

# Poverty Research Insights

A newsletter featuring research findings on poverty and policy from the National Poverty Center

FALL 2006



## Overview

This August marked the 10th anniversary of the passage of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act, or PRWORA. In this issue of Poverty Research Insights, Ron Haskins, one of the key Congressional staff members involved in the welfare reform debates, examines the research evidence on the effects of PRWORA on families and children.

This issue also presents summaries from two workshops hosted by the NPC. The first, on mixed methods research, brought together a multi-disciplinary group of junior and senior scholars, all of whom are actively engaged in both qualitative and quantitative approaches to the study of how economic conditions and public policies affect family and child well-being. The mixed methods workshop was jointly sponsored with the Harris School of Public Policy at the University of Chicago. The second workshop convened researchers, practitioners, agency staff and foundation representatives to share research and program evaluations and to discuss how to improve service delivery for ex-offenders who are leaving prisons. This workshop was jointly hosted with MDRC.

Also in this newsletter are several announcements, including notice of a forthcoming edited volume, *Working and Poor*, a notice of an upcoming conference on income volatility and food assistance programs, and descriptions of three research and training opportunities at the NPC, one for Visiting Scholars, the second for post-doctoral fellowships, and the third a call for proposals.

## Welfare Reform, 10 Years Later

Ron Haskins, Senior Fellow, Brookings Institution and Senior Consultant, Annie E. Casey Foundation<sup>1</sup>

Ten years ago, the welfare reform law of 1996, the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA), was signed by President Clinton after a long and sometimes bitter congressional debate. The voluminous body of research on the effects of welfare reform that has been produced in the decade since 1996 allows us to

draw conclusions about whether predictions of disaster from the left or glorious success from the right were correct. Not surprisingly, the evidence shows that the effects of welfare reform fall between these two extremes.

The most important change brought about by the 1996 law was the replacement of the Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) program with the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program.<sup>2</sup> With its emphasis on work, time limits, and sanctions against states that did not place a large fraction of their welfare caseload in work programs and against individuals who refused to meet state work requirements, TANF was a historic reversal of AFDC's entitlement to cash assistance. If the 1996 reforms had their intended effect of reducing welfare dependency, a leading indicator of success would be a declining welfare caseload. TANF administrative data show that caseloads began declining in the spring of 1994 and fell rapidly after the legislation was enacted. Between 1994 and 2005, the caseload declined about 60 percent. The number of families receiving cash welfare is now the lowest it has been since 1969, and the percentage of children on welfare is lower than it has been since 1966. Although it is often reported in the media that cash welfare caseloads increase during economic recessions and decline during recoveries, this claim is

## Contents

*Welfare Reform, Ten Years Later.* Ron Haskins, Senior Fellow, Brookings Institution and Senior Consultant, Annie E. Casey Foundation ..... p. 1

Call for Papers: The Impact of Religion and Faith-Based Organizations on the Lives of Low Income Families ..... p. 7

*Mixed Methods Research on Economic Conditions, Public Policy, and the Well-Being of Families and Children.* Ariel Kalil, Harris School of Public Policy, University of Chicago; Hiro Yoshikawa, Graduate School of Education, Harvard University ..... p. 8

Postdoctoral fellowships ..... p. 11

*The Re-entry to Recidivism Cycle: NPC Workshop Focuses on Promising Demonstration Projects.* Jessica Wyse, University of Michigan ..... p. 12

Upcoming Research Conference: Income Volatility and Implications for Food Assistance Programs II ..... p. 13

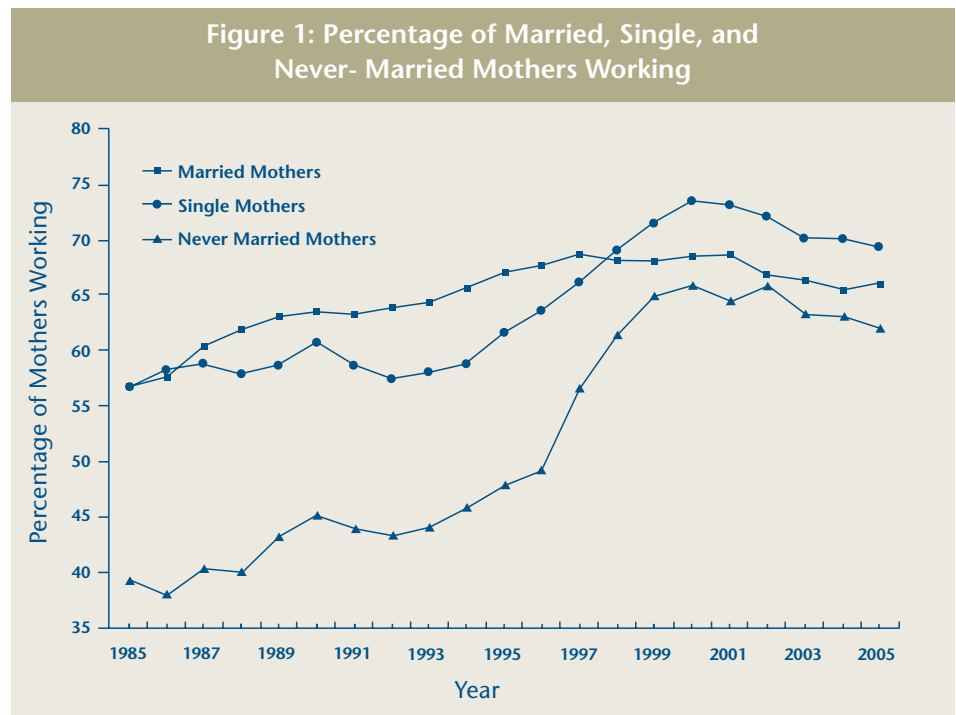
The NPC Visiting Scholars Program ..... p. 13

Call for Proposals, 2007 Small Grants Program ..... p. 13

mostly false. In the forty-one years between 1953 and 1994, the number of families on AFDC declined in only five.<sup>3</sup> Only once – between 1977 and 1979 – did the caseload decline (by about 2 percent) two years in a row. By contrast, 2005 was the eleventh year in a row that the caseload declined. Clearly, we are in a new era of welfare use.<sup>4</sup>

Although caseload decline is an important outcome measure, how families fare after leaving welfare is also of great importance. So another test of welfare reform is whether mothers leaving welfare are working. Three lines of evidence produce a consistent story. The first set of evidence is dozens of welfare-to-work studies conducted since the 1980s. These gold-standard studies almost uniformly show reductions in caseloads and increases in employment attributable to work requirements, as long as the programs included job search requirements. The second line of evidence comes from more than forty state studies conducted since 1996 of

**The most important change brought about by the 1996 law was the replacement of the Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) program with the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program. With its emphasis on work, time limits, and sanctions against states that did not place a large fraction of their welfare caseload in work programs and against individuals who refused to meet state work requirements, TANF was a historic reversal of AFDC’s entitlement to cash assistance.**



adults who left welfare. On average, these studies show that a little less than 60 percent of the adults leaving welfare were employed at any given moment and that over a period of several months or longer about 70 percent held at least one job (although there is evidence that the share of leavers who were working has declined somewhat since the recession of 2001).<sup>5</sup>

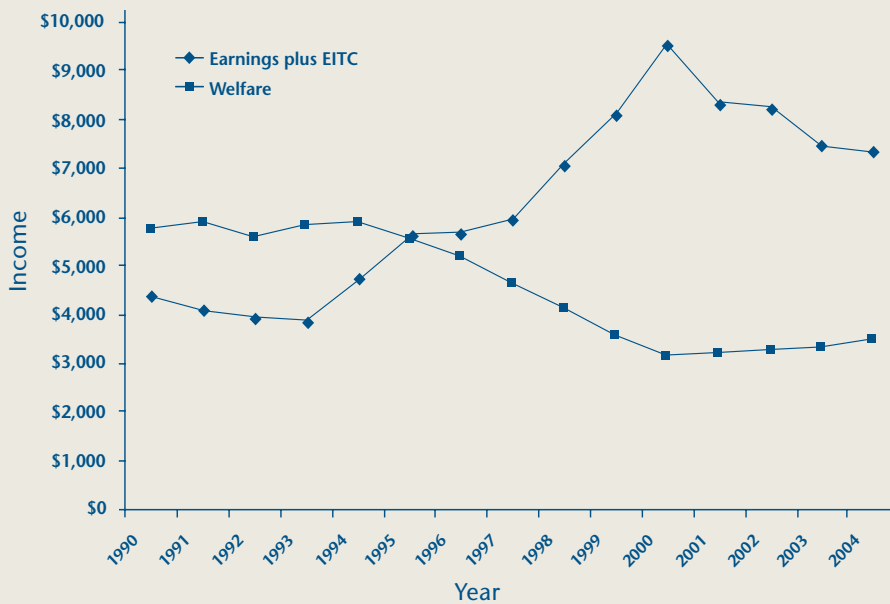
A third line of evidence, perhaps the most definitive, is the trend in female employment for the nation. Census data show historic changes in employment (defined as any earnings during the year) by single mothers, especially low-income single mothers (Figure 1). From 1993 to 2000 the employment rate of single mothers grew from 58 percent to nearly 75 percent. Employment among never-married mothers grew from 44 percent to 66 percent.<sup>6</sup> Before 1996 never-married mothers were the group most likely to be school dropouts, to go on welfare, and to stay on welfare for a decade or more. Yet their employment over this period grew by 50 percent. Employment changes of this magnitude over such a short

period for an entire demographic group are unprecedented.

Census Bureau data for those in the bottom 40 percent of the income distribution for female-headed families (those below about \$21,000 in 2000) show that their income sources shifted dramatically between 1993 and 2000.<sup>7</sup> In 1993, earnings accounted for about 30 percent of their income, while welfare payments, including cash, food stamps, housing, and school lunch, accounted for nearly 55 percent. By 2000 this pattern had reversed: earnings constituted nearly 60 percent of income, while welfare income had plummeted to only about 23 percent. As a result of earnings growth and legislated expansions of the EITC, payments from the EITC more than tripled. Thus, the total income of these low-income families increased by about 25 percent over the period (in dollars adjusted for inflation). Even after the recession of 2001, earnings remained above their 1993 level. The predictions of doom turned out to be wrong.

The pattern is clear: earnings up, welfare down. This is the definition of reducing welfare dependency. Most low-income mothers

**Figure 2: Earnings Increase, Welfare Income Falls for Bottom Two Fifths of Female-Headed Families, 1993-2004**



Source: Richard Bavier with U.S. Census Bureau data (Welfare income is cash, school lunch, food stamps, and housing; constant 2003 dollars).

heading families appear to be financially better off, although work expenses and Social Security taxes consume part of their earnings, because most now earn more than they received from welfare. Taxpayers continue making a contribution to their well-being through the EITC and other work support programs, but these mothers earn a majority of their income. This explosion of employment and earnings constitutes an enormous achievement for the mothers themselves and for the nation's social policy.

During the debate leading up to the passage of the 1996 law, a frequent objection to the legislation was that it would throw over a million children into poverty. This claim was based on a study conducted by the Urban Institute at the request of staff at President Clinton's Department of Health and Human Services.<sup>8</sup> Although child poverty dropped during the 1960s, after the early 1970s it gradually drifted upward. However, between 1994 and 2000, child poverty fell every year and reached levels not seen since 1978

(Figure 2). In addition, by 2000 the poverty rate of black children and of children in female-headed families was the lowest it had ever been. The percentage of families in deep poverty, defined as half the poverty level (about \$7,000 for a mother and two children in 2000), also declined until 2000, falling about 35 percent during the period.<sup>9</sup> Even after four consecutive years of increasing child poverty between 2001 and 2004, poverty was still 20 percent below its 1993 peak.

An analysis by the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and the Congressional Budget Office provides a clear understanding of the impact of work on poverty rates among families headed by poor mothers. The analysis examined the changing impact of earnings and government taxes and transfer payments on poverty during the 1990s. In 1990, the poverty rate among children in households with an unmarried female head before any taxes or government transfers was 50 percent. But in 1999 this poverty rate (which might be thought of as

the market poverty rate, because it is computed without regard to government taxes or benefits) fell to a little over 39 percent. Virtually all this decline in poverty is attributable to increased employment and earnings by mothers during the 1990s. When income from benefit programs and tax benefits were added to income, the analysis showed that the poverty rate in 1990 fell from 50 percent to 37 percent. Adding both tax and non-tax benefits to income in 1999 also reduced the poverty rate, in this case from 39 percent to 25 percent. Thus, based on both market income and government transfers, the poverty rate in 1999 was 12 percentage points lower than in 1990. If the 1999 poverty rate (25 percent) had been the same as the rate in 1990 (37 percent), 4.2 million more single mothers and children would have been poor. The prediction that welfare reform would increase child poverty was flawed.<sup>10</sup>

Promoting child well-being was a major goal of participants in the 1995-96 welfare reform debate. Supporters of the law argued that increased work by mothers on welfare would lead to positive impacts on children because mothers would set an example of personal responsibility, would impose schedules and order on chaotic households, and would increase family income. By contrast, opponents thought that reform would be bad for children because mothers would not be able to find and maintain work, would hit time limits or be forced off welfare by sanctions, and would experience declines in family income. There were also predictions that more children would be removed from their parents and placed in the child protection system.

Research evidence is now available to make informed judgments about which predictions have come true. As we have seen, poverty not only did not increase but declined every year between 1994 and 2000, with black child poverty reaching its lowest level ever. Although poverty increased

after 2000, it remained below its 1994 level. So great was the decline in poverty that, as Paul Jargowsky and Isabel Sawhill show, the number of neighborhoods with concentrated poverty fell precipitously, as did the number of neighborhoods classified as “underclass” because of the concentration of poverty and the high frequency of problems such as school dropout, female-headed families, welfare dependency, and labor force dropout by adult males.

Additional measures of child well-being are available. The Child and Youth Well-Being Index (CWI), published by Ken Land of Duke University with support from the Foundation for Child Development, reports twenty-eight indicators of child well-being. The indicators are based on nationally-representative surveys. The overall index shows a clear pattern of changes over the past three decades. After a few years of modest changes in no particular direction, in 1982 the index showed a decline in well-being that lasted almost continuously until 1995. By contrast, since 1995 the index shows an improvement in well-being in almost every year, more than recovering the ground lost in the 1980s and early 1990s. Using 1975 as the base year, the index descended to about 75 percent of its original level by 1995. Since then, it has increased by about 30 percentage points, to about 5 percent above its 1975 level. The CWI reports seven domains, each of which measures a dimension of child well-being such as economic, health, safety, and emotional and spiritual well-being. Most domains reflect the overall CWI pattern of continuous increases since 1995. As Land concludes, “Children are faring better in recent years.”<sup>11</sup>

Another feared effect of welfare reform was an increase in the number of children taken from destitute families by the foster care system.<sup>12</sup> By the mid-1990s, the national foster care caseload had increased every

year for fourteen consecutive years, rising from 262,000 in 1982 to 507,000 in 1996. The caseload then increased over the next three years at approximately the same rate as in previous years. Then in 2000, for the first time in two decades, the foster care caseload began to decline and has declined every year since then, falling from 567,000 in 1999 to

**Taken together, data on the well-being of children in the decade following welfare reform indicates, that with some exceptions, children, and especially poor and minority children, have generally lived under improved conditions and have shown modest gains on indicators of development. On the other hand, the hopes of conservatives about the impact of welfare reform on children have not been vindicated either.**

518,000 in 2004.<sup>13</sup> Similarly, the incidence of child maltreatment of all types has declined in most years since 1993, falling by over 20 percent between 1993 and 1999, before rising somewhat beginning in 2000. However, the rate in 2001 was still well below the rate of the early 1990s.<sup>14</sup>

Taken together, data on the well-being of children in the decade following welfare reform indicates, that with some exceptions, children, and especially poor and minority children, have generally lived under improved conditions and have shown modest gains on indicators of development. On the other hand, the hopes of conservatives about the impact of welfare reform on children have not been vindicated either. High-quality studies show that preschool children of

families participating in welfare-to-work programs may experience modest gains in their development and behavior, but other studies show that adolescents experience modest problems in school performance. From the perspective of one decade, it does not seem likely that welfare reform will alleviate the serious lags in development and performance shown by children from poor and minority families. Direct interventions with these children and their families will be necessary if the nation is to close the ability and education gaps between them and more advantaged children.

Although welfare reform is a major cause of the dramatic rise in earnings and the decline in welfare dependency and child poverty, at least two other factors account for the improving financial well-being of female-headed families. First, the economy of the 1990s was exceptionally strong. Before the recession hit in 2001, 64.4 percent of all noninstitutionalized adults in the United States were working, the highest share ever. The unemployment rate fell from 6.9 percent in 1993 to 4.0 percent in 2000, the lowest in several decades. Economists have conducted studies to determine the relative contribution of the economy, of welfare reform, and of other factors to the dramatic rise of work and earnings by low-income mothers heading families.<sup>15</sup> These studies show that both welfare reform and the booming economy are important, but there is little agreement about the relative contributions of each factor. However, previous economic booms did not lead to either the reduction in welfare rolls or the increase in work by low-income mothers heading families that were seen in the 1990s. It may be that without welfare reform cajoling and, where necessary, pushing mothers into the labor force, a growing economy would have had a more modest effect on the employment and earnings of these mothers, as was the case during previous economic expansions.

Second, beginning in the mid-1980s, the federal government made benefit programs friendlier to low-income working families and created entirely new programs designed primarily to help low-income working families. These actions include expansions of child care, creation of the child tax credit, changes in the standard deduction and the personal exemption in the income tax code, changes in Medicaid, and above all several expansions of the EITC. Two studies by the Congressional Budget Office (CBO) and the Congressional Research Service (CRS) describe the magnitude of these changes.

The CBO study examined whether federal policy changes between 1984 and 1998 had resulted in more support for low-income working families, focusing on child care, the EITC, Medicaid, and the child tax credit. Since these programs provide financial and in-kind support to poor and low-income working families, they can be considered “work supports.” Expansions in these programs after 1984 resulted in working families receiving \$46 billion more in cash and other benefits than they would have received if Congress and a series of presidents had not expanded the work support programs.<sup>16</sup>

The second study, conducted by CRS, compares the financial work incentive for a typical mother with two children on welfare in a typical state (Pennsylvania) in 1986 and 1997. For years, a major charge against welfare was that it posed a substantial disincentive to work because families that accepted jobs could be worse off working than on welfare. A mother and two children in a typical state in 1986 received about \$8,970 in cash welfare and food stamps (in constant 1997 dollars). If the mother worked and earned \$8,000, her welfare income would fall to \$1,900. She would also pay nearly \$1,200 in federal taxes but would gain about \$540 from the EITC. Thus, for working full-time she would have net income of about \$9,275, or only about

\$350 more than if she had stayed on welfare. In addition, both the mother and children would lose their Medicaid coverage. The working mother would get modest, if any, government help paying for child care. By contrast, because of the expansion of the work support system and welfare reform, by 1997 a similar mother with a \$10,000-a-year job would have net income of around \$15,350, or \$7,550 more than the \$7,800 she would have received if she had stayed on welfare. The EITC alone was worth an additional \$3,000 in cash, and changes in federal income tax law had removed the mother entirely from paying income tax. Further, the mother would have Medicaid coverage for one year, and the children would be covered as long as the mother had low income. Finally, there was much more money available for child care in 1997 than in 1986. All in all, the work support system made work a more attractive option for welfare mothers in 1997 than in 1986. It would be difficult to exaggerate the extent to which the nation’s social policy has shifted from one that provides most of its benefits to families dependent on welfare to one that provides enormous benefits to low-income working families.

The positive impacts of the 1996 reforms on income, earnings, and poverty have been pervasive. However, no policy produces all benefits and no costs. Although the 1996 law did not produce the failures predicted by its critics, it has created problems that states and the federal government should address. In my view, the most important problem is the finding that there is a group of mothers at the bottom of the income distribution who appear to be floundering under the more demanding welfare system. Generally, these are mothers who live without another adult in their household and who do not have income from cash welfare, from employment, or from unemployment insurance. In the past, these troubled parents could stay on welfare for many years. Under AFDC,

the average length of spells for adults on the rolls at any given moment was twelve years. It would be naive to believe that all these welfare-dependent parents were suddenly capable of finding and retaining jobs.

Strong evidence shows that a number of poor mothers are floundering. Surveys demonstrate that about 60 percent of the mothers who leave welfare are working at any given moment and that around 70 percent have held at least one job since leaving welfare.<sup>17</sup> The 40 percent who do not work regularly raise some concern, but the 30 percent who have not worked at all since leaving welfare raise even more serious concern. States frequently use sanctions, and thirty-six states have policy that allows them to completely terminate cash benefits for rule infractions. At least one study found that mothers sanctioned off the rolls had characteristics that make it less likely they will be able to get and hold a job. They are less likely to have a high school degree or job experience and more likely to have substance addictions, mental health problems, or three or more children than other welfare mothers.<sup>18</sup> Other researchers at Johns Hopkins, the Urban Institute, the University of Michigan, and Mathematica Policy Research report similar findings on increased hardship among mothers who leave welfare, live in a household without another adult, and do not have earnings.<sup>19</sup>

The evidence reviewed above is based on income data. Surprisingly, consumption data provide a somewhat different picture. In studies using two nationally representative data sets, Bruce Meyer and James Sullivan show that the material conditions of low-income mothers, as measured by their consumption, improved somewhat after welfare reform.<sup>20</sup> A large part of the additional consumption in the late 1990s appears to be related to work. More specifically, the mothers spent more on housing, food away

from home, and transportation. Additional housing costs could be explained by the fact that the federal housing programs in which many of these mothers participate charge families 30 percent of their income, with the remainder of the family's rent being paid by the government. If mothers earn additional money, they must spend 30 percent of it on housing: in effect, federal housing policy by itself imposes a 30 percent tax on increased earnings. Additional spending on food away from home and transportation could also be associated with mothers working and needing to use some of the increased earnings to get to work and to eat out because of time pressures.<sup>21</sup>

Although the income data suggest that there is a group of single mothers, comprising perhaps 10 percent of all single-mother families that had been on welfare, who are worse off following welfare reform, data based on consumption tend to offset this conclusion. On balance, it seems prudent to conclude that more public and private funds should be devoted to conducting research and demonstration programs to determine whether these floundering mothers are as poor as they seem to be from income data and how they can be helped. The trick will be to maintain a demanding welfare system that strongly discourages welfare dependency while simultaneously allowing states, counties, and cities enough flexibility to identify and help these floundering mothers. Some mothers may never be able to achieve steady employment. Welfare programs should figure out how to help them without reducing the pressure on more capable mothers to leave welfare for work or to avoid welfare in the first place.

Now the question is: What's next for welfare reform? The obvious answer is that states must continue to aggressively implement the work requirements in the TANF program. Recent changes in the TANF statute and as-

sociated regulations were designed to ensure that states continue to focus their attention and resources on helping adults avoid or leave welfare by working. Although states have complained that the new regulations limit their flexibility, if the nation is to effectively reduce poverty by keeping welfare dependency as low as possible, state work programs are the first line of the battle plan. In addition, federal policy should move to strengthen the work requirements in the Food Stamp program and create strong

**Some mothers may never be able to achieve steady employment. Welfare programs should figure out how to help them without reducing the pressure on more capable mothers to leave welfare for work or to avoid welfare in the first place.**

work requirements for able-bodied adults in housing programs. If work requirements are successful in one program, I can see no reason why they cannot be successful in other programs.

Years of research on poverty have convinced me that there are only three ways to reliably reduce poverty: economic growth, increased work, and increased marriage rates. Unfortunately, primarily because of low and often declining wages at the bottom of the income distribution, economic growth is less effective than in the past at reducing poverty.<sup>22</sup> However, the nation's experience with increasing work levels following the 1996 welfare reforms shows unequivocally that increased work by mothers heading families drives down the poverty rate. Now comes marriage. Work that we have undertaken at The Brookings Institution provides solid evidence that increasing marriage rates to the level the nation enjoyed in 1970 would re-

duce poverty by almost 30 percent.<sup>23</sup> Recent legislation will provide \$150 million per year to stimulate healthy marriage and responsible fatherhood programs around the nation. Experimental research projects, funded by the Department of Health and Human Services, will test marriage education and other approaches to strengthening marriage. If some of these programs are successful, they should be expanded throughout the nation. I believe the evidence strongly supports the view that if we can increase the nation's marriage rates, especially among poor and minority parents, the parents themselves, their children, and the nation will greatly benefit. Not least among these benefits will be a declining need for government welfare programs. ■

#### Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> This article is based on testimony given by Ron Haskins to the Committee on Ways and Means, U.S. House of Representatives on July 19, 2006.

<sup>2</sup> In this article I examine results only for the new TANF program. In a recent book (Ron Haskins, *Work Over Welfare: The Inside Story of the 1996 Welfare Reform Law*, Washington: Brookings, 2006), I review evidence on the effects of the law's provisions on family composition, Supplemental Security Income (SSI) for Children, SSI for drug addicts and alcoholics, public benefits for noncitizens, child care, and child support enforcement. In each of these domains, the 1996 law has had effects that range from substantial to dramatic.

<sup>3</sup> Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, "Cash Assistance for Needy Families, Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) and Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF), Average Monthly Families and Recipients for Calendar Years 1936–2001," May 10, 2002, available at [www.acf.dhhs.gov/news/stats/3697.htm](http://www.acf.dhhs.gov/news/stats/3697.htm).

<sup>4</sup> House Committee on Ways and Means, 2004 *Green Book*, section 7, pp. 27-37; Department of Health and Human Services, *Indicators of Welfare Dependence: Annual Report to Congress, 2003* (Government Printing Office, 2003), appendix A, table TANF 1; for welfare

caseloads information, see the Administration for Children and Families, [www.acf.hhs.gov/newstat2.shtml](http://www.acf.hhs.gov/newstat2.shtml).

<sup>5</sup> For reviews, see Judith M. Gueron and Edward Pauly, *From Welfare to Work* (New York: Russell Sage, 1991); Jeffrey Grogger, Lynn Karoly, and Jacob Klerman, *Consequences of Welfare Reform: A Research Synthesis* (Santa Monica, Calif.: Rand, 2002); and Gregory Acs, Pamela Loprest, and Tracy Roberts, *Final Synthesis Report of Findings from ASPE's 'Leavers' Grants* (Washington: Urban Institute, 2001).

<sup>6</sup> Gary Burtless of the Brookings Institution, unpublished calculations using U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics data.

<sup>7</sup> These figures are from unpublished tables of demographic and economic characteristics of female family heads, distributed by income quintile, that are prepared by Richard Bavier of the Office of Management and Budget using the Census Bureau's Current Population Survey. Bavier makes these tables available to anyone who requests them. All figures are given in 2004 dollars.

<sup>8</sup> Sheila Zedlewski and others, "The Potential Effects of the Budget Reconciliation Bill on Family Incomes" (Washington: Urban Institute, 1995).

<sup>9</sup> Bernadette D. Proctor and Joseph Dalaker, *Poverty in the United States: 2002* (Census Bureau, 2002), table 5; Douglas J. Besharov, ed., *Family and Child Well-Being after Welfare Reform* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Transaction, 2003), figure 4; Bureau of the Census, Poverty and Health Statistics Branch, *Current Population Survey, Annual Social and Economic Supplements*, December 14, 2005, table 3, available at [www.census.gov/hhes/www/poverty/histpov/hstpov3.html](http://www.census.gov/hhes/www/poverty/histpov/hstpov3.html).

<sup>10</sup> This analysis retains the same thresholds as the official poverty index (about \$13,300 for a family of three in 1990) but uses a broader definition of income than the official measure. House Committee on Ways and Means, *2004 Green Book*, table H-21.

<sup>11</sup> Kenneth Land, *Child and Youth Well-Being Index (CWI), 1975-2004 with Projections for 2005*, available at [www.soc.duke.edu/~cwi/](http://www.soc.duke.edu/~cwi/).

<sup>12</sup> House Committee on Ways and Means, *Contract with America: Overview*, Serial 104-20, January 5, 10, 11, and 12, 1995, pp. 58-93.

<sup>13</sup> House Committee on Ways and Means, *2004 Green Book*, section 11, table 23; Depart-

ment of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Children's Bureau, "Trends in Foster Care and Adoption, FY2000-FY2004," September 2005, available at [www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb/stats\\_research/afcars/trends.htm](http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb/stats_research/afcars/trends.htm).

<sup>14</sup> House Committee on Ways and Means, *2004 Green Book*, section 11, figure 1.

<sup>15</sup> Rebecca M. Blank, "Declining Caseloads/Increased Work: What Can We Conclude about the Effects of Welfare Reform?" *Economic Policy Review* 7 (2001): 25-36; James P. Ziliak and others, "Accounting for the Decline in AFDC Caseloads: Welfare Reform or the Economy?" *Journal of Human Resources* 35 (2000): 570-86.

<sup>16</sup> Congressional Budget Office, *Policy Changes Affecting Mandatory Spending for Low-Income Families Not Receiving Welfare* (1998).

<sup>17</sup> House Committee on Ways and Means, *2004 Green Book*, pp. L24-L31.

<sup>18</sup> Andrew J. Cherlin and others. "Operating within the Rules: Welfare Recipients' Experiences with Sanctions and Case Closings," *Social Services Review* 76 (2002): 387-405.

<sup>19</sup> Robert Moffitt and Katie Winder, "Does It Pay to Move from Welfare to Work? A Comment on Danziger, Heflin, Corcoran, Oltmans, and Wang," *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management* 24 (2005): 399-409; Pamela Loprest, "Disconnected Welfare Leavers Face Serious Risks," Report 7, *Snapshots of America's Families III* (Washington: Urban Institute, 2003); Lesley Turner, Sheldon Danziger, and Kristin Seefeldt, "Failing the Transition from Welfare to Work: Women Chronically Disconnected from Employment and Cash Welfare." *Social Science Quarterly* 87(2006): 227-249; Robert G. Wood and Anu Rangarajan, "What's Happening to TANF Leavers Who Are Not Employed?" Issue Brief 6 (Princeton, N.J.: Mathematica Policy Research, 2003).

<sup>20</sup> Bruce D. Meyer and James X. Sullivan, *The Well-Being of Single-Mother Families after Welfare Reform*, Policy Brief 33, *Welfare Reform & Beyond* (Brookings, 2005).

<sup>21</sup> Christopher Jencks, Scott Winship, and Joseph Swingle, "Welfare Redux," *American Prospect* 17 (2006): 36-40.

<sup>22</sup> Sheldon Danziger and Peter Gottschalk, "Diverging Fortunes: Trends in Poverty and Inequality" in R. Farley and J. Haaga, eds. *The American People: Census 2000* (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 2006).

<sup>23</sup> Ron Haskins and Isabel Sawhill, "Work and Marriage: The Way to End Poverty and Welfare" (Brief #28), Washington, DC, Brookings Institution, September 2003; and Adam Thomas and Isabel Sawhill, "For Richer or for Poorer: Marriage as an Anti-poverty Strategy," *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management*, 2002, 21(4), 587-599.

## Call for Papers: The Impact of Religion and Faith-Based Organizations on the Lives of Low Income Families

In June, 2007 the National Poverty Center (NPC) will sponsor a research conference designed to bring together the growing group of researchers who are interested in better understanding the role that religion and religious organizations play in assisting low-income families and affecting their behavior. Those selected will give a presentation at the conference to be held in Washington, D.C.

<http://www.npc.umich.edu/opportunities/>

For more information, contact Sarah Marsh, NPC Program Manager, at [skmarsh@umich.edu](mailto:skmarsh@umich.edu). ■

# Mixed Methods Research on Economic Conditions, Public Policy, and the Well-Being of Families and Children

---

*By Ariel Kalil, Associate Professor, Harris School of Public Policy, University of Chicago;  
Hiro Yoshikawa, Professor, Graduate School of Education, Harvard University*

In June 2005, the NPC co-sponsored a two-day conference at the University of Michigan, “Mixed Methods Research on Economic Conditions, Public Policy, and Family and Child Well-Being.” This conference was organized by Ariel Kalil, Associate Professor in the Harris School of Public Policy Studies at the University of Chicago, and Hiro Yoshikawa, Professor in the Graduate School of Education at Harvard. The impetus for the conference was the observation that although many studies have explored how economic conditions and related public policies affect children and their families, most use either qualitative or quantitative methodologies, with few combining these two approaches.

The conference brought together scholars from psychology, sociology, economics, public policy, anthropology, education, and social work, all of whom are actively engaged in both qualitative and quantitative approaches to the study of how economic conditions and public policies affect family- and child well-being. Support was provided by the National Poverty Center, the Center for Human Potential and Public Policy at the University of Chicago, the National Institutes for Child Health and Human Development, and the American Psychological Association. About 35 senior and junior scholars presented and discussed seven research papers over the course of two days. The conference included a keynote address by Greg Duncan, Northwestern University, and Kathryn Edin, University of Pennsylvania, as well as a wrap-up and “next steps” session with Kalil and Yoshikawa.

Many of the participants were investigators on large-scale quantitative studies that had embedded in-depth qualitative components. The participants noted that research on questions of economic conditions, public policy, and child and family well-being cannot rely exclusively on ethnography or qualitative methods, especially since such studies usually have very small sample sizes that make generalization and subgroup comparisons difficult. At the same time, relying only on quantitative data leaves important questions unanswered. A goal of the conference was to discuss the range of mixed-methods designs that most productively contribute to research on economic conditions, policy, and family and child well-being. These include qualitative studies embedded within non-experimental or experimental survey studies; the integration of qualitative and quantitative studies conducted on separate samples; quantitative data collection limited to particular constructs within qualitative studies, and vice versa.

Why is it so rare to find studies that incorporate both qualitative and quantitative methods? First, training on integration of these methods is rarely available either in graduate training or in the early-career stage. Second, there is little consensus on the different approaches to integrating the two kinds of data. Finally, the added value in implications for public policy of studies that combine these kinds of data has not been explored. The conference addressed these issues and provided concrete suggestions for the research process, from training, project conceptualization, funding, implementation, and publishing.

These methodological questions were organized around substantive topics relating to economic conditions, public policy, and

family and child well-being. The papers discussed (a) parental employment and low-income children’s well-being; (b) intra-household resource allocation and investments in children; (c) marriage promotion, family formation, and child well-being; (d) child support and father involvement; (e) neighborhood effects on low-income families and children; (f) poverty, public policy, and the well-being of immigrant children; and (g) implementation and service delivery.

A number of new large-scale studies in this research area (e.g., the New Hope demonstration; the Time, Love, Cash, Care, and Children (TLC-3) sub-study of the Fragile Families study; Moving to Opportunity (MTO) have recently adopted a mixed-methods approach. The conference facilitated discussion of early findings across multiple, related projects. The conference also provided a forum for collaboration, with discussion of, for example, how groups of researchers might apply a common mixed-methods analysis across different data sets. This exercise could be useful not only for helping to standardize new methodological approaches but also to develop new theory in this area. Finally, the conference provided a valuable opportunity for junior scholars to interact with the senior colleagues in a relaxed, intimate setting.

## **Combining quantitative and qualitative methods**

What can mixed-method approaches contribute that neither quantitative nor qualitative methods alone can? Current research provides several unique contributions (e.g., Edin & Lein, 1997; Gibson & Duncan, 2005; Kalil, Schweingruber, Daniel-Echols, & Breen, 2000; Kling, Liebman, & Katz, 2005; Yoshikawa, Weisner, & Lowe, in press).

First, the combination of quantitative and qualitative methods can capture the complexity of mechanisms through which the economy, public policies and families affect child development. For example, the conference paper by Susan Clampet-Lundquist, Jeffrey Kling, Kathryn Edin, and Greg Duncan explored why the Moving to Opportunity residential-mobility experiment had more positive effects on the academic performance and social behavior of girls compared to boys. The qualitative sub-study found that boys of parents who took up the offer to move from high- to low-poverty neighborhoods had more difficulty adjusting to new neighborhoods. Girls adapted more quickly to the new settings, developing school-based friendship networks that were less likely to be involved with risky behaviors. These were experiences that had not been anticipated in the survey, but emerged from in-depth interviews.

Another conference paper examined the psychological meanings of different forms of expenditures in low-income families. Rashmita Mistry and Ted Lowe analyze the concept of “economic stress” by showing that keeping up with bills, making direct expenditures on children, and buying big-ticket household items are associated with different affective states in low-income parents. Such variation in psychological states has important implications for parenting and child well-being. The authors question the extent to which a theoretical model developed in quantitative studies (in this case, the “family process” model developed by Conger, Elder, and others in their studies of economically stressed families) can be used to interpret qualitative data.

Second, creative use of mixed methods can challenge how researchers measure family- and policy-level constructs. For example, Edin and Lein (1997) challenged assumptions of how household income and expenditures

are measured in quantitative studies, by gathering qualitative data on budgeting from a relatively large sample and then using both qualitative and quantitative analysis methods. The rapport and trust developed between interviewer and welfare recipient make it possible to gather data that tends to go unreported in large social surveys.

The conference paper presented by Katherine Magnuson and Tim Smeeding followed in this vein by examining the role that child-support income plays in family budgets and how child support receipt affects economic well-being. For those who receive it, child support constitutes about 16% of family income and averages nearly \$3,800 per year. However, these estimates do not count informal assistance, including in-kind contributions, and mask considerable variability in the amount and regularity of support provided. Magnuson and Smeeding analyze in-depth interview data from the TLC-3 study to describe patterns of formal and informal child support, as well as its role in custodial and non-custodial parents’ economic well-being and intra-household resource allocation. The results call into question the conventional assumption that income is shared only between related family members; these findings have implications for how quantitative data are analyzed, especially to arrive at official statistics. Kathryn Short, of the Census Bureau, then used these findings as a jumping-off point to illustrate the number of families who would be officially counted as poor under the different assumptions about income-pooling that Magnuson and Smeeding’s research proposed.

Qualitative research can also add to our understanding of how families experience the implementation of public policies in local communities, organizations, and networks, and why their responses to policy-driven incentives may differ. Marcia Meyers and

colleagues found that welfare-office social workers in California were not implementing reforms that the state had mandated (Meyers, Glaser, & MacDonald, 1998). This information was obtained through taped observations of caseworker-client interactions. Such data can explain why families may not respond to employment policies in ways that policy makers intend—in this case because the intentions of the policy makers were not implemented. At the conference, Meyers synthesized new work examining the structure, delivery, and impact of social welfare policies by examining the policy process at the agencies and observing encounters between clients and workers. She concluded that an understanding of the devolution of authority for welfare to the state and local levels and to sub-contracted agencies requires an assessment of interactions between caseworkers and clients.

Encouraging two-parent family formation was an explicit goal in the 1996 welfare reform legislation and marriage promotion as a policy goal has featured prominently in welfare reauthorization discussions. While quantitative studies have documented the characteristics of low-income couples who do and do not marry, less information is available on how and why low-income women enter into marriage; how marriage decisions are linked with employment opportunities, welfare and related policies, and/or services; and how women take their perceptions of their children’s well-being and development into consideration in making decisions about marriage and union formation. Qualitative approaches can investigate how women make family formation decisions and what they perceive to be the consequences of union formation for both themselves and their children. This information, in turn, can inform the development of quantitative measures that more comprehensively assess decisions about relationship formation and dissolution.

At the conference, Rukmalie Jayakody and Kristin Seefeldt addressed this potential contribution of a mixed-methods approach with their discussion of the in-depth interviews they have conducted with a subset of low-income mothers who participated in a 5-year panel survey of women leaving welfare in Michigan (the Women's Employment Study). They uncovered a wide variety of complex family structures that were not apparent in the survey, especially those involving multi-partner fertility. They also observed differential treatment by the respondents of children of different parents who spend time together in the same household. Jayakody and Seefeldt provided concrete examples of ways in which their mixed-methods approach is providing more insights into questions of family structure and behavior than either an exclusively quantitative or qualitative approach could. For example, they were able to identify numerous step and half-siblings of resident children and describe the large network of other extended families members who are involved in the lives of newly married low-income couples.

Our discussion at the conference also touched on a range of mixed-methods analysis. There are as of yet no standard accepted methods in data analysis for integrating qualitative and quantitative information. Topics explored included the consideration of the range of detectable effects within qualitative, quantitative, and mixed-methods studies of varying sample sizes; qualitative vs. quantitative approaches to longitudinal data analysis; the contribution of qualitative data to experimental and quasi-experimental evaluations of policy initiatives; and how to approach interpretation when qualitative and quantitative methods present conflicting results. The group also discussed training of field workers in mixed-methods studies, issues of recruitment and data collection, and funding and publication issues.

The wrap-up session synthesized the discussion of the two days and offered a few conclusions. First, a mixed-methods approach is both teachable and learnable, and that it would be to students' merit to train in both worlds. Some graduate programs, such as the doctoral program in Human Development and Social Policy at Northwestern University, have implemented mixed-methods training into the curriculum. As for research design, participants agreed that an embedded design has much to offer, as does random sampling in an experimental framework. In addition, parallel timing of the two types of data collection was seen as advantageous. More experienced scholars at the conference brought up the risks of covering too many topics in a qualitative interview study, arguing that a focused approach is better. Finally, the group agreed that important issues remained unresolved, including how best to capture dynamics in family life (e.g., relating to the frequency of visits and type of data collection). There is also clearly much room to develop along the lines of theory-building in a mixed-methods framework.

In sum, the conference was challenging and raised more questions than were answered. This is to be expected in a new domain of research. We encourage researchers to read the conference papers on the NPC website, <http://www.npc.umich.edu/news/events/mixedmethods/>. ■

### Citations

Edin, K., & Lein, L. (1997). *Making ends meet: How single mothers survive welfare and low-wage work*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.

Gibson, Christina M., and Greg J. Duncan. 2005. "Qualitative/Quantitative synergies in a random-assignment program evaluation." Pp. 283-304 in *Discovering successful pathways in children's development : mixed methods in the study of childhood and family life*, edited by Thomas S. Weisner. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Kalil, A., Schweingruber, H., Daniel-Echols, M., & Breen, A. (2000). "Mother, worker, welfare recipient: Welfare reform and the multiple roles of low-income women." In S.H. Danziger & A.C. Lin (Eds.), *Coping with Poverty: The Social Contexts of Neighborhood, Work, and Family in the African American Community* (pp. 201-223). Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.

Kling, Jeffrey R., Jeffrey B. Liebman, and Lawrence F. Katz. 2005. "Bullets Don't Got No Name: Consequences of Fear in the Ghetto." Pp. 243-281 in *Discovering successful pathways in children's development: Mixed methods in the study of childhood and family life*, edited by Thomas S. Weisner. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Yoshikawa, Hirokazu, Thomas S. Weisner, and Edward D. Lowe, editors. In press. *Making it Work: Low-Wage Employment, Family Life, and Child Development*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.

## Postdoctoral fellowships

The NPC is accepting applications for 2007-2008 Postdoctoral Fellowships with the University of Michigan's Research and Training Program on Poverty and Public Policy.

Funded by the Ford Foundation, this program provides the opportunity for one or two years of research and extensive training to outstanding American scholars who are members of groups that are underrepresented in the social sciences (e.g. members of racial and ethnic minority groups, individuals from socioeconomically disadvantaged backgrounds, etc.)

Preference will be given to applications from scholars who are engaged in poverty research and who received their Ph.D. after 2001. Priority will be given to scholars who would benefit from resources available at the University of Michigan and from interactions with affiliated faculty members

**Application Deadline:** January 12, 2007

**Award Notification:** March 31, 2007

**More details and the application are available online at:**

[http://www.fordschool.umich.edu/research/poverty/fellowship\\_opps.html](http://www.fordschool.umich.edu/research/poverty/fellowship_opps.html) ■

## Edited Volume of NPC Research Available Soon

In late 2006, the Russell Sage Foundation will publish an NPC conference volume, *Working and Poor: How Economic and Policy Changes Are Affecting Low-Wage Workers*. The editors are NPC co-directors Rebecca Blank and Sheldon Danziger and NPC Affiliate, Robert Schoeni. The book can be ordered from Russell Sage at: <http://www.russellsage.org/publications/books/060711.765292>

In recent decades, economic developments, such as technological changes, the decline in unionization, and changing skill requirements, have adversely affected low-wage workers, especially those with few marketable skills and few resources with which to support themselves during periods of economic transition. In *Working and Poor*, various scholars examine how economic and policy changes over the last twenty-five years have affected the well-being of low-wage workers and their families. The table of contents is listed below.

### ***Working and Poor: How Economic and Policy Changes Are Affecting Low-Wage Workers***

**Introduction: Work and Poverty During the Past Quarter Century**  
Rebecca Blank/Sheldon Danziger/Robert Schoeni

#### **Part I. What is Changing (and Why) in the Labor Market for Low-Skilled Workers?**

1. Exploring Gender Differences in Employment and Wage Trends Among Less-Skilled Workers. Rebecca M. Blank/Heidi Shierholz
2. Wage Trends among Disadvantaged Minorities. George J. Borjas

#### **Part II. How do Economic Trends Affect Less-Skilled Workers?**

3. The Macroeconomy and Determinants of the Earnings of Less-Skilled Workers. Robert Hall
4. The Impact of Technological Change on Low-Wage Workers: A Review. David Card/John DiNardo
5. The Changing Pattern of Wage Growth for Low Skilled Workers. Eric French/Bhashkar Mazumder/Christopher Taber

#### **Part III. How do Macroeconomic Changes Influence Well-Being Measures Beyond Income?**

6. The Level and Composition of Consumption Over the Business Cycle: The Role of "Quasi-fixed" Expenditures. Kerwin Kofi Charles/Melvin Stephens Jr.
7. Recent Trends in Resource Sharing among the Poor. Steven J. Haider/Kathleen McGarry
8. Economic Conditions and Children's Living Arrangements. Rebecca A. London/Robert W. Fairlie

#### **Part IV. How do Policy Changes Interact with the Economy and Economic Well-being?**

9. How do Tax Policies Affect Low-income Workers? Kevin A. Hassett/Anne Moore
10. State Spending on Social Assistance Programs Over the Business Cycle. Therese J. McGuire/David F. Merriman
11. Temporary Agency Employment as a Way out of Poverty? David Autor/Susan Houseman
12. Child Support and the Economy. Maria Cancian/Daniel R. Meyer
13. Unemployment Insurance over the Business Cycle: Does it Meet the Needs of Less-Skilled Workers? Phillip B. Levine
14. How is Health Insurance Affected by the Economy? Public and Private Coverage among Low-skilled Adults in the 1990s. Helen Levy

# The Re-entry to Recidivism Cycle: NPC Workshop Focuses on Promising Demonstration Projects

Jessica Wyse, University of Michigan

On May 24, 2006, the National Poverty Center sponsored a workshop entitled “Research on Prisoner Reentry: What Do We Know and What Do We Want to Know?” Facilitating successful reentry is a growing challenge for policymakers and practitioners, as 600,000 ex-offenders are released, mostly into a relatively small number of neighborhoods each year, and far too many of them recidivate. While programs aiming to facilitate the reentry process exist, with some notable exceptions, many have received inadequate evaluation and assessment. In a paper prepared for the workshop, Dan Bloom of MDRC reviewed the existing literature, noting that the policy research community knows little about how to improve the re-entry process for ex-offenders.<sup>i</sup>

The NPC, along with MDRC, organized the workshop as an opportunity for researchers, practitioners, and agency staff to share research findings and to discuss how to improve service delivery. Workshop participants were drawn from government, academia, research and evaluation organizations, and the foundation communities.

Christopher Uggen of the University of Minnesota reviewed recent research and cited a fifty-percent recidivism rate, noting that this left half of ex-offenders successfully returning to communities. In the past, the policy and academic communities have focused on pathways to recidivism; but Uggen noted that in order to facilitate reentry, it is essential to understand the stories and experiences of those who have succeeded. He highlighted the need for richer descriptive and theoretical understanding of ex-offenders’ experiences, in addition to enhanced evaluations. He concluded by highlighting the negative effects of collateral sanctions levied against ex-offenders, such as prohibitions against entering certain occupations or the inability to vote. Conference participants concurred that program models should address the many

challenges facing the ex-offender, be they employment, drug addiction, housing, family issues or mental health.

Representatives from the Urban Institute, Research Triangle Institute, MDRC and the Joyce Foundation each spoke about several ongoing prisoner re-entry demonstration projects that use either random or quasi-random assignment to evaluate program success. Target populations vary between the demonstration projects, from the violent offender population of Serious and Violent Offender Re-entry Initiative (SVORI), a multi-site demonstration project operating in nearly every state, to the offender population at large served by the Center for Employment Opportunities (CEO) in New York.<sup>ii</sup> The Joyce Foundation, with MDRC as the lead researcher, in 2006 will launch a random assignment demonstration project to test the effectiveness of transitional jobs programs as a way to help ex-offenders enter and stay in the labor market. With the newness of these evaluations, audience members suggested that research tools be shared across demonstrations, furthering our ability to make generalizations across sites.

A theme that emerged during the sessions facilitated by David Thacher of the University of Michigan, Jeffrey Kling of the Brookings Institution, and Debbie Mukamal of the Jay John College of Criminal Justice was the need for a holistic approach to serving ex-offenders. For example, some participants noted that programs needed to creatively address the employment issue, be that by integrating wrap-around services, offering transitional jobs, or focusing on the long-term stability of the job in addition to the initial placement. Mukamal challenged the audience to think of the ex-offender as both an individual and as a part of a broader community.

Gordon Berlin, President of MDRC, assembled a list of the conferences’ primary findings and priorities for future research. Oft-mentioned goals included expanded,

longitudinal data sources and a common survey instrument that could be used across evaluations. In terms of program design goals, audience members suggested tying findings from the welfare-to-employment literature with that of the reentry literature. Although some remarked that these two research areas differed in fundamental ways, others believed that uniting the policy findings from welfare with that of criminal justice could advance the state of knowledge. Rebecca Blank, Dean of the Gerald R. Ford School of Public Policy, suggested that a welfare scholar and a reentry scholar could collaborate to further such an integration of findings.

Audience members also suggested examining the social safety net and its potential for use with the criminal justice population, such as the possibility of using TANF or child support funds for family reunification or extending EITC eligibility to non-custodial parents. Community colleges were seen as a potential means of creating opportunities for some ex-offenders. Participants also stressed the need to support the ex-offender not just through employment, but in the diversity of their needs, from mental health to expanded housing options. ■

## Endnotes

<sup>i</sup> A link to the full paper can be found here: <http://www.mdrc.org/publications/435/full.pdf>

<sup>ii</sup> For more information about the SVORI evaluation, see <http://www.svori.org/>; for more information about the CEO evaluation, see <http://www.mdrc.org/publications/426/full.pdf>

## Upcoming Research Conference: Income Volatility and Implications for Food Assistance Programs II

The National Poverty Center (NPC) and the Economic Research Service (ERS), U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), will sponsor a research conference to be held in Washington, DC, on November 16-17, 2006. Eleven papers will be presented, abstracts of which can be found on our website: [http://www.npc.umich.edu/news/events/income\\_volatility\\_agenda/](http://www.npc.umich.edu/news/events/income_volatility_agenda/)

For more information, contact Sarah Marsh, NPC Program Manager, at [skmarsh@umich.edu](mailto:skmarsh@umich.edu). ■

## The NPC Visiting Scholars Program

Each year, the NPC hosts a small number of faculty, researchers, and policy analysts through our Visiting Scholar Program. We provide visiting scholars with office space, access to computers, and opportunities to collaborate with NPC affiliates and attend events on the University of Michigan campus.

Applications are now being accepted for the winter and summer, 2007. Past visitors have stayed for a week or for an entire year.

For more information and for an application, please go to: [http://www.npc.umich.edu/opportunities/visiting/Visitors\\_RFA\\_2006.pdf](http://www.npc.umich.edu/opportunities/visiting/Visitors_RFA_2006.pdf) ■

## Call for Proposals, 2007 Small Grants Program: Incarceration, Criminal Justice Policy and Poverty

Annually, the NPC provides funds to young scholars to conduct innovative research around a specific area of interest. Preference is given to non-tenured researchers with full-time academic appointments and researchers using new approaches and innovative methods.

The focus of this year's small grant competition will be on the effects of incarceration and the effects of criminal justice policies more generally on poverty broadly defined. We envision a number of potential areas of inquiry, including, but not limited to:

- The effects of prior incarceration and a criminal record on the employment outcomes of former inmates;
- The effects of incarceration on family formation and dissolution or on children's outcomes;
- Inter-generational correlations in the likelihood of arrest, conviction and incarceration;
- The effect of incarceration, arrests, or criminal justice policy on inter-group differences in economic, family or community outcomes;
- Mental illness and the risk of incarceration as well as the health and mental health consequences of incarceration;
- Evaluations of public programs and community and faith-based organizations in facilitating re-integration of ex-offenders;
- Evaluations of programs that divert convicted felons from prison;
- The impacts of crime or criminal justice policies on low income communities and/or the interaction of crime and incarceration on place-based poverty;
- The impact on families of policies that deny convicted felons access to opportunities such as educational loans, public housing, and employment in certain occupations.

The application deadline is February 1, 2007 for funding starting in late spring/early summer 2007. We anticipate making up to four awards of \$17,500 each.

Applications should be sent to:  
National Poverty Center  
Gerald R. Ford School of Public Policy  
University of Michigan  
5100 Weill Hall, 735 S. State St.  
Ann Arbor, MI 48109-3091  
ATTN: 2007 Small Grants

For more information, please visit our website: [http://www.npc.umich.edu/opportunities/research\\_grants/](http://www.npc.umich.edu/opportunities/research_grants/) ■

### The National Poverty Center

#### About the NPC

The National Poverty Center is charged with promoting high-quality research on the causes and consequences of poverty, evaluating and analyzing policies to alleviate poverty, and training the next generation of poverty researchers.

Rebecca M. Blank and Sheldon H. Danziger, Co-Directors

Major funding for the National Poverty Center is provided by the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

Visit us online: [www.npc.umich.edu](http://www.npc.umich.edu)

#### Poverty Research Insights

A newsletter featuring recent research findings on poverty and policy from the National Poverty Center

Kristin S. Seefeldt, Editor

Any opinions, findings, conclusions, or recommendations expressed in this material are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the view of the National Poverty Center or any sponsoring agency.



National Poverty Center  
Gerald R. Ford School of Public Policy  
University of Michigan  
Joan and Sanford Weill Hall  
735 South State Street, Suite 5100  
Ann Arbor, Michigan 48109-3091

NON-PROFIT  
ORGANIZATION  
U.S. POSTAGE  
**PAID**  
ANN ARBOR, MI  
PERMIT #229