



THE FAMILY SUPPORT ACT: AN ANALYSIS OF KEY COMPONENTS,
DRAFT FEDERAL REGULATIONS,
AND STATE OPTIONS

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PROGRAM ELEMENTS:

I. Who participates:

Mandatory Rs now includes parents of children age 3+

EXEMPTIONS:

If no CC available

If R is ill or incapacitated

If R is caring for ill or incapacitated person

If "remote" from program

If dependent <16, or in school full-time

If R has a child < 6, required max. participation = 20 hours/week

In UP families, if a child < 6, 2nd parent exempt, unless state provides CC

REGULATIONS (DRAFT)

State may determine if another person in household is available for child care; & only one CC exemption/household

Must be verified by doctor, etc.

Must be verified by doctor, etc. & no other person available

Defined as 2-hour+ roundtrip to JOBS program, not incl to/from CC

If child <16 is custodial parent herself, not exempt

CC exemption in UP families limited to non-principal earner

STATE OPTIONS:

Mandate participation by parents with children 1 year or older (instead of 3)

To meet state Plan goals or federal participation quotas, State may give priority to non-exempt volunteers & Rs

II. Who is targeted:*

1) Those who received AFDC for 36+ months in last 5 years

2) Parents < 25, w/out a HS degree, & little or no work experience in last year

3) Individuals in family in which youngest child is 14, i.e., are 2 years or less from loss of eligibility (displaced homemakers)

* (these groups must be 55% of program participants in order to get federal monies)

Volunteers served first to extent program is available & state resources permit

Exempt volunteers do not have to be served, if makes reaching 55% of program participants from target population

PROGRAM ELEMENTS:

III. What the JOBS program must & may do for entering clients:

- 1- Inform every recipient of all JOBS & Child Support Enf. programs
- 2- Inform Rs of availability of CC aid, & help with finding CC
- 3- An assessment of each R, taking into account for each:
 - needs for education, CC, & supportive services
 - skills, deficiencies, & prior work experience
 - family circumstances
- 4- Develop an employability plan for each individual (not a contract) which includes:
 - services to be provided by the state
 - R's activities, incl CC & other supportive services, education, training, etc.
 - an employment goalthe plan must reflect, as much as possible, Rs preferences
- 5- May have a client-agency contract which includes a purpose, length of participation & hours, services, education, training & employment activities
- 6- May have a case manager

REGULATIONS:

- Provide information in writing & orally, as appropriate
- Within the month, R must also be informed on how to indicate she wants to participate, & how to enter program(s), in writing
- Assessment procedure, tests etc. must be in State Plan; states may use different methodologies, different tests with different R groups
- Employability plan should reflect a "direct path to available employment"
- May have these agreements with only some of clients
- State may opt not to have case manager for all Rs, but must describe state approach

THE JOBS PROGRAM (cont'd)

PROGRAM ELEMENTS:

IV. ALL JOBS programs must have:

1) Educational activities, incl. HS or equivalent; basic & remedial educ.(to achieve basic literacy); English as 2nd Lang.

2) Job skills training

3) Job readiness

4) Job Development & placement

V. All JOBS programs must have 2 of the following components:

1) Group & individual job search

2) OJT (On-the-Job Training)

3) Work Supplementation

4) CWEP (Community Work Experience Program) or other State work program

VI. JOBS Programs may have:

Post-secondary education

Other Education & employment activities

Job Search (8 weeks + 8weeks/yr, but only in combination w/ training,educ

REGULATIONS (draft):

[States may combine these elements]

Must have qualitative (e.g., grades) evaluative measure

Employer subsidy max. + 50% of R's wages; R receives regular wages, benefits & raises
No limit on employer subsidy

N. B. If R loses AFDC eligibility due to increased earnings from OJT or Work Supp, & is eligible for transitional CC & Medicaid, receives up to 1 year, starting w/ end of AFDC eligibility.

Must be related to specific occupational goal

May not include Public Service Employment

State must do assessment (see above) within 3 weeks of start of first job search

STATE OPTIONS:

State-wide, or geographically concentrated programs

Contract out job training, education, etc. (e.g., to JTPA) or not

PROGRAM ELEMENTS:

I. Who Participates

Teen parent with no high school degree

If over 20 and no high school degree must have education component that is consistent with employability plan goals

UP Rs: if < 25 yrs, and no high school degree

II. Program Components

Regular high school

If 18 or 19, and not making "satisfactory progress," may substitute work and training

[N.B.-- No exemptions for lack of child care, or lack of appropriate program for parenting students]

But not if > 20 hours/ week

III. Self Initiated Education or Training

If R is already attending (at least 1/2 time) school or training, may continue if:

- it's consistent with her employment goal

- she's making "satisfactory progress" (costs of schooling not federally reimbursable, but child care, transportation, etc.

REGULATIONS (Draft)

STATE OPTIONS:

EXEMPTIONS:

None for age of child

- if R demonstrates basic literacy (= 8th grade)
- if R's long term employment goal doesn't require high school

R must get an employability plan that documents the relevance of her education/training to her empt. goal.

States may set time limits, e.g. 2 years.

"Satisfactory progress" must be defined qualitatively (e.g., GPA) over a period < 1 year, and quantitatively (amount of time to complete)

THE TWO PARENT PROGRAM:

PROGRAM ELEMENTS:

10/90 -- all states must have a UP program

-- retains old requirement that parent cannot work > 100 hours/month

-- one parent must work 16 hours + in a state work project, (work supplement, CWEP, OJT, or state-designed work program)

EXEMPTIONS:

- if one parent "looking hard" for a job

- if a parent working < 16hrs, and earnings = welfare check,

- if parent < 25, and no high school degree, may do education in lieu of work

REGULATIONS:

if in education, exempt from 16 hours requirement

STATE OPTIONS:

State may limit benefits to 6 months of year (except Medicaid must continue full year)

State may require 1 or both parents to participate in JOBS programs

State may substitute for work experience: job training, JTPA, school, voc. ed.

10/94 -- must have 40 % of UP non-exempt Rs in a work program

state cannot substitute education for state work program

STATE MAY CHOOSE TO DELAY IMPLEMENTATION OF UP WORK PROGRAM

WELFARE REFORM IN 1988: A MISSED OPPORTUNITY

by *Diana M. Pearce*

Two years ago, President Reagan proclaimed that it was time to take the welfare system out of the "horse and buggy" days. Congress has held hearings, governors have convened commissions and reform organizations have written proposals. A number of states and cities have experimented with reforms. Yet despite truly good intentions and hard work, the proposed legislation, particularly the bill sponsored by Senator Moynihan, falls far short of the welfare reform its sponsors set out to accomplish.

To address the real failure of the welfare system is a formidable task. In concrete terms, the welfare mother—who is usually young and/or has very young children, who may also be minority, and/or a high school dropout, and/or have poor health, a disability, or a child who is ill/disabled, and/or live in a poor or remote neighborhood—must be "jumped" to the front of the unemployment line. This takes her over a queue of unemployed which includes ex-steelworkers, secretaries, and many others with years of experience and/or education—and few disadvantages of race, sex, disability, or parenting responsibilities.

Ironically, the 'welfare reform' package contained in the Senate bill keeps poor families *on* welfare, provides few resources to those leaving welfare, and leaves both groups in poverty. Aside from the quite good child support enforcement provisions, the Senate bill is

primarily a program that imposes "work" requirements on welfare recipients, while doing little to help people move into real jobs.

What the Senate bill does *not* do is just as important as what it does:

- There is no minimum benefit. The AFDC benefit for an average welfare family—a mother with two children—averages \$359 per month, less than *half* the poverty line. Benefits range from \$118 per month in Alabama to over \$600 in New York, much greater than the real differences in costs of living.
- There is no guarantee of appropriate education and training, such as remedial education, English as a second language, post-secondary education, or on-the-job-training.
- Participation quotas allow little flexibility to states to concentrate training and education resources where they are needed most and spread scarce dollars thinly, helping no one person enough to make a difference.
- There is no provision for overcoming the barriers of race, sex, and geographical isolation that prevent many from obtaining wages sufficient to leave welfare and provide adequately for their families.

Welfare reform which includes these missing elements would begin to address the *real* failure of welfare—its

failure to enable people to leave poverty. But to change the welfare system without addressing the economy and social infrastructure is to set people up for failure: if there are no jobs, or the only jobs are part time and minimum wage, job training will only lead to one more cycle of poverty, not a road out. If there is not enough child care, affordable and available, and no health care coverage through employment, jobs will only last as long as transition support or the next crisis. Some of these elements are addressed in other welfare reform legislation, such as the House bill; others are found in state-level welfare reform, and others must be addressed by labor, civil rights, health, and education legislation. To propose reform without these elements is to miss an opportunity to enable welfare recipients to leave poverty as well. And that's the main point of reform in the first place.

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