



Event: Interpretations and Implications of Findings from Welfare Leavers Studies

Date: May 10, 1999

Location: Doubletree Hotel, Arlington, VA

I. Summary

The Welfare Peer Technical Assistance Network, funded by the Administration for Children and Families (ACF), Office of Family Assistance (OFA), Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) coordinated this workshop in conjunction with the Office of Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation (ASPE), DHHS. Ms. Julia Isaacs, Director, Data and Technical Analysis Division, ASPE/HSP, led the planning and conduct of this workshop. It was intended for states or counties that were awarded specific ASPE grants in 1998 to study welfare “leavers.” Ten states and three counties (or consortia of counties) were awarded the grants to study the outcomes of welfare reform on individuals and families who leave the TANF program, who apply for cash welfare but are never enrolled because of non-financial eligibility or diversion programs, and/or who appear to be eligible but are not enrolled. This workshop afforded participants from the grantee states an opportunity to gain information on interpreting the findings from their leavers studies. It was intended to offer them some preliminary findings from select states, examine cross-state comparisons, discuss uses and misuses of the data, and examine implications for program redesign and refinement. This summary highlights the main points from the workshop presentations and subsequent discussions ensuing from them.

II. Participants

Participants included representatives from all ten of the grantee states as well as from two counties. The states in attendance included Arizona, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Massachusetts, Missouri, New York, Washington, and Wisconsin; others in attendance included Cuyahoga County, Ohio; San Mateo County, CA; and Washington, D.C. Presenters included representatives from several grantee states and one grantee county as well as from ASPE, DHHS; the Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation (OPRE), DHHS; the General Accounting Office; the National Conference of State Legislatures; and the state of Maryland.

I. Session Summary

The workshop began with welcome and introductory remarks from Mr. Alvin C. Collins, Director, DHHS/ACF/OFA, and Ms. Patricia Ruggles, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Human Services Policy, DHHS/ASPE. Mr. Collins highlighted one of the ultimate goals of the workshop as to identify strategies and ideas to help families find ways to go to work and succeed there. He stressed the sharing of information among states and emphasized cross-state comparisons in order for states to gain ideas about what is working in the area of welfare reform. Another theme that Mr. Collins emphasized is that states need to maintain a sense of urgency as the time clock is ticking for many of the families on welfare. He referred to this further by suggesting that states “maintain their investment with a sense of urgency” in the area welfare reform. The area of welfare leavers has become a very important issue in recent months he commented. He went on to say that his office receives several calls a day about what is happening to people who leave welfare. As an example of this issue’s importance, he referred to the various articles in the media that have focused on leavers. He concluded by stating that it is important for states to determine the current status of leavers; what work needs to be continued to best assist welfare leavers; and to identify successful strategies states have implemented that can be replicated nation-wide.

Ms. Ruggles provided additional welcoming comments and pointed out that each of the thirteen ASPE grant recipient states/counties had a representative at the workshop. She noted that ASPE has already received interim reports from five of the thirteen grantees on their welfare leavers studies: Arizona; Cuyahoga County, Ohio; San Mateo County, California; Washington; and Georgia. She said she expected many more interim reports to be completed by other states in the very near future. She concluded by saying that her office is looking forward to hearing more from the grantees about what is happening to welfare leavers.

The following section highlights the main points of the workshop presentations and the related issues discussed.

A. Preliminary findings from TANF Leavers Studies

1. *Overview* (Julia Isaacs – Director, Data and Technical Analysis Division, ASPE/HSP)

Presentation of findings from:

- 5 draft interim reports from ASPE-funded leavers studies (AZ, GA, WA, Cuyahoga Co., San Mateo Co.)
- 2 reports based on state administrative data (MD, WI)
- 4 reports based on state-funded surveys (MA, SC, WA, WI)
- 50-70% with earnings in quarter after exit, 70-85% ever employed in first year after exit
- median and mean quarterly earnings of leavers rise significantly immediately after exit and continue to rise over the year following exit
- 15-25% receiving TANF 12 months after exit, 20-40% ever returning within 6 months after exit

- 20-60% receiving FS 12 months after exit, 50-80% receiving Medicaid 12 months after exit
- data given for a small number of states on receipt of other public assistance (child care, child support) and some measures of family well-being

2. *Arizona* (Karen Westra, Senior Research Analyst, Department of Economic Security)

- Focus of study: What consequences, both intended and unintended, do recipients and their dependents experience once their link to cash assistance is severed?
- Cases profile: From 1/98-3/98 (first quarter) 10,647 cases closed
 - 20 % of the cases examined were closed due to a sanction being imposed on their case
 - 80% of the cases closed for reasons ranging from employment to failing to have their benefits reviewed for renewal
- Demographic characteristics of the research sample
 - cases closed due to sanctions appear to be demographically different than cases closed due to other reasons
 - specifically: adults in sanctioned cases are:
 - more likely to have never been married
 - more likely to be of African American or Hispanic origin, and less likely to be Native American or Caucasian
 - less likely to have completed high school
 - more likely to live in Maricopa County
 - more likely to have reached the 24-month time limit
- Top three reasons for case closure
 - 36.9% failure to comply with procedures (clients failed to verify residential address or SSN, failed to complete the reapplication process, etc.)
 - 20.2% sanctioned (failure to comply with issues such as work requirements, immunization requirements, and cooperation with child support)
 - 19% employment
- Recidivism (cash assistance)
 - 65% of all the cases in the research sample did not return to cash assistance within twelve months of case closure
 - recidivism rates are higher for cases closed due to a sanction (these cases were 1.5 times more likely to return to assistance in the quarter following case closure)
- Wages
 - 52% of clients had reported wages in the quarter following case closure (with a 62% increase in average earnings in the quarter following case closure when compared to average wages in the quarter prior to closure), while 48% had no reported wages

- cases that closed for a reason other than the imposition of a sanction, on average, had more reported wages than those cases closed due to a sanction
- Arizona's survey (next part of study) will examine other financial supports on which clients may be relying (child support, Social Security, family members, or living with others to share expenses) and will also ask if none of these supports were sufficient, leaving people homeless or without food
- Food stamp receipt
 - nearly 90% of all cases in the sample received food stamps in the quarter prior to leaving the cash assistance program
 - 74% of sanctioned cases continued to receive food stamps – compared to 51% of non-sanctioned cases
 - food stamp eligibility may continue even when a cash assistance case is closed due to a sanction because of differing policy guidelines between cash assistance and food stamp programs
- Child care utilization
 - 14-17% of the cases in the study utilized state childcare assistance
 - further study is needed in this area due to varying eligibility issues such as the age of the children and income levels
- Medical assistance
 - few entry-level employment opportunities offer medical assistance as a benefit
 - sanctioned households tended to maintain medical eligibility for Title IXX medical assistance at increased rates compared to non-sanctioned households
- Sanctioning policy (Arizona has a very aggressive policy)
 - clients who are out of compliance for one month have their benefits reduced by 25%
 - at two months benefits are reduced 50%
 - at three months the case is closed

3. *Washington* (Jay Ahn, Principal Investigator, Department of Social and Health Services)

- Two focuses: monitor post-exit outcomes of TANF recipients (three different groups during different time frames) and examine a “natural diversion” population
 - cohort I= TANF clients who received TANF cash assistance the fourth quarter of 1996 (group prior to welfare reform)
 - cohort II= TANF clients who received TANF cash assistance the fourth quarter of 1997 (reflective of preliminary effects of the state's WorkFirst program)
 - cohort III- TANF clients who received TANF cash assistance the fourth quarter of 1998 (results from this group will be available in a future report)

- natural diversion group represents clients who are not receiving TANF cash assistance even though they have characteristics that make them look as though they are eligible (income characteristics or program participation in Medicare, Food Stamps, etc.)
- Washington's approach: studied clients who left TANF for at least two months immediately following receipt of benefits during a particular quarter (exit group) as well as those who remained on assistance during the same quarter (ongoing group)
 - clients will be tracked twelve months prior to and twelve months after the selected study quarter as well as during the quarter itself (twenty-seven months total)
 - the study focuses on wage progression, job retention, job entry, recidivism, and other well-being characteristics of TANF recipients among the three cohort groups
- Data suggest that the exit groups have relatively constant characteristics while the ongoing groups have been affected by policy changes
 - employment and assistance attributes of the exit groups are relatively unchanged before and after welfare reform
 - the ongoing groups may be influenced largely by new eligibility criteria—50% of earnings are disregarded in determining TANF eligibility—as well as the work requirements
 - exit rates increased from 14.6% to 17% between cohorts I and II (indicative of the effects of welfare reform)
- Wage progression
 - median wage of the exit group cohort I during the twelve weeks after they stopped receiving assistance was \$2,753
 - median wage of the exit group cohort II during its same respective period was \$92 less at \$2,661
 - median wage of the ongoing group cohort I was \$1,540 in this period
 - median wage of the ongoing group cohort II was \$24 less at \$1,516
 - skill differences may partially account for the drop in wages for both cohorts after welfare reform was implemented (welfare reform may have accelerated the departure of people with more job skills, which left a smaller proportion of people on assistance with desirable job skills)
- Job retention rate
 - rates were similar for the exit groups between the two cohorts
 - results fail to support concerns that reform has pushed people to accept less desirable or less stable, temporary jobs
- Job entry rate
 - rate went up 3% in the months studied immediately after welfare reform was implemented
 - state welfare programs may have encouraged clients to find new jobs, particularly those who stayed on TANF assistance
- Recidivism
 - rate of return to TANF assistance within 12 months after an exit decreased from 28.8% in cohort I to 23.2% in cohort II

- this may be due to the early implementation of state welfare reform that includes time limits and work requirements
- Natural diversion population (diversion group) features
 - Made up of people who may be potentially eligible for TANF benefits, but choose not to apply
 - Reasons for not applying may be an unwillingness to satisfy requirements or not wanting to exhaust the lifetime limitation on benefits
 - Group has been identified as single parents who are head household and receiving food stamps and/or Medicaid while not receiving TANF
 - TANF client population has declined steadily during the study period while the naturally diverted population increased by about 15%

4. *Cuyahoga County, Ohio* (Nandita Verma, Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation)

- Background- Caseloads in Cuyahoga County declined 15.25 % compared to 27.08% for the entire state of Ohio in the years between 1989-1997
- Average annual caseload in 1998 was 88,000 for the county and 300,000 for the state
- Study methods used
 - cohort I represented clients who exited AFDC assistance in the third quarter of 1996 (providing a pre-TANF baseline)
 - cohort II represented clients who exited TANF assistance in the same quarter of 1998 (providing a post-TANF analysis)
 - tracking periods were three years for cohort I (retrospective) and one year for cohort II (prospective)
- Children
 - In quarter three 1996, 3, 532 adults exited from assistance rolls with 79% (2794) exiting with all their children
 - MDRC believes that how children are interpreted in the data needs to be clarified further when discussing welfare leavers (This point was also an area of concern for many of the states in attendance at the workshop.)
- Previous assistance history
 - 55.4% of clients had been on assistance for 25-36 months before they left the welfare rolls
 - clients leaving were not new cases for the most part
 - new cases were closing faster than in previous years while over half of existing cases are now long-term (indicative that case load characteristics are changing)
- Job earnings
 - Women leavers- those earning \$4,000 or more per quarter rose nearly 6% between quarter four 1996 and quarter three 1997
 - Clients who worked all four quarters reported higher earnings than those who only worked two or three quarters
- Recidivism

- 35% of sampled leavers returned to TANF assistance within the first two months off assistance
- less than 10% return to assistance after working five or more months
- Other program participation (Note: low numbers may be reflective of different state study methodologies)
 - 34.7 % did not receive food stamps in 12 months after exit from TANF assistance
 - 31% did not receive Medicaid in 12 months after exit from TANF assistance
 - MDRC found a significant decrease in adult as well as child food stamp participation and Medicaid eligibility when the first month after exit (14.9%-adult / 20.9%child) was compared to twelve months after exit (6.5%-adult / 7.7%-child)

B. Cross-State Comparisons

1. General Accounting Office (Margaret Boeckmann, Evaluator, GAO)

- GAO has been asked by Congress to report on what is happening with welfare leavers. Specifically, they have been examining the families and children of welfare: their work status income; marital status; housing arrangements; school achievement, criminal involvement, and pregnancy rate of children who leave welfare. (Hearings were held on preliminary findings on May 27, 1999. GAO reported to the House Ways and Means human resources subcommittee.)
- GAO identified seventeen state studies and selected seven on which to focus. The seven selected were: Indiana, Maryland, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Washington, and Wisconsin (which has two concurrent studies). Areas of focus from these states that GAO has been examining are economic status, family composition, and family and child well-being.
- GAO is still sorting out how to analyze preliminary findings from these studies. Discrepancies were found in categories of families in the study and the time periods involved; the frequency of follow-up; the timing of follow-up; and data sources.
- Their analysis will result in a “condition report”- meaning it will only describe what is happening to families (their “condition”) as they leave welfare. Causality for the data is too early to make any substantial conclusions.
- Highlights from this report (May 27,1999) to Congress are as follows:
 - Since 1996 between 61-87% of adults leaving public assistance have found work

- Between 61-71% of these clients were still employed at the time they were surveyed
 - The average hourly wage rate ranged from \$5.67 in Tennessee to \$8.09 in Washington state
 - Typical families worked more than 32 hours a week
2. *ASPE* (Julia Isaacs, Acting Director, Human Services Policy Data Division, ASPE, DHHS)

Handout: “A proposed Set of Commonly Reported Administrative Data Outcomes for Leavers Studies” (3 pages plus one page of table)

SEE ATTACHMENT 1

C. Uses and Misuses of Data

1. *OPRE* (Howard Rolston, Director, OPRE, ACF, DHHS)
 - A central focus of the leavers studies is to develop reliable, credible information about how different strategies are working in order to inform state policy makers of the choices that TANF flexibility provides: This information can also inform the public and Congress about how welfare reform is progressing.
 - DHHS’ strategy in conducting this research has two major parts: working in partnership with states to develop in-depth information and using national data to understand the overall progress of welfare reform
 - Highlights of some preliminary findings indicate:
 - Employment of welfare recipients and former recipients has increased dramatically
 - in 1992 one in five AFDC recipients was working within one year
 - by 1998 the number had dropped (for TANF recipients) to one in three
 - earnings have increased but not uniformly
 - household income has increased for some families, but there is evidence that there are winners and losers
 - Findings can be used to identify future areas where more study is needed; some of the areas needing future study are:
 - longer term follow-up: most findings to date are based on periods from six months to three years—four to six years is needed to fully understand the effects and outcomes of welfare reform
 - more comprehensive measures: much of the current data are from administrative records—survey information will provide more comprehensive information in the future
 - more outcomes, especially related to child well-being: ACF provided grants in 1996 to 12 states to develop measures of child well-being to examine how different welfare reform programs and policies are affecting children. (This work

will continue by ACF, and ASPE has also provided funding to a research organization to conduct similar research.)

- more rigorous information about what works and does not work: states are now paying less on cash assistance and can devote more funding to invest in assisting families to move to work, sustain them there, and move them up through the workforce (i.e. job retention strategies, advancement strategies for recipients and former recipients, etc.)
- more information about sub-populations: rural populations, families with disabled members, Native Americans, victims of domestic violence, and families with mental health or substance abuse problems
- more nationally representative data: it will soon be possible to develop a comprehensive picture of how the nation's families are faring under welfare reform by merging findings from in-depth studies in states and localities
- Cross state comparisons are difficult to make due to the variances in study methods and other factors cited previously in this summary report- this sometimes causes findings to be misused by making inaccurate conclusions (an example follows below)
 - 50-60% of clients who enter welfare programs within the last two years are finding work
 - this figure may be misleading as the majority of states that reported data are reporting it inconsistently
 - the figure also implies that those remaining on welfare rolls have been on the rolls over two years and may have other issues that need to be examined (i.e. hard to serve, etc.) before any final conclusions can be made

2. *National Conference of State Legislatures* (Jack Tweedie, Program Director, Children and Families Program)

- Uses of the data need to focus on three challenges:
 - The need to collect uniform data and determine the status of welfare leavers (i.e., employment rates, earnings levels, etc.)
 - Data needs to be comparable to other states and take into consideration area taxes, housing costs, etc.
 - Follow-up studies are needed to examine discrepancies and areas in which more information is required
- Misuses of data
 - Discussions of earnings levels (particularly in comparison to poverty levels) is difficult due to differences in data reporting, survey population, local costs of living, etc. that vary by state and also many times by county
 - Legislators have been known to use or misuse different parts of the data to promote their views on welfare reform
 - Supporters of reform focus on the surprisingly initial high numbers of more work and less dependency
 - Proponents of reform focus on the statistical suggestion that some families are not doing as well as they used to

D. Implications for Program Design and Refinement

1. *Maryland* (Richard Larson, Office of Policy Research and Systems, Family Investment Administration, Maryland Department of Human Resources; Dr. Catherine Born, principal investigator, University of Maryland School of Social Work)
 - Maryland is one of the states with the most comprehensive studies (in September 1997 it was the first state to publish evidence that welfare reform is working)
 - Maryland has published three reports as part of a longer longitudinal study entitled *Life After Welfare*. Highlights from the study follow below.
 - 63% of former welfare recipients in Maryland have “ever” been employed since leaving public assistance
 - it is estimated that they would have earned \$9,536 if they had worked for the entire year
 - 92% of families leaving welfare have done so voluntarily and not due to full family sanctions imposed for non-compliance with work requirements (7.3%) or child support (0.7%)
 - the profiles of existing cases has not changed over time (early and later welfare exiters differed little in family size, length of time on welfare, or number/age of children)
 - the most frequent types of employment for clients exiting welfare were in the following areas:
 - wholesale and retail trade (35%)
 - personal services such as temporary agencies and motels (23%)
 - organizational services such as hospitals and nursing homes (21%)
 - recidivism rates are low with the exception of cases that close and then reopen within 30 days (only 5.2% of clients have returned to assistance after three months)
 - transitional benefits and services will become increasingly important for welfare leavers (i.e., job retention and employment services, etc.)
 - top five reasons for case closure:
 - income above limit (19.1%)
 - failed to reapply/complete redetermination (17.1%)
 - failed to provide eligibility information (14.4%)
 - cash assistance payee started work or has higher earnings (9.8%)
 - assistance unit requested closure (8.5%)
 - Differing study methods indicate that studies need to be more consistent in the way they are designed and conducted; some examples follow below.
 - sometimes people do not tell the local welfare offices that they have returned to work
 - when clients do return to work, it is not always properly recorded in the data system
 - Maryland is trying to develop strategies that wraps these two factors together
 - Maryland will be conducting several pilot studies on job skills enhancement initiatives for clients who have found work and are interested in advancing

- Maryland is analyzing the role of education in getting people off welfare and staying off welfare through community colleges. (This would be for longer term clients who did not succeed under Work First.)
 - Further studies are needed to identify follow-up strategies to keep people working who have found jobs
 - The basic way in which Maryland approaches studies is what can be referred to as the “spiral method” which consists of the following steps:
 - Use the research to plan and debate
 - Create/conduct programs
 - Conduct follow-up research
 - Use that research to plan and debate for more program creation
2. *Division of Self-Sufficiency Programs* (Mack Storrs, Director, Division of Self-Sufficiency Programs, ACF, DHHS)
- In previous years, policy making has historically ignored research findings—that is fundamentally changing
 - Future program design considerations include determining who is has left welfare rolls and do they need additional types of support; and who is still remaining on the welfare rolls and what types of support do those clients need?
 - Employment earnings levels need more consideration
 - Despite differences in determination of poverty levels, a goal for clients should be to climb above it in their income level
 - Sanctioned clients need to be followed up on more
 - Clients left on the rolls need to be quantified better in terms as to numbers having problems such as substance abuse, domestic violence, developmental disabilities, etc.
 - Few states have examined TANF and MOE guidelines to determine flexibility in assisting both working families and hard to serve clients remaining on the welfare rolls
 - Loss of Medicaid and food stamps needs to be reexamined—their delivery systems need to be studied
 - Skills enhancement needs to considered under program design
 - Services for child support need to also be considered under program design
 - Hard to serve will continue to be a major area of focus for program design (i.e. substance abuse, mental health problems, domestic violence, learning disabilities, developmental disabilities, etc.)
 - Community involvement will be critical in future years when considering program design
 - Hours of operation for local support agencies need to also be taken into consideration for program design

E. Issues to include at future meetings (these were issues that were tabled, but there was no time to discuss in detail)

- Public access files
- Definitions of receipt
- How to define children for Medicaid receipt
- Denominators for child care
- Comparing cohorts/TANF pre-cohort
- Different results between the survey and administrative data
 - Employment issues
 - Summaries and synthesis (ASPE recognizes these differences but hopes the final reports will bring the results closer together)
- Unit of analysis
- Definition of leavers/returns
- More definitions
- Wage data from other states- information on hourly wages

IV. Workshop Evaluation Feedback

Participants completed a three-page evaluation form that asked them to rate the technical assistance support received and offer any additional comments regarding the workshop. Following are a sample of the comments that participants provided through written feedback or during discussions.

1. Describe any immediate or long-term benefits to your agency that you anticipate as a result of the TA provided.
 - Hearing preliminary results from other states' studies has allowed our state to learn problems they may face and anticipate how to handle them in my state
 - I appreciated hearing the interim reports as they will help my state in writing our report
 - Cross fertilization of ideas learned at the workshop will improve our evaluation efficiency
 - More informed of programs and plans to accomplish TANF goals
 - The ability to enhance our exit report to be more comparable to national findings
2. Identify any anticipated longer term benefits of the TA.
 - Tracking of results of welfare leavers
 - Expect to eventually get definitions resolved and get closer to uniform reporting among grantees
 - Learned some insightful thoughts to adjust my state's welfare program to be more productive
3. Identify what was most useful about the TA
 - State presentations
 - Identifying reporting problems surfaced by other participating attendees

- The presentations by individuals who are prominent in the field as well as peer input through conversations held
4. How could the TA have better met your needs?
 - Continue the process with regular feedback
 - Allow more time for open discussion to explore how other states are conducting their studies and program efforts
 5. Do you have any final comments or questions?
 - Hopefully these findings will help states and communities to come together in working toward poverty reform

 - It appears too early to do a good workshop with even the most responsive states having only interim /early results at this point. We needed to resolve the definitions issue and did not do this for the most part. How can states/counties fulfill reporting requirements when the federal government is so geared to define terms?

V. Final Remarks

Although these findings are preliminary, they do offer a fairly descriptive early view of what is happening to clients who leave the welfare rolls. The states conducting leavers studies will continue to share information in the future as they did in this workshop. An extensive amount of money and effort has been focused on this topic. All those in attendance felt that the research results they discussed show that welfare reform is working, but that further study is necessary to adequately gauge the effects of welfare reform.

For further and/or other welfare-related information, or to learn more about the Welfare Peer Technical Assistance Network, visit our web site at www.calib.com/peerta or contact Paul Purnell or Blake Austensen at (301) 270-0841.

ATTACHMENT 1

A Proposed Set of Commonly Reported Administrative Data Outcomes for Leavers Studies

A number of different states are conducting “leavers studies” which track families after they leave TANF. Many of these studies focus on tracking leavers through linked administrative data. In order to facilitate cross-study comparisons, a small set of commonly reported outcomes has been developed by staff in the office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation (ASPE), DHHS, in consultation with the 14 grantees receiving ASPE funding to study welfare outcomes. The ASPE grantees have been encouraged to include these outcomes in their interim reports (in addition to the many other outcomes and analyses proposed in their various studies). Other researchers may wish to include these same measures in their reports, to further facilitate cross-study comparisons.

Note that this small set of measures is limited to the most common measures available in administrative data. Further information on child and family well-being of TANF leavers will be included in the ASPE grantees’ final reports, which will draw upon survey as well as administrative data.

Common definition of “leavers” to include in analysis:

Please report each of the proposed measures for single-parent closed cases or leavers, defined as those cases that leave cash assistance and remain off cash assistance for a minimum of two months. Note that the “two-month” definition was chosen to correspond to the definition used for the survey samples in the ASPE studies. It excludes closed cases that re-open within two months, because such cases are likely to be subject to “administrative churning.” It includes, however, cases that close for two months but re-open subsequently.

Note that in addition to reporting on single-parent cases closed for two months, many studies also will be reporting outcomes for the fuller sample of cases that may be included in their study (e.g., including closed two-parent or closed child-only cases, as well as closed cases that re-open within two months). To the extent sample sizes permit, some studies also will report measures for closed UP cases or closed child-only cases as separate sub-groups.

“Month of Exit”

Note that some studies define “month of exit” as the first month without any receipt of assistance, while other studies define “month of exit” as the month in which the case closing action is taken (and the following month is the first month without any receipt of assistance). Please document how “month of exit” is defined in your study.

Unit of Analysis

Studies have chosen different units of analyses. Many ASPE-funded studies are following the adult head of household, or the entire case. For some measures, however, it also is important to track children. One option is to track the children, but still report by the same case or adult unit of analysis (i.e., the study could report that x% of cases or adult leavers have children receiving Medicaid 12 months after exit). Please document the unit of analysis used in your study and note in the measures below whether receipt of public assistance is tracked for heads of household only, all adults, all children, or any member of household.

Quarterly/Monthly

Except where noted otherwise, please report employment outcomes by calendar quarter, starting with the quarter of exit, and continuing for 4 quarters (or more, if you have it). (Data from quarters prior to exit are also useful). The definition of quarter of exit will be the quarter in which the month of exit (as defined by you) occurs.

For the measures of participation in TANF and other programs, please report under one of two alternatives: by months since exit, or by calendar quarter. If reporting by months since exit, you may either report every month, or report at key monthly intervals, including 3 months after exit, 6 months after exit, 9 months after exit, and 12 months after exit.

The measures and their definitions are shown in the attached table. Please note that this is a draft set of proposed measures, with future refinements possible. For further information, please contact Julie Isaacs, at jisaacs@osaspe.dhhs.gov.

Definitions of Commonly Reported Administrative Data Outcome Measures

(1) Total number of cases Complete sample of closed cases for the identified cohort, regardless of current TANF or work status, provided the case was closed for two months or longer. This should be the denominator for all percentages in measures below, unless noted otherwise.

EMPLOYMENT OUTCOMES. Report for calendar quarter of exit, and each quarter after exit:

(2) Employment rate Percentage of total leavers with quarterly earnings reported in the Unemployment Insurance System. Assumed to be limited to UI-covered employment within state, unless documented differently. Note that many studies are reporting this for adult leavers (>18) only. Most ASPE-funded studies including any leavers with earnings >\$1; at least one limiting to those with earnings >\$100.

(3) Mean quarterly earnings calculated across cases with earnings

(4) Median quarterly earnings calculated across cases with earnings

(5) Rate ever employed Those who have been employed at any point within 4 quarters after exit (based on UI-reported earnings)

RECIDIVISM. Report for each month (or for each calendar quarter) after exit:

(6) Receiving TANF Those receiving TANF in month (or quarter) as percentage of all leavers. May be reported by month, or at selected points (3 mos, 6 mos, 9 mos, 12 mos). Please report those *receiving* in each month (quarter), not those *returning* in each month (quarter). (The latter measure may be reported in some studies, to provide additional information). Please document unit of analysis. (Most studies reporting on returns of adult head, or case. Some also are tracking receipt by children as an additional measure of policy interest).

(7) Percentage Ever Returning to TANF Within 12 months

Those who have been received TANF at any point within first 12 months of exit (except excludes those whose cases were re-opened within 2 months of exit). Note that this is the sum of those returning to TANF in each of the first 12 months after exit (the optional measure discussed above).

OTHER PROGRAMS. Report for each month (or for each calendar quarter) after exit:

(8) Receiving Medicaid Those families receiving Medicaid (regardless of TANF or Food Stamp status) as percentage of all leavers. That is, do not limit to “Medicaid only” or to “Medicaid but not TANF.” It is critical to

document the unit of analysis, because this differs considerably whether analyzed for adults, children, or any member of household. Some studies are reporting separately for adults and for children. Also, some studies are reporting additional measures of Medicaid receipt among those who do not return to TANF.

(9). Receiving Food Stamps Those receiving Food Stamps (regardless of TANF or Medicaid status) as percentage of all leavers. That is, do not limit to “Food Stamp only” or to “Food stamps but not TANF.” Though the differences for children and adults are not as large as in receipt of Medicaid, still important to note unit of analysis. Again, some studies are reporting additional measures of Food Stamp receipt among those who do not return to TANF.

Please note that different studies also will be reporting the percentage participating in other programs (i.e., child care, child support enforcement, child abuse and neglect, foster care, etc.). To facilitate comparisons across studies, please report these for “closed single-parent cases off assistance for two months or longer, “ in addition to other groups of interest to the researchers.

Commonly Reported Administrative Data Outcomes for Leavers

Single-Parent Leavers ¹ (1) N=	Quarter of Exit	1 st Qtr after Exit	2 nd Qtr after Exit	3 rd Qtr after Exit	4 th Qtr after Exit	(5) Ever empl. over 4 Qtrs
Employment Outcomes:						
(2) Employment Rate (% with any earnings over quarter) (%)						
(3) Mean Quarterly Earnings (across those with earnings)						-----
(4) Median Quarterly Earnings (across those with earnings)						-----
	Month (Q)of Exit	3 mos(1Q) after Exit	6 mos (2 Qs) after Exit	9 mos (3 Qs) after Exit	12 mos(4 Qs) after Exit	(7) Ever on over 4 Qs
Recidivism (reported by month or quarter)						
(6) Receiving TANF(%)						
Other Program Benefits (reported by month or quarter)						
(8a) Participating in Medicaid (%)						
(8b). Participating in Medicaid (Children) (%)						
(9). Receiving Food Stamps (%)						

¹Single-parent cases that are closed and remain off cash assistance for a minimum of two months. See reverse for further definitions of each of the nine measures. Note that table may be repeated for two-parent cases or other sub-groups of interest.

