to gather this information and may not be able to make it immediately available.

Sources:

- **State Employment Departments**
- **Center on Budget and Policy Priorities**
The Center's publication *Poverty Despite Work* contains useful analysis and point in time information on this topic as it relates to the working poor. See also, *Pulling Apart* which contains state by state analysis of income trends.

B. INCOME OPPORTUNITY/POVERTY

Measures of family income and poverty status provide an indication of whether welfare reform and related poverty changes are increasing or decreasing families' level of economic well being.

1. Percentage of persons/children in poverty: The share of children or persons in poverty provides a measure of changes in basic economic wellbeing. Unfortunately, there is typically a several year lag between the time data is collected and the time it is released. Moreover,

poverty estimates at the substate level may not be accurate enough to capture small changes, particular in areas with low population.

Sources:

- **U.S. Bureau of the Census**
Current Population Survey (March supplement)
- **Kids Count**
County Data Book available for each state. Note that somewhat different data is captured in each state.

2. MEDIAN FAMILY INCOME: Median family income provides a measure of the general economic wellbeing of a state's population. Another useful measurement is the median income for families at the 20th percentile.

Source:

- **Census Bureau**
Available for states on the Internet, limited information available for counties (see bibliography).

3. PERCENT OR NUMBERS OF TANF CASELOAD REPORTING EARNED INCOME: In order to comply with federal welfare reform's work participation requirements, states must now track the numbers of hours worked by families receiving assistance. This information can provide an indication of the number of families that are making the transition into the workforce, as well as the extent to which employment fails to provide sufficient income to lift families above the eligibility threshold for assistance. Depending on the information available from the state agency, it may be possible to break out the numbers in terms of subsidized employment, work experience, and unsubsidized employment.

Source:

- **State Welfare or Social Services Department**

C. CHILD WELFARE

Interaction with the child welfare system may be an early warning of increased family stress. Increases in out-of-home placements or child welfare caseloads will increase the public costs as well as social costs attributable to abuse and neglect. Useful indicators include:

1. RATES OF OUT OF HOME PLACEMENTS: Under federal welfare reform, foster care remains entitlement. In some instances, families that lose cash assistance may turn to the foster

care system to provide a safe home for their children. Increases in rates of out of home placements may provide an indication of the number of instances where families no longer have sufficient financial or other resources to support their children. In other instances, out of home placements may result from denial of assistance to certain populations, such as individual convicted of felony drug offenses in states that did not opt out of the federal elimination of eligibility. Increases in out-of-home placements resulting from time limits or other aspects of welfare reform imply increased public costs since the cost of foster care is substantially higher than TANF.

Sources:

- **State/County Departments of Social Services**

2. INSTANCES OF CHILD ABUSE OR NEGLECT: The incidence of child abuse or neglect may serve as an early warning of the number of families experience significant distress.

Sources:

- **State/County Departments of Social Services**

D. PUBLIC ASSISTANCE CASELOADS

Caseload data provides a measurement of need or demand for services when programs are an entitlement.

1. TANF: Under welfare reform, changes in TANF caseloads may also be linked to particular policy shifts (i.e., time limits, work requirements, etc.). In instances where caseloads significantly increase or decrease, it may be important to identify the factors contributing to change. In order to control for changes in the overall health of a state or area's economy, it may be more useful to track TANF caseloads as a percentage of the population or percentage of population in poverty, as well as by absolute change.

Sources:

- **State/County Departments of Social Services**

2. GENERAL ASSISTANCE: Where available, General Assistance (General Relief, Home Relief) serves as the safety net of last resort for individuals who are not eligible for other forms of public assistance. General Assistance caseloads provide a measurement of the number of individuals that have lost eligibility for other programs and lack any other form of support. As above, it may be most useful to track caseloads as a percentage of the population in poverty.

Sources:

- **State/County Departments of Social Services**

3. FREE OR REDUCED SCHOOL LUNCH: When used as a percent of all children, eligibility for free or reduced school lunches provides a measurement of poverty status that may be more readily available than other measures.

Source:

- **State Departments of Education**

4. TRANSITIONAL MEDICAID OR OTHER SUBSIDIZED HEALTH CARE:

Families that leave welfare for work retain eligibility for Medicaid benefits for up to a year. The number of families that utilize transitional Medicaid provides an indication of the extent of employer provided health coverage in the occupations and industries frequented by former welfare recipients. In states, such as Oregon and Minnesota, which offer plans for the uninsured working poor, information on the number of families utilizing the state plan can be used to assess employer provided health coverage occupations/industries employing people this population.

Source:

- **State Departments of Health**
- **The Employee Benefits Research Institute**
Publishes annual state by state analyses of health insurance coverage.
- **The Kaiser Commission on the Future of Medicaid**
Also publishes national data in this area.

5. TRANSITIONAL OR OTHER SUBSIDIZED CHILDCARE: Subsidized child care caseload data and information regarding the length of waiting lists for subsidized child care may be used to help assess the extent to which affordable child care is a barrier to workforce participation as well as the adequacy of levels of public support for subsidized childcare. The number of deferrals from work participation due to lack of available childcare may be used to help assess the adequacy of childcare capacity, but may only provide a partial picture of capacity. Childcare Resource and Referral agencies may be able to help illustrate what types of childcare are available in an area as well as the number of slots for particular hours (e.g. weekend) and particular needs (e.g. infant).

Sources:

- **State Departments of Social Services or Education**

- **Local Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies**

6. CHILD SUPPORT COLLECTIONS: Statistics relating to child support collections (including the amount collected for TANF and the general amount collected) can be used to assess the level of public commitment to obtaining support from absent parents and the effectiveness of state's efforts at collection amounts owed to low income families. This information can also provide an indication of the amount of support families can expect to receive from child support and thus the amount they may require from other sources of income.

Source:

- **Department of Social Services** or other agency charged with collecting child support.

II. FISCAL INDICATORS

Welfare reform gives states and locality substantial discretion to adjust their level of support for low-income families and children. In addition to welfare reform's programmatic changes, the recent federal budget accord and other policies may lead to substantial reductions in the level of support for low income families and children. Analysts and advocates may also wish to monitor their state's compliance with the federal maintenance of effort requirements by tracking levels of state support for TANF families and in programs and policies benefiting low income families more generally.

In order to make sense of fiscal trends, it is important to benchmark spending and revenue information to some standard indicator such as population or population in poverty.

A. TANF MAINTENANCE OF EFFORT (MOE) SPENDING: Comparisons of TANF spending by major program element (grants, childcare, training, etc) over time can be used to determine whether funds are being transferred out of TANF and into other program areas. Obtain both the base year amount and current spending by major program area. In some states, counties may also make expenditures that are counted toward the state's MOE. An analysis of the split between state and county expenditures can be used to determine whether the state is shifting the cost of welfare to local government.

Sources:

- **State Department of Social Services or State Budget Offices**

B. FEDERAL FUNDS BY COUNTY: A number of federal policy changes are affecting the financial resources available to assistance low-income families and children. A comparison of

federal spending over time can be used to track broader trends toward devolution of program responsibilities from the federal to state and local government.

It is possible to take Federal Fiscal Year 1995 information as a baseline point and compare it to subsequent years on a per capita basis adjusted for inflation to illustrate changes in federal funding. An example can be found at the University of Washington Fiscal Policy Center's website at <http://weber.u.washington.edu/~fpcweb>.

Source:

- **U.S. Bureau of the Census**
Federal Expenditures available by State for Fiscal Year 1996.

C. SHIFT IN THE COMPOSITION OF STATE REVENUES: Changes in the composition of state revenues can be used to assess the adequacy of state resources and whether the burden of financing public services is being shifted among groups of taxpayers.

Sources:

- **State Tax Agencies or Budget Offices.**

D. RECENT TAX RELIEF: Many states use tax policies as a means of targeting relief to certain groups of individuals or businesses. An analysis of recently granted tax relief provides a means of assessing whether program savings are being converted to tax cuts, whether spending is being reduced to fund tax cuts, and who is benefiting from, recent tax policy changes.

Sources:

- **State tax agencies, budget offices, and legislative tax committees.**
If your state has tax expenditure reporting, this information can be used to examine policy changes.

E. STATE SPENDING² DATA OVER TIME: Expenditure data by program by year should be available from state human services and/or finance agencies. In addition to simply tracking the spending levels for the major programs affected by welfare, spending can be adjusted for inflation and calculated on a per person basis. It is also possible to compare this data to other measures for a different analysis. One example is to compare state spending to total personal income (expenditures per \$1,000 personal use) in the state to examine how spending compares to capacity.

Sources:

² State spending can refer to several different measures. Generally, it refers to state general fund spending, not including federal aid, matching funds or other designated state revenue and expenditure accounts.

- **State Budget Offices**
- **U.S. Census Bureau of Economic Analysis**
For state personal income amounts

F. WELFARE SPENDING AS A PERCENT OF TOTAL SPENDING: It can also be useful to illustrate the percentage of TANF/AFDC spending (and where applicable, General Assistance) in comparison to the rest of the state budget as well as the proportion of welfare programs to the rest of the federal budget. A pie chart is a helpful way to show this information. Another way of illustrating this information is providing the maximum or average cash grant for a three-person family over time, adjusted for inflation. In virtually all states, this will be a declining measure. It is important to express the information in today's dollars.³

Sources:

- **State Finance or Budget Offices**
- **State Legislative Budget Committees**
- **Congressional Budget Office**
For federal information; also can be obtained from many national research and advocacy organizations (many of which have websites, e.g. Center on Budget and Policy Priorities).

III. SURVEYS AND INTERVIEWS – “EARLY WARNING” MONITORING

Many of the effects of welfare policy changes, especially in the short term, will not be measurable through statistical indicators and governmental administrative data. Also, there may be unintended consequences for children and families which will go undetected by traditional monitoring (such as increased family stress, or older children staying home from school to provide child care for younger children).

However, there are two groups of people who have this information: low-income individuals who are affected by these changes themselves and the people who work with them directly in community organizations and human services agencies. Since most state and local organizations do not have the resources to identify, track and follow a sample of families, the best available source is likely to be service providers.

The process described below is intended to provide a structured system for obtaining and analyzing information gathered through contacts with people in positions to see first-hand the impact of welfare changes are having on children, families and communities. The process should also help point to responses that may help mitigate negative consequences for those affected.

³ A more sophisticated analysis would adjust spending by inflation and caseloads for the specific program. For caseload adjustment, the most appropriate measure is full-time equivalent (FTE) cases. The state human/social service agency most likely has such a measure which it uses to forecast caseloads.

The process is based on identifying key informants, obtaining information from them and carefully recording responses so that trends and issues can be seen and monitored over time. This monitoring system will differ from state to state, but should follow a few key points:

1. The first step is to identify areas which are likely to be most affected by welfare reform (e.g. child care, school, child welfare, housing, etc.) so that a list of informants working in those areas can be developed.
2. A variety of provider types should be included in the network of informants, making to cover those areas identified including: health care providers, homeless shelters, food shelves, domestic abuse shelters, counseling services, employment and training providers, religious-base charities, and law enforcement. It is especially important to include schools (social workers, teachers and nurses) as contacts, since they likely will see early effects on children. For the same reason, include childcare providers, where possible.
3. Ideally it is important to randomly choose the panel of informants (e.g. selecting every third provider on the list) as well as obtaining geographical representation (a sample of certain types of counties or areas in a specific state). However, it is most important to have informants who are willing to respond thoughtfully and to participate over time. In this type of impact study, depth of information is crucial.
4. Informants should be interviewed periodically (2-4 times per year) to establish on-going relationships and to encourage them to be aware of specific issues. Informants should get copies of any summaries, reports, etc. and be fully informed as to the manner in which the information will be used so they can buy into the project.
5. Questions should be open-ended to encourage and discover new or unexpected issues (A list of sample questions can be found in Attachment C). Particular policy related questions can be added as needed, based on situations specific to a state (e.g. as time limits start occurring). Some questions will be more relevant in a certain setting than in others. The wording may also need to change depending on the setting.
6. Interviewers should understand the larger context of welfare reform so that they can ask appropriate follow-up questions. It is also desirable for them to have some interviewing skills and experience.
7. It is important to record the responses of the people contacted in the study as accurately as possible. Later, the responses can be reviewed for evidence of themes and trends. Careful recording of responses also allows for statements to be made regarding the relative frequency with which certain issues are raised. Retaining notes allows retrospective review to determine if there are changes over time in any particular areas.
8. Consider collaborating with others doing the same type of research in other areas to increase the relevance of the interviews. A similar result across different areas strengthens the validity of the conclusions.

9. Report the results in written reports, newsletters, news releases, and testimony before legislative and local governmental units. When possible, combine these more “qualitative” results with other social indicators, such as those suggested above.

IV. BIBLIOGRAPHY

ADMINISTRATION FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES (ACF), U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

The website for ACF includes state welfare caseload information, TANF maintenance of effort requirements, sharing ratios for other federal programs and other useful information.

<http://www.acf.dhhs.gov/news/welfare/>.

AMERICA'S CHILDREN: KEY NATIONAL INDICATORS OF WELL-BEING

This report, prepared by the National Center for Health Statistics, provides a composite picture of the wellbeing of the Nation's children. The report presents in a single document, 25 key indicators on critical aspects of children's lives, including their behavior and social environment, economic security, education, and health. While the report does not include state level data, state and local advocates and policy analysts may find the list of data sources and national information useful.

<http://www.census.gov/population/www/socdemo/children.html>.

BUREAU OF LABOR STATISTICS, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

The Bureau of Labor Statistics releases state and metropolitan area employment and unemployment data on a monthly basis. This information is available on the Internet (<http://stats.bls.gov/>) or by subscription. A subscription to BLS releases is available at no cost.

Annual wage information by state (typically a year out-of-date) can be found on the BLS web site at <http://stats.bls.gov/news.release/annpay.toc.html>.

The site also contains quick links to other frequently requested employment related data.

<http://stats.bls.gov/blshome.html>.

CALIFORNIA BUDGET PROJECT

The California Budget Project's website provides good examples of state fiscal policy analysis as well as hyperlinks to many good fiscal and policy websites that provide useful fiscal and social data by state. The website can be reached at <http://www.cbp.org>.

CENSUS BUREAU DATA FILES

Expensive, but may be worth purchase for specific projects. Data files are available from the Census Bureau's Customer Services Department (301-457-4100; TDD 301-457-4611). When mass-produced, files on CD-ROM (compact disc--read-only memory) also are listed. These CD-ROM's generally cost \$150. Other tape files can be produced on CD-ROM by special order. Files available on diskette ("floppies") for IBM and compatible microcomputers also are listed. Technical documentation, included with each file order, also generally is available separately. The price varies.

Selected data and product information can be accessed via Internet

<http://www.census.gov/> (Call 301-457-1242 for information.); for a brief description of any file, request the free Data Developments booklet for that file from Customer Services.

Contact:
Gerard Keffer
301-457-1522
gkeffer@census.gov.

CENSUS BUREAU ESTIMATES OF POVERTY AND INCOME FOR COUNTIES

The Census Bureau has released estimates of poverty and median household income for states and counties. The estimates mark the first attempt by the Census Bureau to produce county-level poverty and income estimates more frequently than those released every 10 years based on the decennial census. The tabulations show estimates (for 1993) of the total number of poor persons, the number of poor related children ages 5 to 17 years old, and the median household income for all states and all 3,143 counties. The county-level estimates based on combining results of the 1994 March Current Population Survey and data derived from federal income tax returns, food stamp participation (administrative records data) and 1990 decennial census figures. The Census Bureau plans to release 1993 state and county estimates of the number of poor children under age 5, the number of poor persons age 65 and over and per capita income.
<http://www.census.gov/hhes/www/saipe93.html/>.

Contact:
John Coder
301-763-8413
hhes-info@census.gov
Source: Census and You, July 1997.

CENSUS BUREAU -- FEDERAL EXPENDITURES

Federal Expenditures by State for Fiscal Year 1996 at
<http://www.census.gov/prod/www/titles.html#gov>. Print (\$10, call 301-457-4100); Consolidated Federal Funds Report: 1987-1996. Detailed information regarding the receipt of federal funds at the county level is available on CD-ROM for \$150. CD-CFFR-96.

CENSUS BUREAU RELEASE INFORMATION

The Census Bureau provides a monthly announcement of new products by E-Mail. For a free E-mail subscription to the Monthly Product Announcement and other new product announcements, either (1) access their Internet Web site at

<http://www.census.gov/mp/www/subscribe.html#SUB> and follow instructions, or (2) send an E-mail message to majordomo@census.gov including "subscribe product-announce" followed by your E-mail address.

CENTER ON BUDGET AND POLICY PRIORITIES

The Center provides fiscal and policy analysis with an emphasis on issues impacting low and moderate income individuals and families. Several publications focus on state numbers and trends. The Center's site is located at <http://www.cbpp.org>.

CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET OFFICE

CBO conducts independent analysis of the President's and congressional budget and policy proposals, as well as short and long-term economic, revenue, and spending forecasts. The CBO Internet site can be accessed at <http://www.cbo.gov/>.

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INDICATORS OF WELFARE DEPENDENCE AND WELL-BEING: INTERIM REPORT TO CONGRESS

[U.S. Department of Health and Human Services](#)

October 1996

This report contains baseline information at the national level for a number of indicators that can be used to assess the impact of welfare reform. Local analysts and advocates may find the listing of data sources and discussion of available data of particular interest.

HENRY J. KAISER FAMILY FOUNDATION

Publishes state by state health care related information as well as reports and analysis on health care issues. State Medicaid statistics can be found at http://www.kff.org/state_health/.

URBAN INSTITUTE'S NEW FEDERALISM PROJECT

The Urban Institute is conducting a major national study of the impact of welfare reform and related policy changes. Data gathered for the project will be made available to other researchers. The project's database of state social and fiscal indicators is a useful tool for state organizations and is available via the Internet along with periodic briefing reports at <http://www.urban.org/>.

UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON FISCAL POLICY CENTER

The U of W's website provides good examples of state fiscal indicator and policy analysis as well as hyperlinks to many good fiscal and policy websites that provide useful fiscal and social data by state. The website can be reached at <http://weber.u.washington.edu/~fpcweb>.

Attachment A

What Are The Fastest Growing Occupations In Fresno County? What Is The Median Wage For Entry Level Jobs In Those Occupations?			
	Absolute Growth 1992-99	1995* Median Hourly Pay	Required Training/Education
Salespersons, Retail (Non-Vehicle)	2,580	\$5.00	Short-term on-the-job training
Cashiers	1,230	\$5.00	Short-term on-the-job training
Instructional Aides	1,120	\$6.93	Short-term on-the-job training
Teachers, Elementary School	760	\$12.32	Bachelor's degree
General Office Clerks	700	\$7.65	Short-term on-the-job training
Food Preparation Workers	550	\$5.00	Short-term on-the-job training
Teachers, Secondary School	510	\$14.21	Bachelor's degree
Truck Drivers, Light	500	\$5.90	Short-term on-the-job training
Automotive Mechanics	490	\$5.50	Long-term on-the-job training
Waiters and Waitresses	480	\$4.25	Short-term on-the-job training

Source: Employment Development Department (EDD) and Bureau of Labor Statistics.

*The EDD survey does not report 1995 salary data for each occupation in every county. When current salary data is not reported for a particular occupation in this county, salary data from a comparable county was used. Salary information reflects wage level prior to minimum wage increase. Growth is total projected for a seven year period (1992-1999).

What Does It Take To Live In Fresno County?				
Family Budget For A Single Parent With Two Children				
Expenditures	Monthly Costs	Annual Costs	Bare Bones Monthly^f	Bare Bones Annual^f
Housing and Utilities ^a	\$526	\$6,312	\$441	\$5,292
Basic Phone Service	\$17	\$204	\$17	\$204
Food At Home ^b	\$342	\$4,104	\$342	\$4,104
Food Away From Home	\$80	\$960		
Clothing	\$25	\$300	\$15	\$180
Medical ^c	\$201	\$2,410	\$201	\$2,410
Savings, Emergency	\$60	\$720		
Transportation ^d	\$50	\$600	\$50	\$600
Child Care ^e	\$636	\$7,637	\$609	\$7,308
Recreation, Education, Reading	\$20	\$240		
Personal Care	\$25	\$300	\$25	\$300
Miscellaneous	\$70	\$840	\$50	\$600
TOTAL COMMODITIES	\$2,052	\$24,627	\$1,750	\$20,998
Sample Earnings and Taxes			Monthly	Annual
Earnings for a full-time retail salesperson at \$5.00/hr			\$867	\$10,400
Payroll Tax (FICA & SDI) for full-time worker at \$5.00/hr			(\$71)	(\$848)
EITC for full-time worker earning \$5.00/hr with 2 children			\$296	\$3,556
TOTAL			\$1,092	\$13,108

^a 1997 Fair Market Rent in Fresno County (MSA) for a 2-bedroom is \$526, a 1-bedroom is \$441.

^b Food at home based on USDA low-cost plan for parent, child <2 yrs., child between 6-8 yrs. (January 1997).

^c Medical is lowest cost program for insurance for one employee plus dependent(s) in the HIPC for Fresno County.

Does not include copayments for doctor visits or prescriptions.

^d Assumes travel by public transport, 1997 Fresno Area Express monthly pass for one adult and one youth.

^e 1996 full-time child care costs for one child <2 yrs. and part-time for one child ≥6 yrs. old in Fresno County at a child care center, California Child Care Resource and Referral Network (assumes one child in school).

^f Bare bones budget eliminates some expenditures, assumes a 1-bedroom apartment, child care in family day care home.

Attachment B

SURVEYS AND INTERVIEWS – POTENTIAL “EARLY WARNING” QUESTIONS

- How much knowledge would you say that your [clients/customers/members] have about changes to the welfare system? What else do they need to know?
- How much knowledge would you say that your co-workers and you have about changes to the welfare system? What else do you need to know?
- How has your caseload/number of clients changed in the past [___] months?
- What problems are your clients most concerned about?
- In general, does it seem like the economic situation for most of your clients has improved, stayed the same, or gotten worse?
- What do you believe your clients need most in order to be successful?
- What difficulties, if any, are your clients having with child care/job training/medical insurance/housing as a result of changes to their food stamps, SSI or welfare benefits?
- Do you have any specific stories about the impact of welfare reform on a particular family, child or individual?