

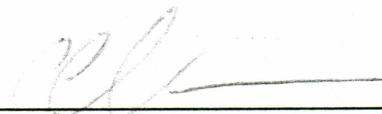


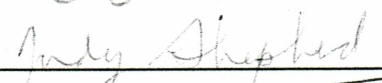
PERCEPTIONS AND BARRIERS TO WELFARE REFORM
BY WELFARE RECIPIENTS

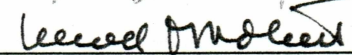
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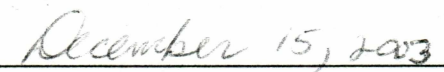
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PERCEPTIONS AND BARRIERS TO WELFARE REFORM

A
THESIS

Presented to the Faculty
of the University of Alaska Fairbanks
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of
MASTER OF ARTS

By

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Abstract

The current study examined the barriers and perceptions of Welfare Reform of welfare recipients answering questions through a survey in Alaska's Northern Regional area (Appendix A). The areas covered in the survey concerned family health and well-being, barriers to getting a job, and how they are managing on and off welfare. An area of central concern was to understand how families reported that they were managing after closure. The major problem identified was the ability to pay monthly bills and purchase food. Families were also concerned with finding an appropriate childcare provider and their inability to obtain health care coverage. Most individuals worked part-time jobs with little or no benefits and had problems obtaining health care for their families.

Areas for further research were identified. Doubts are raised about how states are administering their welfare programs and how much information clients know about their entitlements. The current study is consistent with other studies that show families lack many of the important resources that are essential for self-sufficiency; i.e., well-paying jobs for low skilled workers, transportation, childcare, health services, support networks, and the financial means to meet basic needs.

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Introduction

On July 1, 1997, Welfare Reform went into effect in Alaska. Welfare no longer is an entitlement program for poor families. Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) and the Job Opportunities and Basic Skills Training Program has been replaced with The Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF). TANF has enabled states to create and manage their own welfare programs. Each state had the ability to choose options within the guidelines of TANF for their State.

According to Welfare Reform Watch (1997), in Iowa, the preliminary results show that Welfare Reform may be detrimental to recipients. Families' benefits were terminated for non-participation in work activities. Among these terminated families, there was a significant drop in income with little or no safety net available. Most encountered barriers in regards to transportation, childcare and health care problems, which prevented them from complying with work requirements. The Government Accounting Office (GAO) studied the results in 33 states following the termination of individuals from welfare. Most states had very few people or none who were terminated for non-compliance. Welfare Watch (1997) states that "because the policies had not been in effect long enough, many people were exempt, the policies were being phased-in or applied in limited areas, the policies generally did not apply in large urban areas of states tried to avoid termination." (pg .2). However, Michigan study demonstrated many families did not have enough money for food and personal needs. Studies in

other locations such as Iowa, did not show any severe deprivation. Clearly there is much to learn about the effects of programs to change welfare.

At the time the current study was planned there was no information about the effects of welfare reform on Alaskans. Therefore, The Alaska Temporary Assistance Client Survey (ATACS) was developed that investigated barriers and perceptions of families on Alaska Temporary Assistance Program (ATAP). The survey contained items from another survey recommended and developed by the Coalition of Human Needs, The Monitoring Project instructions and Client Survey (1997)

Participants were asked to answer questions about themselves, such as educational level, demographic information and their experience with the welfare system. The survey investigated barriers to employment, childcare, health service and the family situation.

The research identified strengths and weaknesses within the Welfare System. These strengths and weaknesses were then examined for barriers that may prevent a family from moving out of poverty. This study would also identify training areas for Welfare personnel and the potential for further evaluations and monitoring of families on ATAP.

Literature Review

Welfare was originally created as an answer to the depression. Congress and President Hoover created welfare as part of the Social Security Act of 1932. The passage of the "Emergency Relief Act of 1932" passed into law supplemented local relief efforts with 300 million dollars of loan money available to the states. By the end of the Hoover Administration 60% of all national relief efforts were funded by the federal government.

In 1933, President Roosevelt called upon Congress to establish the Civilian Conservation Corps, a public works programs and a federal emergency relief program (FERA). Roosevelt also set up the Civil Works Administration (CWA) after concerns that the direct relief efforts were giving people a "gimme" mentality. The CWA was closed down due to widespread opposition from the business community.

The next program that was formed was the Works Progress Administration (WPA), which replaced direct relief with a government public works program in April 1935. FERA was abolished and millions of recipients were transferred to work programs under the WPA. The Social Security Bill was passed that included direct relief provisions for unemployment insurance. This bill contained the original provisions for the original "Welfare" or also known as Aid for Families with Dependent Children. (AFDC). States received grants for administration of local and state based welfare programs with matching federal funds.

In 1939, the Relief Act was passed that placed an 18-month time limit on an individual's participation in the WPA job program. Surveys of workers that were cut from the WPA job program because of the 18-month time limit showed that only 100,000 of the 775,000 people found jobs in the private sector within 2-3 months. President John F. Kennedy signed a law designed to move welfare recipients into the work force. This revision also liberalized benefits and expanded eligibility. The welfare rolls continued to grow until the 1960's when President Johnson's "War on Poverty" attempted to assist the poor. Johnson's social programs became known as the 'Great Society'.

In the 1960's and 1970's liberals proposed expanding aid as an antipoverty device. They were defeated because voters and politicians would not accept greater dependency by working-aged adults. One alternative would be to cut aid completely, but the public opposed this out of concern for needy children who might be harmed.

In 1967 the Work Incentive Program was introduced with the idea that single mothers who did not have responsibility for caring for pre-school children should be expected to work. Welfare dependency came with the rapid growth in the welfare rolls. From 1960 to 1971 the welfare rolls more than tripled, from 3 million to 10.2 million recipients. The cause of the increase (Mead, 1996) is thought to be: (1) Higher benefits levels, which qualified more families for aid, (2) Court decisions that eliminated some regulatory barriers to aid (such as residency requirements), and (3) Decline in welfare stigma.

The Nixon Administration attempted to reduce welfare rolls by complicating the verification process. In 1988 the Job Opportunities and Basic Skills (JOBS) act was passed by the U.S. Congress to assist the poor in moving from welfare to work. The Family Support Act (FSA) of 1988 mandated that all states run welfare-to-work programs. This movement approved education, training and employment programs. Between the years of 1989 and 1993, welfare nationwide increased by 29%. By 1994 the U.S. welfare rolls peaked at 14.4 million people.

Federal welfare received a massive overhaul with the passage of The Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996. Supporters of this bill felt that it would reduce the use of public assistance, increase employment and increase earning in the long run. The new legislation represented a change in reorganizing responsibility for welfare programs. Since welfare was created in the 1930s, Aid to Families with Dependent children (AFDC) was run jointly by state and federal programs. AFDC's main purpose was income maintenance (Mead, 1996). It was regarded as an entitlement program because benefits were assured to all eligible. Welfare adults generally did not have to do anything to get aid except establish and maintain their income eligibility.

The liberals wanted to focus on poverty and worried about the well-being of recipients, while conservatives were concerned about the dependency, fearing that once people were on welfare they would never find their way off, nor would

their children. As a result, welfare reform for liberals meant fixing the gaps in the system, while for conservatives it meant finding incentives for recipients to work their way off the program (Weicher, 2001). The new legislation brought an end to the AFDC Program and created a block grant to the states, the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) Block Grant.

The primary purpose was to give states control over their own design of public assistance programs. The block grant was set up to do the following, (1) Provide assistance to needy families, (2) Ending dependency of needy parents on government benefits (3) Preventing and reducing out-of-wedlock pregnancies and, (4) Encouraging the formation of two-parent families.

States now have more discretion in determining who should get funds and how much they should get. States can eliminate some groups from assistance, redirect money away from cash support toward services designed to prevent teen pregnancy and promote marriage, or impose behavioral requirements on the recipients of public assistance. If money runs short at the end of the year, families can be turned away. Federal legislation mandated work requirements and payment limits for the states. These requirements were: Any parent who received 24 months of assistance funded through TANF must be working or in a work activity (2) By 1997, 25% of all families must be working at least 20 hours per week. (States have discretion to define what counts as "work") and, (3) Mandated time limits on support, 60-month lifetime limit. Twenty percent of the caseload can be exempted.

States could continue to support families with state-only funds. The legislation offers no new federal funds to assist states in expanding their work programs. Opponents claim that it will further impoverish many already poor families, leaving them without the safety net of public assistance (Blank, 1997).

The States had until July 1997 to begin implementation of the new law. This current law assumed that most adults on public assistance can and should be working. Welfare Reform has been called the "devolution resolution" (Bailey & Koney, 1996). Devolution is defined as the "transference (as of rights, powers, or responsibility) to another; esp.: the surrender of powers to local authorities by a central government" (Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary, 1988, p. 348).

With the passage of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA), problems began to rise from lawmakers did not take into consideration all of the causes of poverty. Accordino (1998) felt that there were two types of poverty, structural and cyclical. Cyclical poverty reflects the ups and down of an economy where structural poverty reflects the mismatch between workers and jobs. In some cases people, lack the basic education or training needed to succeed in a job. This is an important issue that needs further research. PRWORA changed our social safety net in three fundamental ways (Silver, 1998); (1) Major responsibility for welfare policies is now up to each individual state, (2) The states each have flexibility in setting their own policies, (3) TANF recipients face strict new work requirements and time limits on

receiving aid and, (4) Requires underage mothers to live with parents or adult guardian as a condition of receiving aid.

Panatazis (1997) also felt that passage of the PRWORA pressured states into reducing caseloads. This leads to more important questions, can the states fiscal afford to promote an environment that will accommodate all the reform that is needed or will this drain already strained budgets? Are there enough jobs, transportation and support services such as child care to help individuals make the transition from welfare to work?

As a nation we have conflicting goals for welfare (Gueron, 1996). Since on one hand Americans do not want children to live in severe poverty, an important goal is to maintain a safety net for children. The way to do this is to provide money to the parents of poor children. Secondly, American's also think that parents should be working and supporting their children. One way to encourage this is to reduce welfare benefits so that work is the only reliable alternative to starvation. Children and their parents come as a package deal. So, it's hard to be tough on parents and still maintain and provide a safety net to support their children and save money.

As states undertake the efforts to transform the culture and the vision of welfare, they are encountering reform issues: (1) Creating jobs, (2) Preparing recipients for work, (3) Safety nets for children, (4) Transportation and, (5) Child care funding. To address these issues, local policy makers will be required to extend dramatically the job search assistance, training, and possibly public

employment programs. According to Pantazis (1997) some of the locally driven strategies include: (1) Creating industry partnerships and customized employment projects (2) Starting interagency task forces that link welfare, workforce, and economic development systems for job creation, job development, and/or employment marketing, (3) Using workforce investment boards or councils, (4) Opening one-stop career centers, (5) Establishing groups and positions responsible for soliciting employers to hire welfare recipients, and (6) Working with community-based organizations.

States have taken two strategies for creating jobs in the private sector: subsidization of wages and collaborations with business. Twenty-two states provide direct wage subsidy, and several states have tax credits for companies that employ welfare recipients. In Connecticut, there is a \$1,500 tax credit available as an "opportunity certificate". South Carolina in addition to offering wage subsidies, require each state and county agency to target 10% of all jobs requiring a high school diploma or less to be offered to people getting welfare. Another strategy is a collaborative project with local employers. In Missouri for example, the Local Investment Commission has a consortium to link job development, training and placement. The result is the 21st Century Project that provides subsidized positions to welfare recipients.

In most states the welfare rolls have shrunk substantially. TANF was not designed or implemented to be flexible for families. Strict time limits are imposed, which differ from state to state. Recent studies have shown that the dire

predictions of welfare reform were not true; working has not improved their economic security (Zuckerman, 2001). There is growing evidence that fewer families are doing better financially than they did while on welfare, and some of our most vulnerable families are worse off. One major problem is that former welfare mothers can find jobs but cannot keep them. Work requirements were welcomed, but working has not improved economic security. Few people can find jobs that put them above the poverty line. In Indiana, the majority of adults in the program were not earning enough at the end of the two-year follow up to move families above the federal poverty line (Fein, 1998).

In Indiana, welfare reform was looked at as an opportunity to increase self-confidence and improve self-esteem (Etindi, D. 1997), giving individuals the opportunity to envision life beyond poverty. One flaw of the old welfare system was that it isolated families. They were just mailed a check with little or no interaction and the agency. With the new system there will not only be interaction with workers with the agency, but with community resources to help families move toward self-sufficiency. As Edtindi (1997) stated "The increased involvement from within the community will allow for additional direct services and for more support that in turn will enable more of the transitioning families to recognize and deal with their problems"(p. 3).

No family can receive funding from TANF if an adult in that family has already received 60 months of assistance over his or her lifetime (Blank, 1997). Families can move from state to state and there is no monitoring system in place.

Enforcing this lifetime limit will require a national tracking system to identify cumulative months of support received by any individual in any state. There was no legislative funding established for such a system at present.

In Oregon (Rojas-Burke, 2001) family's cases are closed if they do not find work or participate in work activities after 5 months. The economy has slowed and the state is challenged with many people losing jobs and insurance. The system hinges on an economy that cooperates said analyst Mike Leachman, Oregon Center for Public Policy, a nonprofit research group (p. 2).

An editorial (Ewalt & Mulroy, 1997) expressed the view that housing costs that are built into welfare reform at 30% of the need standard do not take into account the reality of what it costs to rent a house or apartment. Typically \$250 per month is what the federal government considers affordable housing. This brings up relevant questions when families work their way off welfare where will they live when full-time work does not enable them to pay for housing.

Research shows that many former welfare recipients are mentally ill, or victims of domestic violence. There are some days that they have no transportation or are unable to function at work and eventually lose their jobs (Zuckerman, 2001). Black (1997) also felt that a disproportionate number of welfare recipients have experienced or are experiencing domestic and sexual abuse. There are also substantial learning disabilities among the welfare population that relate to low rates of literacy and lack of job training.

Research has also shown that although the welfare rolls have declined (Asch-Goodkin, 2001), employment has not moved children out of poverty, rather the number of children classified as "working poor" increased by more than 650,000 between 1995 and 1998.

Leaver studies are beginning to be published now that welfare reform has been in existence for 5 years. In Alaska, positive results were reported in a study conducted by University of Alaska Anchorage entitled "Reaching for Independence". This study requested the characteristics and status of Alaska residents who left welfare rolls after the implementation of the Alaska Temporary Assistance Program. The study found that three-quarters of Alaskans who left welfare have not gone back on welfare and in fact were working. Individuals reported they have reservations about their long-term ability to remain independent.

Across the country after the first years of welfare reform, all of the states experienced successful drop in their welfare rolls. In Indiana as in other states, a Work First philosophy and program approach shifted the focus from education to job search (Fein 1998). Maryland (Born, 1998) did a study at the state level and reported the reasons that their clients left welfare and the top four reasons were: (1) Over income – due to earnings by another household member, (2) Failure to appear for re-determination process (3) Failure to provide verification and, (4) Client starting to work.

The studies show that the welfare rolls have dropped, which is one of the goals of welfare reform, but none of the studies have researched the recipients to find out how they are doing after leaving the program. Now five years later, studies are tracking the people who left welfare and how they are doing.

Illinois found that many people left because they found jobs, but that their earnings were still below the poverty line and they had significant job turnover and unemployment (Chamberlain, 2000).

Methods

Participants

Participants were randomly chosen from a list of families receiving Aid to Families with Dependent Children as of June 30, 1997 in the State of Alaska, Northern Region (Appendix A). As of June 30, 1997 there were 1,046 families on Aid to Families with Dependent Children. Surveys were mailed to 400 randomly drawn families. The subjects represented the Northern Region of the Department of Social Services, Division of Public Assistance, and Alaska.

Out of the 400 families surveyed, sixty-two participated and Table 1 provides the demographics of the sixty-two surveys returned. The family composition shows that the majority (64.5%) of the families have children over the age of five. Of the families surveyed, 74.2% had two adult members who were not married. The majority was White (66.1%) with the largest minority being Alaska Native (19.4%)

Table 1

Demographics

	Sample <i>n</i>	%	Alaska %	United States %
<u>Family Composition</u>				
Married two parent family	9	14.5	14	25
Single parent family	7	11.3	16	28
Unmarried two parent family	46	74.2	70	47
Totals	62	100.0		
<u>Ethnicity</u>				
Alaska Native	12	19.4	16.8	.88
Black	5	8.1	4.4	12.32
White	41	66.1	73.7	75.14
Other races	3	4.8	5.1	11.66
Race unknown	1	1.6	0.0	0.0
Totals	62	100.0	100.0	100.0

Procedures

A survey was developed to examine the experiences of welfare clients with the Temporary Assistance program. The survey included assessments of socioeconomic characteristics, work and family self-sufficiency information, barriers to employment, and housing characteristics. The survey consisted of 29 descriptive, Lickert scales and open-ended questions (see Appendix B).

Participants were sent a cover letter with the survey explaining the project in which they were being asked to participate (Appendix C). They were asked to return the completed questionnaire directly to the researcher using an addressed, postage-paid envelope.

The answers were kept confidential in accordance with the American Psychological Association's (1992) ethical guidelines regarding the involvement of humans in social science research. The cover letter also explained that participation was strictly voluntary.

Results

The first part of the data describes how long the recipients have been on welfare, if their case is currently open and how welfare has affected them as a family. Of the individuals surveyed, 30.6% have been on assistance for longer than 36 months. The length of time of Alaska Temporary Assistance varied but the majority was experienced with the welfare system and had been on assistance before time restraints were instituted (see Table 2).

Table 2

Length Of Time On Welfare

Time (in months)	%
Over 36 months	30.6
25 to 36 months	11.3
13 to 24 months	22.6
6 to 12 months	22.6
Less than 6 months	9.7
Did not answer	3.2
Totals	100.00

The next section of the data analysis examined how families reported they were managing after their temporary assistance case closed. Table 3 shows that the majority of the samples that are not on welfare were working however, 38% reported that they were not managing well. Nine families answered that their cases had been closed; yet 13 families also answered how they were managing after closure. So, we are unsure whether their case closed and they did not understand the question being asked or they answered not applicable because they did not know why their case closed. Of these 13 that answered how they were managing, 53% were working

Table 3

Reasons Why Case Closed In The Last Six Months

	%
Did not meet work requirements	4.8
Program too much hassle	3.2
Other income	4.8
Did not know why case closed	1.6
Not applicable	85.5

Managing after closure

Working	53.0
Not managing very well	38.0
Managed other ways	9.0

The next section of the data describes family barriers to finding and obtaining childcare services. The families who answered this survey were concerned about the effects of welfare on their children and their families (Table 4). The families reported that their children's grades had dropped and that their children were having behavior problems at school.

Table 4

Reported Incidence Of Childcare Issues

	Yes	No	No answer	Totals
	%	%	%	%
My child changed school	9.7	87.1	3.2	100.0
My child changed time in Foster care	3.2	93.6	3.2	100.0
My child's grades dropped	21.0	74.0	5.0	100.0
Child had behavior problems	19.4	77.4	3.2	100.0
Problems finding child care	16.1	77.4	6.5	100.0

The survey also asked about how the families were paying for childcare and obtaining medical health insurance for their children. Overall families found little difference in their ability to pay for childcare and get child support (Table 5). However, 25.8% still found it difficult to get health insurance for their children.

Table 5

Ability Of Families To Pay For Support For Children Over Time

	Easier	About the Same	Harder	N/A
	%	%	%	%
Pay for childcare	9.7	29.0	12.9	48.4
Get child support	16.1	43.5	1.6	38.7
Get health care for children	3.2	53.2	25.8	17.7

Clients were then asked how they currently perceived their economic condition. The sample indicated (Table 6) that compared to six months ago, most (over 40%) felt either that their living situation was about the same or more difficult. Some (37.1%) felt that it was more difficult to purchase food and many found it difficult to pay rent and bills (16.1%).

Table 6

Compared To Six Months Ago, How Are You Managing?

	Easier	About the same	Harder
	%	%	%
Pay rent	16.1	41.9	32.3
Pay bills	16.1	40.3	35.5
Buy food	25.8	32.3	37.1
Pay for car, bus, taxi	8.1	37.0	27.4
Get health care for you	12.9	50.0	14.5
Get substance abuse treatment	1.6	0.0	6.5

Questions about how families were managing on and off welfare were also asked in the survey. Food appeared to be an issue with 48.8% reporting that they could not afford enough food (Table 7). The next highest problems faced by the families were that they had their phone cut-off for non-payment (17.7%) and they were not able to pay their rent (14.5%). By far the major problems were the ability to pay their monthly bills and purchase food.

Table 7

Reported Incidence Of Problems Securing Food & Shelter

	Yes	No	Did not answer
	%	%	%
Heat/electric cut-off	8.1	88.87	3.2
Phone was cut-off	17.7	79.0	3.2
Could not afford food	48.4	48.4	3.2
Had to move could not pay rent	14.5	82.3	3.2
Moved in with another family	9.7	85.5	4.8
Stayed in a shelter	4.8	90.3	4.9

Degree of difficulty managing after 6 months

	Easier	About the same	Harder	n/a
	%	%	%	%
Pay rent	9.7	32.3	41.9	16.1
Pay bills	8.1	35.5	40.3	16.1
Buy food	4.8	37.1	32.3	25.8
Pay for Transportation	25.8	27.4	37.1	9.7
Get health care	1.6	14.5	50.0	33.9
Get treatment For substance Abuse	1.6	0.0	6.5	91.9

The next area of the survey was work and The Family Self-sufficiency Plan (FSSP) (Table 8), which is an agreement between the welfare recipient and the state. The agreement (FSSP) sets the goals and deadlines to enter the workforce with a sub-goals designed to help the person reach this goal. The majority of recipients (67.7%) that filled out a Family Self-sufficiency Plan were optimistic about finding a job. Even though the families were optimistic, 77.4% had not taken advantage of measures that would have helped them obtain jobs (e.g. work search or finding a job through Work Search Express). Of the 13 individuals that attended Work Search, only 4 people found jobs.

Table 8

Family Self-sufficiency Plan

	Yes	No	Did not answer
	%	%	%
Did you develop a FSSP with your caseworker?	67.7	29.0	3.3
If yes, was the FSSP a joint effort for you and your caseworker?	58.1	25.8	16.1
Do you feel that you can get a job become self-sufficient?	66.1	22.6	11.3
Did you attend Work Search Express?	21.0	77.4	1.6
If yes, did you find your job through this service?	46.5	41.9	11.6

The next area examined was the health and well-being of the recipients and their families. The survey examined criteria families were looking for in childcare providers and what was important to the families in these settings (Table 9). The majority of the families felt that it was important that childcare provided educational opportunities for their children (Mean = 4.5). Also of equal importance was that their children attend a center as opposed to someone's individual home (Mean = 4.2). However parents indicated that they did not want to work but would rather be able to stay at home with their children (Mean = 3.2).

Table 9

What Is Important To The Recipients In A Childcare Provider

	Mean
Provides education	4.5
Teaches religion	4.2
Does not teach religion	4.2
Daycare setting	4.2
In own home	3.8
In providers home	3.7
Location to home	3.6
Location to school	3.4
Provides flexible hours	3.2
Stay at home myself	3.2
Location to work	2.8

As depicted in Table 10, the survey also examined barriers to employment. The most powerful barriers that clients experienced were family violence, substance abuse, unstable housing, no child care and fear of going to work (Means for all barriers = 4.8). (Table 10) Other factors contributing to work difficulties were children with chronic health problems, physical limitations and no telephone (Means for all barriers = 4.7). Also interesting was that some of the clients had difficulty reading (Mean = 4.6)

Table 10

Barrier To Getting A Job

	Mean
Substance abuse	4.8
Unstable housing	4.8
No childcare	4.8
Family violence	4.8
Child has chronic health problems	4.7
Fear of going to work	4.7
No telephone	4.7
Inability to read	4.6
Mental health issues	4.4
Physical limitations	4.1
Parent has chronic health problems	3.9
No transportation	3.9
Low/no job skills	3.8
Lack of training	3.7

Another area that was examined on the survey was the income of the households and how this affected their families. Fifty eight percent answered that they had a job, 11.3% received child support, 3.2% received a pension, 8.1% received unemployment insurance, 4.8% received income from outside the household (relatives, loans, etc.), and 14.5% received social security income. Thirty-three percent of families reported they had their benefits reduced for a work-related penalty.

Of the individuals living in a village, 3.2% felt that welfare had affected their subsistence lifestyle, and 41.9% answered that welfare had no effect on their subsistence lifestyle.

Most families that are on assistance reported (Table 11) that they lived in private housing (58.1%). Only 21% reported that they lived in subsidized public housing. Fifty percent of the families also reported that they paid between \$201.00 and \$500.00 in rent each month (Table 11). Seventeen families (27.4%) reported they paid over \$501.00 in rent each month.

Table 11

Housing And Paying Rent/Mortgage

Housing Arrangement	%
Own/buying a home	11.3
Live in public housing	21.0
Live in private housing	58.1
Family lives rent free	3.2
Homeless	1.6
Other	4.8
Totals	100.0

Pays for Rent/Mortgage

\$0.00 to \$200.00	3.2
\$201.00 to \$500.00	50.0
\$501.00 to \$750.00	27.4
Over \$750.00	14.3
Did not Answer	4.8

Of the families surveyed, Table 12 reports that 56.5% were working. Of the 30 individuals reporting wages, 40.3% made less than \$10.00 an hour and 46.8% of these jobs did not include medical benefits. Again, as in other questions asked, 35 people reported that were currently employed but only 30 answered what their hourly rate was and 40 people reported information regarding medical benefits.

Table 12

Employment And Hourly Rate

Currently Employed	%
Yes	56.5
No	41.9
Did not Answer	1.6
Hourly Rate	
Under \$7.00 hr	16.1
\$7.01 up to \$10.00 hr.	24.2
\$10.01 and over	8.1
n/a	51.6
Medical benefits included in job	
Yes and I am receiving them	11.3
Yes, but costs are too high	6.5
No	46.8
Did not answer	35.5

Discussion

The demographics of this study closely correlate to the population of Alaska. Our study shows 66.1% were White families and 19.4% are Alaska Native families. The population of Alaska represents 74.6% White and 16.5% Alaska Native (State of Alaska, 1997). On the welfare rolls as of June 30, 1997 there were 1,046 families, 338 families were located in rural areas. Our sample is representative of this group, we chose an original sample size of 400, 148 randomly chosen from rural areas.

This study found that families were concerned about the effects of welfare on their children and their families. This raises the question of whether adequate time exists for the complex task of transitioning to work from welfare. The families who answered this question stated that their children's grades had dropped and that their children were having behavior problems at school. Families also reported that there was little difference in their ability to pay for childcare, receive child support, and obtain medical health insurance for their children. The perception of the recipients on their economic condition was that they were still having a difficult time purchasing food and many still found it difficult to pay rent and bills. Food is especially an issue with 48.8% answering that they could not afford enough food (Table 7). These are very complex issues that may take more time to resolve than the system provides. If time is not an issue, then there needs to be a clear and systematic plan, faithfully applied that addresses each of the concerns that our study raises.

Alaska has one of the most lenient time frames in comparison to other states to transition off welfare with the option of choosing 60 months in a lifetime limit on benefits. Twenty percent of recipients are exempted for various reasons, due to the lengthy social security disability application process or because of medical conditions for themselves or family members. In Alaska's Temporary Assistance Program, two parent households are required to participate in self-sufficiency activities; both parents must seek work or participate in work activities. Single headed households are allowed a one year baby exemption; this same exemption is not available if there are two parents in the household.

Other states have more stringent time limits allowing less time on Temporary Assistance. Massachusetts is one of the stricter states departing from the 60 month time limit and restricts cash assistance to 24 months in a 60 month period. However, the state has generous exemption policies from its work component, which resulted in 92% of the recipients being exempted from work requirements. Also, 70% were exempt from the 24 month limit. Parents who have children who are between the ages of 2 and 6 are not subject to the 24 month time limit and are not mandated to participate in work readiness activities until their youngest child reaches school age. Massachusetts allows some parents to pursue education and training programs while receiving cash assistance with childcare subsidies provided.

Florida also has some of the strictest time limits and work requirements in the nation. The majority of recipients were required to engage in work activities

as soon as they enrolled in the program; they faced a complete loss of wages or cash benefits if they failed to do so. These requirements were a major factor in the rapid and extensive caseload decline of Florida's welfare rolls. Since 1996 their philosophy has not changed, but they have begun to allow exceptions and to create more opportunities for clients to avoid penalties.

In Alaska we have chosen the 60 month limit, which rises on important question. Could Alaska have shortened the 60 month time limit and chosen more exemptions instead? This could give individuals extra time to work on barriers to employment and other problems and possibly pursue higher education.

An important issue is what is the point of departure and philosophy of welfare reform in each state. We know that there will be quite a bit of non-compliance, therefore, how does each state encourage and gain compliance? La Ganga (2001) states that in California individuals on welfare focused on the failures in their lives instead of coping. People may have problems coping for many reasons; they could be late for work and lose their job because the old car wouldn't start. This is not because of negligence on their part but because public transportation can be unreliable and old cars breakdown. Parents may not show up for parent teacher conferences, not because they do not care, but because they are working multiple jobs and cannot take the time off. Are these barriers taken into consideration or are people penalized for their deficits? La Ganga (2001) reports individuals were discouraged from enrolling in college.

As I examined the data persistent questions came to mind. Do individuals understand clearly what they are being asked to do and what will be necessary to reach self-sufficiency? The study sample suggested cases were closed because recipients did not meet work requirements or that the program requirements were too much of a hassle. In Iowa, families were terminated from welfare because they misunderstood what their caseworker wanted. When people failed to make an appointment and did not understand the rules, they were terminated from assistance (Fletcher, 2000). Termination does cause hardships for families. More than half of families terminated suffered a loss of income because they have minimum wage work or had only part-time jobs. In the Iowa study families relied on family members, neighbors and friends for emotional, financial and childcare help. Families were threatened with termination because of misunderstandings. Iowa implemented a second change policy before assigning the penalty. This was a safeguard that was put in place because of the high number of families being terminated. Now the family has to be approved by the state before an assigned penalty is put into place. This was a second change policy that was needed to identify and correct errors to reduce the risk of families losing their benefits due to a misunderstanding or mistake.

All of these raise questions about how states are administering their welfare programs and how much information clients know about their entitlements. Do families know that if they get a job and they work their way off assistance they can receive one year of transitional Medicaid coverage? Do

families know that they are categorically eligible for foodstamps for six months after closure? One unexpected side effect from Boston, Chicago and San Antonio was that more families were going without healthcare coverage as they moved into the workforce (More, 2001). Questions need to be asked; are the programs being complied with or is more training needed at the state level for eligibility staff. When families are terminated from welfare they have few options. They rely on family support and community services, such as food banks. Periods of ineligibility can cause extreme hardship if these families do not have foodstamps and Medicaid.

Alaska requires that families fill out a Family Self-sufficiency Plan. This plan lays out the steps for a family to follow to get off assistance and into the job market. People were very optimistic about finding a job (67.7%). Even though the families were optimistic, 77.4% did not participate in the activities to find a job or prepare for the workforce. Eligibility staff set penalties if families did not comply with the assigned tasks. During the time period of this study, the penalty for not complying with your Family Self-sufficiency Plan was a \$369.00 monetary penalty. For a family of a single mother with one child, their monthly benefit would be lowered to \$452.00 (\$821.00 - \$369.00). For the first penalty, the monetary penalty stays in place for 30 days, the second penalty 6 months and the third penalty 1 year. These are curable, but the penalty period remains in place. Now the system has changed, there is a 40% penalty, so in the household of the single mother with one child this would be (\$821.00 - 40% (328.40))

\$674.00. However, now they are able to cure the penalty at any time. The families will still suffer the monetary penalty, but not for a specific penalty period, rather the penalty will be released upon cure. If the families do not cure the 40% penalty, then caseworker is required to do a home visit before a 75% penalty can be implemented. Often, families were not informed directly about penalties and frequently did not know how to proceed to have their case re-opened once sanctions led to case closure. Our findings were consistent with the experience in Iowa where families were unsure why their case closed. In contrast, Michigan the case closes after the 75% penalty. Thus, the new penalty system is more equitable to the welfare clients.

Michigan reports that the most common barrier to participation in the work program was transportation, childcare and health care. In most cases, the client perceived a barrier while the agency did not or visa-versa.

An Indiana survey conducted in 1996 suggested that 59% left the welfare rolls because their "welfare check was reduced because of a new rule" (Fein, 1998). Further, this study showed that greater earnings would be needed to boost families above the poverty line.

It was reported in another study in Mississippi that barriers led persons who believed they are wronged, not to pursue an appeal. Penalties can be imposed in error by the welfare worker; it could be a misunderstanding between the client and the agency. There is an appeals process. The barriers can begin with the appeal notice itself. A participant needs to know that there is an appeals

process. In Mississippi advocates are concerned that the letter explaining the availability of the appeals procedures is intimidating and may be difficult to understand. The participant needs to have the fortitude to meet its terms, face to face meetings are required that could entail, negotiating childcare and/or transportation. Others may not appeal because the rules appear inflexible.

In New York, research showed that many people left the welfare rolls because their benefits were reduced or stopped through sanctions and case closings for noncompliance with program rules (Three-city, 2001). The evaluators of this research examined case closures in Boston, Massachusetts, Chicago, Illinois and San Antonio, Texas. In each of these cities at least 17% had their cases sanctioned or closed for not following the rules. The most common reasons for being penalized were not directly refusing to work or look for a job, but rather missing a meeting, usually with a caseworker, or failing to file required paperwork. The study also tells us that penalized parent when compared to all other current or recent welfare recipients showed more signs of distress. They often lacked the resources to navigate program rules. (Three-city, 2001).

According to a study by Judith Asch-Goodkin (2001) adolescent children showed increased behavior problems and lower academic achievement. Some of this behavior in teens may be contributed to stress on single working parents, less parental supervision or burdens being put on the teens for child care and housework. This is an area that could use more research. Some questions that could be examined are: (1) how has welfare affected the children? (2) one of the

goals of reform was to better the lives of children at risk, is this happening? (3) have families just moved from welfare to the working poor? And, (4) has the quality of life changed by working? Veenhoven (1996) in his research on social indicators state that objective quality of life is the degree to which living conditions meet the observable criteria of the good life, such as income security for everybody, safety in the street, good health care, education, etc. Subjective quality of life is how people appreciate their life personally, how secure they think their income is, how safe they feel in the street, how satisfied they are with their health and education, etc. Families on welfare are in a state of flux, their future and quality of life is uncertain. Therefore, their quality of life and living conditions are not what they expected or wanted.

In Alaska a majority of the sample that was not on welfare was working. Of the families that were working, 38% stated they were not managing well. When asked how the families perceived they were managing compared to six months ago, over 40% felt that either their living situation was about the same or more difficult. Thirty-seven percent felt that it was difficult to purchase food and as many found it difficult to pay bills.

Alaska's economy is such that there are seasonal jobs and part-time jobs available without benefits. Once off assistance because of employment, the family has one year of transitional childcare assistance through an agency other than the state. The transition to these benefits is not always smooth and the family would have to pay for childcare themselves until benefits can be received.

Even though these families are working, they are still in poverty and need government assistance to manage. However, cases are also closed because of penalties that are imposed on families for not following the rules set through welfare reform. This appears to fit the issue raised in California of looking at the person as the problem rather than addressing systemic issues in the way the state organizes welfare reform.

Alternative do exist. For example, in New Jersey considerable drops occurred in the number of children on foodstamps and Medicaid. One-third of the recipients believed they were misinformed by their caseworkers regarding eligibility requirements and benefits. New Jersey offers three years of transitional daycare assistance. Even though the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 (PRWORA) eliminated any entitlement to child care assistance for welfare recipients, most states continue to give child care subsidies a high priority (Koretz, 2001).

In Texas (Capps, 2001), 40% of children were dropped from Medicaid within a year of their case closing and the use of foodstamps fell 44 percent between 1996 and 2000. Eligibility procedures may have been forcing people off the welfare rolls. The case workers had the discretion at the local level in setting the length of the recertification periods for foodstamps and the need for frequent recertifications may discourage participation. Families leaving the system because of employment generally receive transitional Medicaid coverage, but only if they knew and asked about the benefit.

When caseworkers are dealing with welfare clients, they use one of three means of influence; constraints, inducements or persuasion (Hasenfeld, 1996). Using these can be effective in getting overt compliances. The threat of sanctions must be such that they deprive the welfare recipient of desired resources. But, all of these fail to produce lasting behavioral changes once the sanction is removed. The compliant behavior is not internalized; in addition, this approach encourages evasion and escape behavior (Hasenfeld, 1996).

The Urban Institute predicted high chronic unemployment for single mothers forced to seek work. This did not happen; working mothers took home 78% as much as the average worker. Welfare reform worked so well in part because most of the country was experiencing an economic boom. But the question becomes, will these working mothers shield themselves from unemployment now that the economy is starting to decline (Koralek, 2001)? Poole (1996) stated that the U.S. economy does not produce enough jobs for recipients to get off welfare. Further, these and other structural flaws in the economy, not the unwillingness to work, push people onto public assistance.

Participant responses of this study make one wonder about how welfare recipients can deal with the basic costs of food, shelter and childcare as they move into the workforce. One issue is whether the state has a realistic targeted income level for a reasonable quality of life that allows families the basic needs to survive and subsist. This was not taken into consideration when the federal poverty line was created in 1960. The Federal Poverty Line is the basis for

determining welfare benefits, including foodstamps and Medicaid. This old factor is based on a 1960s model where there were two-parents and a stay-at-home-mom. It did not factor in items such as childcare expenses or regional differences. This puts people into positions where they have to make choices (Houtz, 2001).

Childcare and the ability to obtain these services along with being able to pay the childcare provider is an area that needs more research. In the era of budget cuts and cut-back on state funding, will families be able to pay for childcare services once they obtain jobs and are off of assistance? Currently when families work their way off of welfare benefits the state no longer pays for their childcare services. There are day-care assistance program available but these are income based and there are usually waiting lists to obtain services. Even when these services are obtained, the former welfare recipient may be overwhelmed with the cost that they have to pay in order to keep their job and keep their children in daycare.

Illinois recipients were asked how they intended to pay for child day care after they lost their subsidy (Smith, 1995). Most, 74.8% reported not knowing what they would do, with only 15.4% reported that they would pay for the care themselves. A question is raised as to how realistic is it to expect parents to be able to pay for the daycare themselves on minimum wage jobs?

Do they take less than adequate childcare, do they not report extra income they earn under the table, and do they double up in apartments or move

back home with their parents or even staying with an abusive partner? Most families could not make it on minimum wage jobs without government help. The Indiana Welfare Reform Evaluation (1998) revealed that there was no impact on four out of five families who remained below the poverty line for a family of three.

Another problem that Danziger (2000) identified is that one year after Medicaid closes the families are considered to be over income and the cost of medical coverage on their jobs is cost prohibitive or not available.

Research shows that families in each study lack many of the important resources that are essential for self-sufficiency; well-paying jobs for low skilled workers, transportation, child care, health services, support networks, and financial means to meet basic needs. Rural recipients have few resources available to them and on a less accessible basis. There are fewer job opportunities in villages. Jobs that are available are minimum wage or part-time work with little or no benefits. In rural communities, there may be no available childcare, especially for special needs children. Shelters and soup kitchens are available only in the cities. Other issues in Alaska are transportation for a variety of reasons, cost of insurance, driving records of recipients and the weather. In rural communities there may not be roads and transportation has to be on foot in inclement weather conditions.

In order to realistically get people into the work force and out of poverty they need to obtain skills such as a college education or vocational skills. Education is not seen to be a high priority. The Center for Law and Social Policy

(CLASP) (1999) conducted a survey in 1998 with key policy advocates in the fifty states and Washington D.C. Their study found that welfare recipients are generally not allowed to count post-secondary education as a work activity. In Iowa, Douglas Howard, director of Human Services asserted that his department finds a contradiction between "the requirements of government and the promises of education: government requires that 30% of the TANF recipients be working by a certain date, yet statistics show that the more education a person has, the higher his or her earnings will be" (Howard, 1998, p 15). Single poor mothers must often face barriers to their education at times when they are most vulnerable (Adair, 2001). Adair further states that programs need strong role models and mentors, with a strong academic and personal support system that would impact students' abilities to successfully complete degree programs. Activities that would lead to a post-secondary degree were cut in half by 1998.

Maine, Wyoming, New York, California, Massachusetts, and Minnesota are but a few of the states with creative and successful programs designed to help welfare recipient's gain an education. According to Maureen Lane (2000) of Hunter College, recent legislation in New York State, Hunter College, the City University of New York and Hamilton College worked with state legislators to support passage of a bill that would allow welfare recipients to count college and university internships and work-study positions towards their mandated work requirements. Collaborations between policymakers and post-secondary institutions are crucial efforts to ensure that poor single mothers are able to

access education and its rewards. Bane predicted that “competition among the states... will continue over who can be tougher on welfare. There will be little incentive for states to put money into job development, job training, or worker support” (p. 49). Unfortunately the opportunity for low-income single mothers to better their lives through education and the supports necessary to do so are not adequately available (Adair, 2001). Adair further stated (2001) that the process of earning post secondary undergraduate and graduate degrees can and does break the cycles of intergenerational poverty.

Researchers Lein and Edin (1996) found that poor single mothers and their children experienced hardship at many levels, including going without food, lacking medical and dental care, experiencing multiple utility shut-offs, living in unsafe homes or being homeless, becoming the victims of crime and lacking sufficient winter clothing. Poor women also have five times the risk of experiencing domestic violence.

Barriers to research

This researcher encountered problems setting up a collaborative arrangement with State officials. The first problem was that this researcher played a dual role, as an employee of the government agency as well as a graduate student conducting research. This relationship had to be addressed up front. It was necessary to identify individuals within the state system and negotiate to be able to conduct the research. When this was done a meeting was held with the officials to collaborate on the details of the study.

Communication was done through written e-mails and via the telephone with the local Regional Administrator present at all meetings. The parameters were set up, and the proposal process started. Progress was made by making up the survey, having the questions approved by the Regional Manager and approval by the Internal Review Board at the University of Alaska Fairbanks. When this researcher requested labels for the mailing, to ensure this would be a blind study, permission to perform the research was withdrawn. A year had gone by for the development, design and approval process. According to Huxham (1996) involving government officials in the collaborative is often critical to success but frequently problematic. This certainly was true with this research project. The person that this researcher originally dealt with had little flexibility and was subject to another set of influences within the government agency (Huxham, 1996). At this point, a local legislative representative was contacted on behalf of this researcher. Involving a representative in the process at this point demonstrated the Influence that one person has on another by virtue of their position, affiliation and power (Huxham, 1996). More meetings were held before permission was given to continue the research.

Some of the concerns that the state expressed was that their control over the process and design, how the results would be interpreted and most important the confidentiality of the participants, although this research was set up as a double blind study. To compromise and be able to continue the research, the surveys and supplies that this researcher purchased were sent to Juneau, Alaska

for the State to actually do the mailings. This was done, but problems were still encountered. The person that was to send out the surveys and keep a record of the return rate went on vacation, so the return rate was not recorded. After the surveys were received in Juneau, they were copied and sent to Fairbanks. This was time-consuming and actually detracted from the research because of the unknown response time or return rate for the surveys.

In the course of this research the State of Alaska has developed two studies through the University of Alaska Anchorage. The difference is that the ideas, design and inception were credited to the State of Alaska and the State had complete control. As Sarason (1974) stated when you join together with others for a practical purpose, a common side-effect is the development of a psychological sense of community. This did not occur in this research project. The State did not view this research as a collaborative effort. For my research, I initiated the process and approached the State to get permission to perform the survey, so that state did not have a buy-in for the research.

Limitations

The potential outcome would be the ability to identify strengths and weaknesses that welfare recipients encountered. These strengths and weaknesses will be examined for barriers that may prevent a family for moving out of poverty. This study would also identify training areas for welfare personnel and potential for further evaluations and monitoring of families on ATAP.

Areas for future research

Future research should include the difference between cyclical and structural poverty. In Fairbanks this would be an ideal area to look at the ups and downs of the economy and how that affects the welfare roles. Since Fairbanks historically is a boom and bust town, one could expect a direct correlation.

Another would be studying the local workers to see if they fit the jobs they are holding. From personal experience, people can get jobs within the Fairbanks area without their GED, but at a cost. They can get a hold a job, but can they really expect the progress without the soft skills that are needed to get the job done.

A study of the Alaska Native population could be conducted and how they have fared with welfare reform. In Fairbanks, the Alaska Native and Indian populations are paid and case managed and by Tanana Chiefs Conference. A comparison of the State of Alaska's ATAP and the Tanana Chief's program results to compare the different approaches to the populations.

Other studies could include these questions; (1) how Welfare Reform has affected children is an important question that needs more investigation, (2) Are there more child protection referrals?, and (3) Will transitions off welfare be associated with positive or negative outcomes for children?

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Appendix A

Northern Regional Area

Urban

College
Delta Junction
Eielson AFB
Ester
Ft. Greely
Fairbanks
Ft. Wainwright
Fox
North Pole
Salcha
Two Rivers

Rural Village

Allakaket, Anaktuvuk Pass
Anvik, Arctic Village, Atkasuk
Barrow, Beaver, Birch Creek
Central, Chalkyitsik, Chicken Circle
Clear, Cold Foot, Dot Lake, Eagle
Ft. Yukon, Galena, Tanacross
Greyling, Holy Cross, Hughes
Tetlin, Huslia, Kakovik, Kaltag
Tok, Koyukuk, Livengood, Nenana,
Northway, Manley Hot Springs, McGrath
Minto, Nikolai, Nuiqsut, Nulato
Pt. Hope, Pt. Lay, Rampart, Ruby
Shageluk, Stevens Village,
Takotna, Tanana, Venetie

Appendix B

ALASKA TEMPORARY ASSISTANCE CLIENT SURVEY

DATE: _____

Many welfare rules have changed. You are asked to tell us what you think about how these changes have affected you and your family. Please do not write your name on this form. The six-month time period referred to in this survey would be July 1998 through December 1998. Thank you for your help.

ABOUT YOU AND YOUR FAMILY:

- 1.
- What is your status on Alaska Temporary Assistance Program?

_____ Two parents - Married _____ Single Parent
 _____ Two parents- Unmarried

- 2.
- How many adults and children are in your household? (Adults would include children over 18 years of age).

Adults _____ Children _____
 Ages under 1 _____
 13 months to 3 years _____
 37 months to 5 years _____
 Over 5 years _____

- 3.
- Last year of school finished

Male Spouse/Partner Head of Household

6th - 8th grade	_____	High School Diploma	_____
9th grade	_____	GED	_____
10th grade	_____	Associates Degree	_____
11th grade	_____	Bachelors Degree	_____
12th grade	_____	Master's Degree	_____
		Other	_____

Female Spouse/Partner or Head of Household

6th - 8th grade	_____	High School Diploma	_____
9th grade	_____	GED	_____
10th grade	_____	Associates Degree	_____
11th grade	_____	Bachelors Degree	_____
12th grade	_____	Master's Degree	_____
		Other	_____

4. Are you? Mark all of the blocks that apply.

American Indian	_____	Other	_____
Alaska Native	_____	Pacific Islander	_____
Asian	_____	Unknown	_____
Black	_____	White	_____
Hispanic	_____		

5. How long have you been on public assistance as an adult? (total of months altogether)

Less than 6 months	_____
6 months - 12 months	_____
13 months - 24 months	_____
25 months - 36 months	_____
Over 36 months	_____

6. Has your case been closed within the last six months?

Yes _____ No _____

If yes, Why was your case closed?

I did not meet the work requirement	_____
The caseworker said the rules had changed	_____
It was too much hassle	_____
Over income	_____
Over resources	_____
Other/Don't know	_____

If yes, How have you managed?

Currently working found a job and has kept the job _____

Relying on family and friends - no income _____

We-re not managing very well _____

Other - please explain _____

CHILDREN

7. Compared to about six months ago, is it easier, about the same or harder to...

	Easier	About the same	Harder	Does not apply
Pay for childcare				
Get child support				
Get health care for children				

8. In the past six months, did any of these things happen to you. "You" also includes your HUSBAND, WIFE, PARTNER, or CHILD living with you.

	Yes	No
My child changed schools because s/he moved		
My child spent time living away from me or in foster care		
My child's school grades dropped		
My child had school/home behavior problems		
Problems finding a child care provider		

9. When trying to find a childcare provider, to what extent are the following items important to you?

	Extremely	Very	Moderately	Slightly	Not at All
Location of child care provider to your work					
Location of child care provider to child's school					
Location of day care provider in your home					
Child care provider works evenings/flexible hours					
Child care provides educational learning					
Child Care in your home					
Child Care in child providers home					
Teaches Religion					
Does not teach religion					
Day Care Center					
Would rather not work at all so that I take care of my own children					

WORK AND YOUR FAMILY SELF-SUFFICIENCY PLAN (FSSP)

10. Did you develop a Family Self-sufficiency Plan with your caseworker?

Yes _____ No _____

If yes, Was the Family Self-sufficiency Plan a joint effort by both you and your caseworker?

Yes _____ No _____

11. Do you feel that you can get a job and become self-sufficient?

Yes _____ No _____

12. Did you attend Work Search Express?

Yes _____ No _____

If yes, did you find a job through your efforts at Work First/Search Express?

Yes _____ No _____

13. To what extent are any of the following preventing you from getting a job?
Please check (1) Extremely (2) Very (3) Moderately (4) Slightly or (5) Not at all, that applies to your personal situation.

	Extremely	Very	Moderately	Slightly	Not at all
Child in household has chronic health problems					
Substance abuse problems (drugs or alcohol)					
Head of household has chronic health problems					
Physical disabilities or limitations					
Fear of going to work					
Unstable housing - homeless					
Mental health problems					
No transportation					
No childcare					
No telephone					
Low or no job skills					
Family violence					
Lack of Training					
Inability to read					

14. Have you experienced a reduction in your benefits due to a work-related penalty?

Yes _____ No _____

15. If you live in a Village, has welfare affected your subsistence lifestyle?

Yes _____ No _____

If yes, Tell us how?

16. How much work experience do you have?

Never held a job

Have worked part-time jobs off and on

Held a full-time job, but was laid off

Seasonal Employment

Unable to hold a job

None of the above

HOUSING

17. What area do you live?

Urban

Rural

College

Delta Junction

Eielson AFB

Ester

Ft. Greely

Fairbanks

Ft. Wainwright

Fox

North Pole

Salcha

Two Rivers

Allakaket, Anaktuvuk Pass

Anvik, Arctic Village, Atkasuk

Barrow, Beaver, Birch Creek

Central, Chalkyitsik, Chicken Circle

Clear, Cold Foot, Dot Lake, Eagle

Ft. Yukon, Galena, Tanacross

Greyling, Holy Cross, Hughes

Tetlin, Huslia, Kakovik, Kaltag

Tok, Koyukuk, Livengood, Nenana,

Northway, Manley Hot Springs, McGrath

Minto, Nikolai, Nuiqsut, Nulato

Pt. Hope, Pt. Lay, Rampart, Ruby

Shageluk, Stevens Village,

Takovna, Tanana, Venetie

18. Where do you live?

Own or buying home

Rents housing in:

Public Housing

Private Housing

Family lives rent-free

Homeless

Other

19. How much do you pay for rent or monthly mortgage?

\$0.00 - 200.00 _____
 \$201.00- 500.00 _____
 \$501.00- 750.00 _____
 Over \$750.00 _____

20. Are you currently employed?

Yes _____ No _____

If yes, Hourly wage \$ _____
 Full time job _____ Part time job _____

Are health benefits included?

Yes and I am enrolled _____
 Yes, but costs are too high, not enrolled _____
 No _____

HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

21. Compared to about six months ago, is it easier, about the same or harder to....

	Easier	About the same	Harder	Does not apply
Pay Rent				
Pay Bills				
Buy Food				
Pay for car, bus, taxi or transportation				
Get health care for you or other adults in family				
Get treatment for substance abuse				

22. In the past six months, did any of these things happen to you. "You" also includes your HUSBAND, WIFE, PARTNER, or CHILD living with you.

	Yes	No
My heat or electricity was cut off		
My phone service was cut off		
We could not afford enough food		
I moved because I could not pay my rent		
I moved in with another family or let other people move in with me to help pay expenses		
I stayed in a shelter		

23. Compared to six months ago, my life is generally

Better _____ About the same _____ Worse _____

24. Did you caseworker give you a list of resources and where to go for help?

Yes _____ No _____

If yes, was this information useful?

Yes _____ No _____

INCOME

25. What income does your family receive each month? (Check all that apply)

Wages from a job	_____
ATAP	_____
General Assistance - BIA/TWEP	_____
Child Support	_____
Veteran's benefits	_____
Other pension or benefits	_____
Unemployment compensation	_____
Workmen's compensation	_____
Contributions from stepparent in the household	_____
Contributions from other persons in the household	_____
Contributions from outside the household	_____
Social Security Income	_____
Other	_____

26. Is there an absent (no custodial) parent who is obligated to pay child support?

Yes _____ No _____

If yes, is that parent currently paying child support?

Yes _____ No _____

27. In the last 30 days did you go without food for a day or more because you did not have enough money? "You" also includes your HUSBAND, WIFE, PARTNER or CHILD living with you.

Yes _____ No _____

28. If you could change anything about the current ATAP program, what would you change?

29. What do you think will happen to you when you reach the 60-month time limit on Temporary Assistance payments?

Thank you for taking the time to fill out this survey.

Exhibit C

Letter of Introduction

This Survey is a joint effort by myself, a Graduate Student for the University of Alaska, Fairbanks, Department of Community Psychology and the Department of Health and Social Services, Division of Public Assistance. While I am a graduate student, I am also an employee with the State of Alaska, Division of Public Assistance. There have been quite a few changes to the Welfare System and this is your opportunity to answer questions about how the new Welfare Reform has affected you and your family. Part of Welfare Reform is to promote personal responsibility while providing a safety net for families. The questions on this survey are aimed at finding out how you did during the last six months of Alaska Temporary Assistance Program and what problems if any, you encountered.

By completing and returning the survey you are giving consent to participate in this study. **Participation is completely voluntary and if you do not wish to participate, do not return the survey.** Your benefits, if any, will not be affected in any way by either completing the survey or choosing not to complete the survey. The answers to the questions will be kept completely anonymous. Provisions have been taken to insure that this Researcher does not have any knowledge of your individual identity. The State of Alaska, Division of Public Assistance in Juneau will mail the surveys to you, so that this Researcher has not knowledge of your name. When you return the surveys to Juneau, the surveys will be screened so that there is no identifiable information written on the survey and then sent to this Researcher in Fairbanks. Your responses will be completely confidential. After the surveys are returned, there will be no record of who sent a survey. As a graduate Student my area of interest is Welfare reform and how it has affected families. The State of Alaska will receive the results of this survey. They will review the results to see how Welfare Reform has affected Temporary Assistance recipients. This knowledge may aid the State of Alaska to identify problems and hear first hand how you as a recipient have experienced the Alaska Temporary Assistance Program. The results will in no way affect your benefits.

Thank you for your help. The findings from this survey will be available upon request. If you have any questions or problems, you can contact: Patricia Weaver or Dr. Gerald Mohatt c/o University of Alaska, Fairbanks, Community Psychology Department, 104 Gruening Way, Fairbanks, Alaska 99775 – (907) 474-7007 or Jim Nordlund, Director of Public Assistance, Department of Health and Social Services, P O Box 110640, Juneau, AK 99811.

Patricia J. Weaver
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Jim Nordlund
Director of Public Assistance