

AN ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS OF

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Title: An Identification and Evaluation of the Critical Elements Necessary to Design a Model Post-Employment Services Program for Job Opportunities and Basic Skills (JOBS) Participants at an Urban Community College.

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As demands for major, system-wide reforms in the American welfare system are being called for on an almost daily basis, it has become increasingly necessary to identify and evaluate those programs which have attempted to foster a reduction in the level of public assistance subsidies and, particularly, programs that are designed to foster a welfare-to-work transition that is lasting and effective. The present study undertook such a task - the identification and evaluation of the critical elements necessary to create and implement a post-employment services component of the Jobs Opportunity and Basic Skills Program (JOBS) at an urban community college.

Through an extensive review of the relevant literature, and an empirical study, this thesis concludes with a series of recommendations describing how a model post-employment services program could augment JOBS activities. Samples of JOBS participants in the Mount Hood Community College Steps to Success Program, JOBS participants' employers, and administrators from various community college-centered JOBS programs across the country were developed. Survey instruments capturing critical information were created by the researcher; data were collected and analyzed, and results are presented.

In brief, the study demonstrates that JOBS participants making the welfare-to-work transition continue to require assistance in obtaining and financing child care, transportation subsidies, medical coverage, and supportive services that can include advocacy, counseling, and additional education and training if they are to sustain employment and avoid a return to welfare dependency. The study provides recommendations for numerous service options to be included in such a program.

An Identification and Evaluation of the Critical Elements Necessary
to Design a Model Post-Employment Services Program for
Job Opportunities and Basic Skills (JOBS)
Participants at an Urban Community College

by

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AN IDENTIFICATION AND EVALUATION OF THE CRITICAL ELEMENTS NECESSARY TO DESIGN A MODEL POST- EMPLOYMENT SERVICES PROGRAM FOR JOB OPPORTUNITIES AND BASIC SKILLS (JOBS) PARTICIPANTS AT AN URBAN COMMUNITY COLLEGE

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

BACKGROUND OF THE PROBLEM

The origins of social welfare, as national government policy, can be traced to the Industrial Revolution, when the mechanization of production resulted in a shift from small farms and cottage industries to large-scale factory production. Sociologists tend to date the blossoming of government welfare policy and programs, particularly in the United States, to events associated with the Great Depression, the New Deal, and the pledge of then President Franklin D. Roosevelt to provide assistance to the millions of Americans negatively impacted by the economic disaster of the 1930s Great Depression (Janda, Berry, & Goldman, 1987).

The existing welfare system includes such diverse programs as Social Security, Medicare, Social Security Disability, and Aid to Families With Dependent Children (AFDC). Many national, state, and local political leaders are trying to streamline these programs to be more efficient in reducing the incidence of poverty while fostering the transition of AFDC and other funding initiative recipients from dependency to gainful, permanent employment. Critical to this issue is the question of how a model post-employment services program for Job Opportunities and Basic Skills Program (JOBS) participants offered by an urban

community college can be instrumental in this transition. To assure common understanding, a definition of key terms is included at the end of this chapter.

While the U.S. has experienced alternating good and hard times during its history, the Great Depression was far and away the longest and deepest setback the American economy and the American people have ever experienced (Janda, Berry, and Goldman, 1987). It began with the stock market crash of October 29, 1929 and did not end until the start of World War II. By 1932, one of every four American workers was unemployed, millions more were underemployed, thousands of small farmers and business owners were unable to continue operating their businesses, and production was in excess of the consumer's ability to purchase even the most basic necessities such as shelter, food, medical care, and clothing (Janda, Berry, & Goldman, 1987; Lamb, 1978). Tens of thousands of uprooted people sought work in the American West, while the nation's great cities became the centers of poverty, crime, and hopelessness. Under the Administration of then President Herbert Hoover, victims of the Depression were forced to rely upon state and local governments and private charities for assistance, as Hoover did not believe that the U.S. Constitution empowered the federal government to supply relief for the unemployed (Lamb, 1978).

The partial solution to these problems offered by President Roosevelt was the creation of a government assistance program that encompassed several distinct phases. Phase I sought to boost prices and to lower unemployment; under the Works Progress Administration, the government created thousands of subsidized public works projects that offered employment and also stimulated the economy by increasing the demand for specific products (Janda, Berry, & Goldman, 1987). Phase II was aimed at providing direct relief to the people most affected by the continuing economic problems. The Federal Emergency Relief Administration was the forerunner of the AFDC program. It provided direct cash payments to the poor and the newly unemployed, to widowed or single mothers and their

children, and was designed as a temporary or emergency measure that would disappear once the Depression had ended (Lamb, 1978). President Roosevelt and Congress added other programs as well: the Social Security Act of 1935 marked the beginning of federal assistance to those who, through no fault of their own, were unemployable because of age or disability.

From this beginning, federal assistance programs to the poor, the unemployed, the disabled, the aged and the very young proliferated. Presidents John Kennedy (*The New Frontier*) and Lyndon Johnson (*The Great Society*) both significantly expanded these assistance programs, including not only cash payments to the poor but also medical assistance for the poor and the uninsured, food stamps to improve the nutrition of the poor, job training and placement services, and a wide variety of ancillary *support* services all designed to provide the entire range of services and benefits deemed necessary to assist the poor in becoming self-sufficient (Lamb, 1978). Coughlin (1989) has pointed out that the intentions of Presidents Roosevelt, Kennedy, Johnson and their successors were to create, through federally subsidized assistance programs implemented at the state or local level, a national action initiative that would directly attack the root causes of poverty (i.e., joblessness, lack of education or job skills, and medical problems that prevent or inhibit meaningful employment). What has happened, however, is that a vast and virtually unmanageable federal bureaucracy has developed attempting to route funds in the form of direct payment or no-cost services such as Medicaid to needy Americans. This system has historically failed to achieve the goal of assisting people in moving out of the poverty cycle (Coughlin, 1989).

Efforts to reform or restructure these programs, particularly AFDC, have largely been frustrated. A recent article in *The Wall Street Journal* (Thomas, 1993) stated that between 1980 and April of 1993, the number of families receiving AFDC increased from about 3.75 million to more than 5.0 million. The cost to the various levels of government is staggering. In 1983, AFDC cost the federal and state governments \$13.8 billion while the food stamp

component cost an additional \$11.8 billion (Janda, Berry, & Goldman, 1987). Additionally, though food stamp program benefits have offset the decline in cash benefits since 1968 when the food stamp program was inaugurated, the dramatic growth in the number of AFDC recipients has driven the cost of the program higher and higher (Peterson & Rom, 1990).

AFDC is the most controversial of the income support programs. It is targeted to provide assistance in the form of income, food stamps and medical insurance to about 15 million Americans in families where the principal wage earner is missing or not working (Peterson & Rom, 1990). Benefit levels for AFDC are set by the individual states through a process that begins with the calculation of the amount necessary for a family to buy a reasonable amount of food, clothing, and shelter. Any family whose income is below this standard and is otherwise eligible, can receive assistance.

Joe and Rogers (1985) have noted that the eligibility process involves an identification of family composition, an assets test to determine if the family is in actual need, a determination of the level of that need, and the calculation of the AFDC benefit which is based upon the individual state's determination of maximum benefit levels. A major problem that has plagued the AFDC effort is that individual states vary significantly in their assessment of what the family needs to meet a reasonable standard of living and in the percentage of that standard that they are willing to support (Peterson & Rom, 1990). While the average AFDC payment for a three-person family was \$315.00 in 1990, the variation among the states can be as much as 37% (Peterson & Rom, 1990).

While it is true that there are significant differences in the cost of living across the states, these variations are inadequate to explain the attendant variations in benefit levels. Many reform efforts under Presidents Nixon, Reagan, and Clinton have centered upon the creation of a national standard for AFDC benefits. In the case of Social Security, a national standard has been in place for many years and has worked well to equalize the program

across state boundaries (Peterson & Rom, 1990). It is interesting, however, that the National Welfare Rights Organization (NWRO) worked to defeat President Nixon's 1970 efforts to create a national standard. They feared, perhaps rightly, that a national standard lower than the standards of some states would allow those states to reduce their benefits. The NWRO leaders may have failed to recognize that left to the devices of each state, the AFDC program would be vulnerable to a wider range of efforts and activities designed to reduce benefits as states experienced financial difficulties (Peterson & Rom, 1990).

Another problem associated with AFDC is centered upon a perception by many lawmakers, sociologists, and members of the general public that the program has become accepted as an entitlement program that, in effect, fosters the dependency of poor families and does little if anything to facilitate an end to such dependency (Perrucci & Knudsen, 1983). Sociologists have intensively studied the question of whether or not AFDC works to effectively reduce poverty or merely facilitates its continuance. Critics have suggested that AFDC does not effectively reduce poverty among its recipients or the communities in which those recipients live, but tends to provide a standard of living that fosters continued reliance on this and other assistance vehicles (Perrucci & Knudsen, 1983).

Weiss (1992) has pointed out that poverty is a social disease that the welfare system may unwittingly promote by eradicating motivation in an individual. In his view, the needy will benefit more if AFDC programs focus strongly on education and job training in conjunction with financial and other types of assistance. It has been noted that the AFDC program has become in many cases an intergenerational source of income. Many children, themselves supported by AFDC, appear to become single parents who also rely upon this source of economic maintenance (Katz, 1993).

Efforts by President Reagan and others to link AFDC to such activities as *workfare* have been rejected by both recipients and Congressional leaders (Coughlin, 1989). As early

as 1964, reforms in this area attempted to foster reduced dependency on AFDC by allowing recipients work-related expense deductions, job training and placement, day care cost subsidies, and other related services and benefits designed to facilitate entry into the work force. The federal Work Incentive Program (WIN), developed in 1970, created a jointly-administered program between the Department of Labor and state employment agencies and the various welfare administrations. AFDC recipients were required to participate in WIN, with certain exceptions. Unfortunately, WIN funding was inadequate to meet its reform-oriented goal (Katz, 1993).

Other AFDC reform efforts have included attempts to limit the number of children that a family could claim for benefit calculation purposes, the creation of mandatory participation programs focused on training or education, reduction of benefits for the non-working able bodied parents of older children, and an increase in workfare programs (Dumas, 1992). It is anticipated that the Clinton administration will also offer its own reform package in the coming months. The Clinton plan is expected to include expanded earned income tax credits, a 2 year benefit limit after the birth of a new child, education and job training, and better child support collection procedures (Katz, 1993b). Clinton's plan is a response to a growing concern on the part of the middle class concerning the rise in AFDC and other welfare programs in an economic climate characterized by a decline in the ability of the middle class to provide for its own needs (Katz, 1993b).

Even the most vehement critics of the AFDC program would not deny the necessity of providing financial and other types of assistance to the more than 25 million Americans, many of whom are young children, who live at or below the poverty level (Perrucci and Knudsen, 1983). There is increasing agreement between both critics and supporters of AFDC, however, that the time for significant and fundamental programmatic reform is long overdue. Paulette Thomas (1993) has pointed out that the pressure to remove the able

bodied who receive public assistance from AFDC will increase as President Clinton follows through on a campaign pledge that helped define him as a new kind of Democrat. Clinton promised "to end welfare as we know it," a plan that senior White House advisers claim still has his commitment. Central to his plan is the creation of a 2-year eligibility limit which will force able bodied parents to work for their checks in either the private or the public sector (Thomas, 1993).

Several policy changes that offer varying degrees of responsiveness to the problems inherent in the AFDC system have been identified. Peterson and Rom (1990) have recommended the development of a national welfare standard which addresses the questions of both eligibility and benefit levels. Admitting that uniform welfare benefits cannot be achieved overnight, they contend that a national welfare standard can capitalize on the decline in defense costs over the next few years as well as creation of a national health insurance network which would hopefully reduce some AFDC-related costs. A national standard would stabilize program costs across state boundaries. It would, like the Supplemental Security Income and Social Security programs, foster a more rational and cost effective program.

A second reform regarding AFDC has been described by Thomas (1993) in *The Wall Street Journal* in which the efforts of Ohio to facilitate the movement of single AFDC parents from reliance on welfare to meaningful employment are described. Ohio, Oregon, and Wisconsin have highly ambitious Job Opportunity and Basic Skills (JOBS) training programs, in which AFDC-participating parents are provided with child care and transportation in conjunction with job training/education and/or placement. AFDC benefits continue as long as participants attend classes or work. Though only a relatively small number of the individuals eligible for these programs participate, Thomas reports a high level of success (1993).

The welfare-to-work programs established in the 1980s have subsequently been evaluated and found ineffective in some cases, as noted by Gueron and Paley (1991). These early programs often resulted in the exact opposite of their stated objectives. Single parents receiving AFDC, for example, often left these welfare-to-work programs after a brief period of employment and returned to AFDC rolls. Friedlander and Burtless (1995) found that recidivism, or a return to the AFDC rolls after a job placement, was common. They estimate that between 20 and 40% of those who left AFDC in four welfare-to-work programs during the 1980s returned to welfare in one year.

A number of reasons for recidivism has been suggested. Early job loss or a decision to return to AFDC is generally associated with such factors as a decline in income and standard of living associated with the loss of welfare benefits, child care problems, and a lack of technical skills (Berg, Olson, & Conrad, 1991). Berg, Olson, and Conrad (1991) also have suggested that the socially isolated backgrounds of most AFDC recipients who have participated in welfare-to-work programs can have a negative impact upon the ability of new workers to become comfortable with the rules, behavioral and attitudinal expectations, and stresses of the work place. The nature of specific jobs, the type of supervisory practices used, and the type and focus of support programs for new workers who have received AFDC are critical elements that need to be addressed. Hamilton (1993), for example, recommends an intervention and support program for AFDC recipients making the transition to work. Her recommendations include the provision of post-employment services that facilitate the welfare-to-work transition process and which offer new workers the type of assistance that is known to reduce AFDC recidivism.

Under the Family Support Act of 1988, the Job Opportunity and Basic Skills (JOBS) program (Titles IV-A and IV-F of the Social Security Act) was created. This program mandates a fundamental shift in welfare policy, seeking a move from long-term income

maintenance to a short-term transitional program that would result in employment and, eventually, complete self-sufficiency. Chapter II of this thesis reviews the analysis of the JOBS program and others which have been developed to provide the above-described services to new workers who have received AFDC. In brief, the purpose of the JOBS effort is to encourage, assist, and require applicants for and recipients of AFDC to fulfill their personal responsibilities with respect to family support and maintenance by accepting employment.

COMMUNITY COLLEGES AND WELFARE REFORM

Community colleges in the United States serve numerous functions, including the provision of a variety of educational and job training programs and services. John Gardner, the noted educator and philosopher, has called community colleges, "the greatest American educational invention of the twentieth century" (Gardner, 1968). Community colleges are distinguished by their open access philosophy and comprehensive missions. Bliss (1994) has indicated that the nation's community colleges can be leading architects in building new American communities; in particular, community colleges can and should serve as sites at which the least advantaged Americans can obtain the education, training, skills and services they need to move into the social and economic American mainstream.

For these reasons, community colleges in Oregon and throughout the United States have emerged as primary providers of JOBS services. Mount Hood Community College, Gresham, Oregon, in conjunction with its partners, operates the JOBS program (known as Steps to Success) for the Portland, Oregon, metropolitan area. Consistent with other welfare-to-work programs, some 20% of the participants completing the program and entering an unsubsidized job return to AFDC within a year. Community colleges, according

to Dumas (1992), are an ideal locus for the development of post-employment services for welfare recipients as an adjunct to existing JOBS training programs.

It is from these initial considerations that the present study emerges. Post-employment services programs must be developed which are specifically designed to reduce initial job losses and which address the needs of former AFDC recipients who have completed JOBS programs and moved into the work place. Such programs are a necessity if the cycle of poverty and welfare is to be broken (Dumas, 1992). The persistence of the poverty cycle is evident in the fact that between 1980 and 1993, the number of families receiving AFDC increased from about 3.5 million to slightly more than 5 million. Research has demonstrated that while the average length of time an AFDC family receives assistance is about 2 years, many families tend to remain on the welfare rolls for lengthy periods. Elwood (1986) found that about 25% of all families who apply for and receive AFDC remain active participants in the welfare system for 10 or more years. He further estimated that this core group of long-term recipients constitutes about 60% of those receiving assistance at any given time. The problem addressed herein, therefore, is centered upon that core welfare constituency and their education, training, and job placement needs. It is this group of AFDC recipients who experience the greatest negative effect of the barriers to employment such as low education and literacy levels, coupled with a lack of meaningful work experience (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 1989).

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The problem addressed by this study is the identification and evaluation of the critical elements necessary to design a model post-employment services program for JOBS participants at an urban community college.

To accomplish this task, three surveys have been developed to secure: (a) information from JOBS administrators in community colleges, (b) information from employers of JOBS participants, and (c) information from former JOBS participants. These individuals can provide valuable insight into the issues that impact upon successful employment after completion of JOBS programming. In order to obtain this information, three separate surveys have been developed by this researcher aimed at identifying and evaluating the critical elements needed in a model post-employment services program.

These critical elements will be identified through the aforementioned surveys. JOBS administrators in community colleges will be asked to provide information regarding employment recidivism rates for their programs, the type and extent of follow-up services given to participants, and perceived reasons for recidivism among JOBS participants. They will also be asked to identify the resources needed to reduce recidivism and the scope of a program geared to this end.

Employers who have hired JOBS participants will be asked to identify any special company programs that assist former and current welfare recipients and to cite any special assistance needed by this population of workers. They will be asked to indicate awareness of the Mount Hood Community College Steps to Success Program and their attitude toward this program. The Steps to Success Program provides welfare recipients with training and support services to facilitate their transition from welfare to work. Respondents in this category will further be asked to identify issues and problems they perceive to be related to employment success (and failure) among JOBS graduates. Finally, employers will be asked to recommend specific post-employment services that they believe would expedite the transition from welfare to success in the work force.

The third group of participants, JOBS graduates, will be asked a similar group of questions. Their insight regarding the type and scope of post-employment services which

would be beneficial to them will be solicited, as will their perception of recidivism among this population (along with perceived reasons for losing or leaving a job). Their evaluation of the effectiveness of the program services will be sought, along with a listing of most frequently encountered problems with respect to new work positions. They will, finally, be asked to identify the value of Steps to Success as a supportive mechanism and assess the relative merits of assistance modalities.

Through the identification of both problems and solutions and the evaluation of existing, post-employment services as identified in the literature, the research problem previously stated will be addressed.

NEED AND IMPORTANCE OF THE STUDY

Many of America's political, economic, and social leaders are coming to the belief that it is time that AFDC reform be undertaken. This reform should emphasize the transition of increasing numbers of AFDC recipients from welfare to work (Katz, 1993b). Coughlin (1989) has pointed out that the 1988 Family Support Act was the first indication that leaders from all political parties are achieving consensus with respect to the burgeoning welfare system. The idea implicit in all reform efforts is that reciprocal obligations between individuals and society exist along with a national value for self-sufficiency. Disparate groups such as the National Governors Association and the American Public Welfare Association are now approaching agreement about the necessity of directly linking AFDC to some type of gainful work (Coughlin, 1989).

After almost 60 years, it has become apparent that AFDC has generally failed in meeting its primary goal: the enhancement of family strengths which can foster autonomy and independence and an end to reliance on public assistance. Though Thomas (1994) has pointed out that most welfare parents now leave assistance within a year and 72% within 2

years, it has also been noted that this statistic conceals the large number of recipients who bounce between subsistence jobs and welfare over many years, "never quite leaving the grasp of assistance programs entirely."

Thus the present study, which focuses in part on the issue of how community colleges can employ their resources and the expertise of their staff to provide post-employment services to JOBS participants and graduates, is timely and necessary. For the most part, existing welfare-to-work and related programs have tended to focus on preparing AFDC recipients for work, either through remedial education, technical training, or career development. What is now needed is a program that enhances the likelihood that a JOBS graduate (or other welfare-to-work candidate) will be able to remain employed once a job is attained. This study will provide valuable data as to how post-employment services and programs can be structured to maximize job retention and reduce recidivism among JOBS graduates.

From an economic perspective, the one billion dollars now being spent annually by the federal government on JOBS initiatives can be enhanced by post-employment services programming (Thomas, 1993). Additional funding to expand the program over time may be obtained from the so-called peace dividend and from further reductions in AFDC benefits that accrue as parents enter the work force. Integral to this effort is the identification and evaluation of services that reduce recidivism and, therefore, foster meaningful reductions in the number of American women and children living at or below the poverty line.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

1. This study is limited in that it employed descriptive rather than inferential statistics. Its purpose was to design a post-employment services program for use at Mount Hood Community College (MHCC) in Gresham, Oregon. Because the study was confined

to JOBS participants and employers at the MHCC program site, its findings can only be interpreted within the context of the community and populations served by MHCC.

2. The total sample of JOBS participants completing the program at MHCC during a 6 month period was 161 individuals. From this total universe, a random sample of 50 participants was selected. These relatively small samples preclude generalizing the findings of this study to a larger and more diverse population.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Hess, Markson, and Stein (1988) have argued that in order to understand poverty, one must examine structural issues. In their view, the structuralist approach to the examination and understanding of poverty looks not at the related questions of individuals and human capital, but rather at societal-level or structural variables. These variables include sickness and physical handicaps, low wages in some businesses and industries, poor educational systems and limited educational opportunities for some Americans, racial and/or ethnic prejudice and discrimination, failure on the part of private industry to provide sufficient work opportunities and jobs, and a socioeconomic system that in general favors the advantaged over the disadvantaged. From this view point, poverty stems from people's locations in labor markets, broad changes in the economic system itself, and limited personal resources that directly impinge upon economic success.

Poverty, therefore, is viewed as the involuntary outcome of unemployment (or, in some cases, underemployment) and political as well as social powerlessness. Today, in the United States, the poverty population is largely female: divorced, separated, abandoned, or never married. Additionally, most of the women in this population are responsible for the care and maintenance of children. These women are, when in the work force, likely to have

low paying jobs with no insurance benefits. AFDC is the primary income maintenance and support source for this population (Hess, Markson, & Stein, 1988).

While long-term welfare dependency characterizes only a small fraction of the poor and of the total population of AFDC recipients (Bliss, 1994), AFDC recipients find it difficult to develop job skills and become consistent members of the work force. Poverty, many sociologists have pointed out, is not a single-issue problem. Townsend (1983) has noted that individuals who are reared at or below the poverty level tend to encounter multiple barriers as they attempt to break out of the poverty cycle of unemployment, job placement, job loss, and subsequent unemployment.

From the structuralist perspective, therefore, any program designed to assist the poor (in the present case, AFDC recipients) in acquiring meaningful and marketable job skills must include a variety of supportive services in addition to technical training and education (Hess, Markson, & Stein, 1988; Townsend, 1983). Among these services, which are believed to reduce the effects of structural barriers to meaningful employment are the following: job training, counseling, and placement; child care and transportation assistance; support networks and crisis intervention services; post-employment assistance; the development of employee relations programs offered by employers and others to remedy problems that impact upon continued employment (AFSC, 1986).

The present study will, as described in earlier sections of this chapter, identify those structural barriers to long-term employment encountered by JOBS program participants and evaluate avenues and efforts designed to ameliorate those barriers. The last chapter will present a model for the development of a post-employment services program for JOBS participants at an urban community college.

DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

Several key terms (many of which are acronyms for programs) are found throughout this work. These terms are defined as follows:

Job Opportunities and Basic Skills (JOBS). A program created by the Family Support Act of 1988 under titles IV-A and IV-F of the Social Security Act. The purposes of the JOBS initiative are to encourage, assist, and require applicants for and recipients of AFDC to fulfill their personal responsibilities to support their children by preparing for, accepting, and retaining employment. It seeks to provide training, support services, service coordination, and a policy of accountability for both participants and service providers (Bliss, 1994).

Post-Employment Services Program. A program in intervention which would reduce quick initial job loss and AFDC recidivism. Program staff would continue to work with individuals after initial job placement, fostering a positive attitude toward work and reducing the rate of return to welfare (Hamilton, 1993).

Recidivism. In the present context, recidivism refers to the condition where those who complete welfare-to-work programs fail to retain their jobs and, therefore, return to AFDC or other welfare programs.

Basic Skills. In the present context, basic skills refers to an individual's skill level in the following areas: reading, writing, verbal communication in English, mathematics, and problem-solving.

Steps to Success (STS). A program operated by Mount Hood Community College and directed by this researcher under the aegis of JOBS. The mission of the STS program is to provide to welfare recipients the training and support that will facilitate the transition from welfare to work and foster positive work attitudes and relationships. Personalized,

individualized services that directly address career goals and individual needs are stressed. Components of the program include: comprehensive skills assessment, basic education and GED preparation, career and life planning, vocational training, volunteer work experience, on-the-job training, teen parent services, and job placement services.

Community College. Community, junior, and technical colleges are defined as, "institutions (which) offer certificate or degree programs through the Associate of Arts level, and, with few exceptions, offer no baccalaureate degrees" (Carnegie Foundation, 1987). The following is an example of a comprehensive community college mission statement from Mount Hood Community College (MHCC) in Gresham, Oregon:

- MHCC shall provide access to technological education and training, a wide variety of transfer programs, developmental education and comprehensive community services.
- MHCC shall strive to help students discover their own potential, respect the uniqueness of others, and develop ethical values.
- MHCC shall provide enthusiastic and dedicated instruction to students of diverse cultural and economic backgrounds.
- MHCC shall collaborate with agencies, organizations and businesses to best serve students and the community and to be responsive to the realities and demands of a changing world.
- As part of the global community, MHCC shall cultivate international understanding through education and partnerships.
- MHCC shall be a community of caring individuals who strive for excellence in all facets of college life.

In addition to these key terms, several standard acronyms will be employed throughout this thesis. These include:

AFDC: Aid to Families with Dependent Children Program, a national welfare assistance initiative primarily for single-parent families.

WIN: Work Incentive Program, a federally mandated program that requires states assist employable AFDC recipients with a wide range of services, including job search assistance, on-the-job and classroom training, public service employment, child care, and transportation assistance.

CONCLUSION

This chapter has described the background of the study, presented the problem statement and the research questions to be asked, defined key terms, and provided the theoretical orientation of the research. This chapter has outlined the progression of welfare policy in our country. We have, over the years, moved from welfare policies that stressed the entitlement aspect of government social welfare to policies which stress reciprocity in terms of responsibility between government and its citizens. In short, instead of welfare being a long-term income maintenance system, it is now being restructured into a temporary system whose goal is to facilitate the entry or reentry of welfare recipients into the labor market.

If this welfare to work transition is going to be successful, ongoing support must be developed as part of the system. This support (post-employment services) needs to be designed to prevent job loss and recidivism. The purpose of this study is to identify and evaluate those critical elements necessary in a post employment services program.

Chapter II will offer an in-depth review of relevant literature. Chapter III will delineate the methodology of the study, the survey sample, the survey instruments to be used

in gathering data, and the analytic processes to be employed. Chapter IV will present and analyze the data, and Chapter V will summarize the entire study with recommendations for further studies.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

INTRODUCTION

Among the major issues to be addressed by the 1995 American Congress is the question of welfare reform and the fate of the various federally funded entitlement programs. Katz (1993b) has stated that many of America's elected leaders believe that it is time for Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) to be reevaluated and significantly modified. Thomas (1993) has argued that reform in AFDC is an essential ingredient in any comprehensive effort to break the poverty cycle in this country and that reform activities should include a strong focus on the welfare-to-work transition process. The purpose of this chapter of the thesis is to review the relevant literature prior to a discussion of the empirical portion of the study. The literature review serves as the basis upon which the survey instruments developed by the researcher were formulated, as well as the springboard for the discussion of the findings of that study.

The review will include a discussion of the following issues: poverty in the United States, with particular reference to female-headed households with young, school-age children; federal and state welfare and other assistance programs for this population; the Family Support Act of 1988 and its effects; the issue of the welfare-to-work transition, focusing upon the Job Opportunity and Basic Skills (JOBS) program and the community college as the site for such programs; and welfare reform mandates and the implications of these mandates with respect to the JOBS program effort.

A conclusion will be provided to summarize the central themes in the literature. These themes, as identified, will reflect those critical elements that are linked to the creation of a model post-employment services program for JOBS participants.

POVERTY IN THE UNITED STATES

Increasingly, poverty in the United States has become a phenomenon that is centered upon young children and their female parents. The National Commission on Children (1991) stated that as a group, children are the poorest Americans. Census data from 1989 demonstrated that almost 20% of all children in America, and more than 40% of all black children, live in a family with an income beneath the official United States poverty level for a family of three of \$8,500 (U.S. Department of Commerce, 1990). It is significant that the 4.7 million families receiving AFDC in 1991 represented approximately 5% of the nation's population, including an estimated 8.5 million children or about 13% of the total child population in the nation (National Governor's Association, 1993).

The conditions generated by or associated with poverty have a damaging impact upon children with respect to their physical and emotional well being as well as their educational development and career prospects (National Governor's Association, 1993). These conditions usually include crime, high rates of unemployment, gang and drug-infested neighborhoods, poor and substandard housing, inadequate nutrition, poor medical care, low rates of school achievement and correspondingly high rates of school dropouts, and a high incidence of births to unwed, teenaged mothers. It is disturbing that children growing up in poverty are more likely than their more affluent peers to repeat the patterns of their parents' lives, continuing the cycle of poverty as they mature and bring another generation into the cycle (Hess, Markson, & Stein, 1988; The National Commission on Children, 1991).

Perrucci and Knudsen (1983) have stated that AFDC and other welfare assistance programs have, over time, become established as entitlement programs in which those individuals who meet eligibility criteria are legally entitled to receive benefits. It has been argued by critics of the assistance program that this ideological orientation has created a situation in which dependency is fostered rather than reduced. The net effect of providing entitlement financial, nutritional, medical, and housing assistance to the core welfare constituency is regarded by some as fostering the continuation of the poverty cycle and its attendant social ills (Perrucci & Knudsen, 1983). Rather than reducing poverty by providing a temporary source of support, AFDC is regarded as a key element in the continuation of poverty in some communities, particularly those communities wherein the core constituency identified by Ellwood (1986) reside.

Similarly, Weiss (1992) has stated that poverty is a social disease that may unwittingly be promoted by the welfare system, which can have the effect of eradicating the motivations of an individual to move out of the poverty cycle. In his view, AFDC has a negative effect upon individual drive and determination. It tends, he argues, to create a sense of false security while also promoting intergenerational dependency. Katz (1993) has also stated that children of AFDC recipients appear to be more likely than others to themselves become single parents who depend upon AFDC as maintenance for themselves and their children. This, of course, further replicates the poverty cycle and establishes a self-perpetuating core constituency that is financially dependent.

William Julius Wilson (1987) has argued for some time that while the initial intent of AFDC and other entitlement programs was to provide a temporary response to the problems of familial poverty, one effect of the program has been to create a subclass of recipients who come to regard the program as their only source of income and assistance. He believes that many AFDC recipients become dependent and remain dependent because

of a variety of factors, including low self-esteem and a lack of meaningful employment opportunity and, even more significantly, poor urban and rural education systems that do little to motivate students toward success. In his view, the plethora of entitlement programs created under the Roosevelt, Kennedy, and Johnson administrations have largely failed in their efforts to engage in a successful war on poverty in this country and have, in effect, merely succeeded in creating a firmly entrenched class of poor people. These are among the critical elements that must be addressed in any post-employment services model.

Coughlin (1989) agrees in this assessment, arguing that the intentions of these presidents and their successors notwithstanding, it is clear that the root causes of poverty in this country (i.e., joblessness; lack of education and/or job skills; and medical or social problems that inhibit or prevent meaningful, long-term employment) remain firmly in place. Today, more than 25 million Americans of all ages, ethnicities, and races live at or below the poverty level. It is, therefore, readily apparent that the existing public assistance programs, particularly AFDC, are in need of close scrutiny as to their effectiveness as a means of reducing poverty (Perrucci & Knudsen, 1988). The following sections of this chapter will discuss the various federal responses to the issues of poverty, with special emphasis on AFDC.

FEDERAL WELFARE PROGRAMS

In Chapter I of this thesis it was noted that the contemporary federal response to the issues of poverty can be traced to the New Deal legislation and programs of Franklin D. Roosevelt. Some researchers (Janda, Berry, & Goldman, 1987) have characterized the Great Depression as a period during which the longest and deepest economic setback experienced by the American people created massive numbers of newly unemployed and newly poor people in need of food, shelter, medical care, work opportunities and financial assistance.

President Herbert Hoover placed the problem of meeting these needs on the shoulders of the individual states (Lamb, 1978). Under President Roosevelt, however, a shift in responsibility from the state to the federal government took place. He created programs like the Federal Emergency Relief Administration, the forerunner of AFDC, which provided direct cash payments to the poor and the newly unemployed, to widowed or single mothers and their children (Lamb, 1978). From this beginning federally funded assistance programs to the poor or the needy began to emerge.

Between 1960 and 1992, government spending on means-tested transfers to the poor rose from 1.2% to 3.9% of Gross National Product. In the same period, the caseload in the AFDC program alone increased by 460% (Burtless, 1992). This enormous rate of growth led to an expression of concern by elected officials and private citizens alike. It created a strong sense that while the program was well-intentioned, it had become something that its creators had not planned — a permanent means of providing support to women and their children that fostered continued dependency (Thomas, 1994). Both the financial and social costs of welfare have been under scrutiny since the 1960s. Since then, legislators and administrators have attempted to create supplementary programs and policies that would have the effect of encouraging welfare recipients to work and become economically self-sufficient (O'Neill, 1993).

AFDC itself has had a long history as a primary means of providing support to poor children without fathers in the home or whose fathers fail to provide support. Dickinson (1986) has pointed out that it was created in 1935 by the Social Security Act as a direct cash grant. Today, in its 1995 contemporary form, AFDC provides cash assistance, food stamps, and medical care to needy children whose parents, male and female, are unable to adequately provide for their well being. Eligibility criteria vary from state to state, but in general, an unemployed single female with school-age or younger children is regarded as

eligible for AFDC benefits (Dumas, 1992). Children whose parents were unable to provide support because of absence from the home, incapacitation, illness, or unemployment are generally eligible. In 1990, states were further required to implement AFDC programs to provide benefits to children in two-parent families defined as needy because of the unemployment of one (or more) of their parents (National Governor's Association, 1993).

Bliss (1994) has reported that through a combination of state and federal spending efforts, with the federal government covering between 50 and 80% of benefit costs and 50% of administrative costs, during Fiscal Year 1992, benefit payments of about \$21.9 billion were distributed to over 3.7 million families or 13.6 million individuals. Today, concern about these costs is at an all time high. Some researchers (Thomas, 1994) have reported that at both the state and federal levels, there are fears that escalating social welfare programming costs will be impossible to bear in the long run. Peterson and Rom (1990) have stated that of all the federal and state income support programs, AFDC is the most controversial. This is due, at least in part, to the perception that women who remain on the AFDC rolls for lengthy periods of time continue to have additional children (for whom additional benefits are allocated) as an alternative to pursuing meaningful educational or job training and subsequent employment.

In 1968, the federal government created a program that was meant to assist AFDC recipients in moving from welfare to work; the Work Incentive Program, or WIN, was designed to facilitate this transfer and included a variety of specifically targeted services such as job search assistance, job and classroom training, public service employment, child care assistance or subsidies, and assistance in meeting transportation costs (Levitan, 1985). Individuals who were required to participate in WIN activities included those regarded as able-bodied and employable. These individuals were registered with state employment service agencies, and benefit continuance was often linked to WIN involvement (Levitan,

1985). Several variations on the WIN model were eventually adopted, but the key element in each variation was that the adult parent was required to be actively engaged in either pursuit of gainful employment or in obtaining education or training that would facilitate such employment (Lamb, 1978).

Lamb (1978) has pointed out that from the very beginning, AFDC was a system in disequilibrium in that the states exercised enormous latitude in establishing benefit parameters, judging eligibility, assessing benefit increases and/or reductions (when additional children were born or employment secured), and allocating resources. Efforts to develop a more equitable resource distribution and benefit system have also been ongoing, but have, for the most part, failed to achieve anything resembling a national AFDC benefit standard (Joe & Rogers, 1985).

Under President Ronald Reagan, a system known as Workfare was proposed in which benefits would be directly linked to participation in work programs. Janda, Berry, and Goldman (1987) have pointed out that the Reagan Administration was somewhat effective in reducing the amount spent by the federal government on public assistance programs, particularly with respect to the food stamp assistance effort. Of special importance during the decade of the 1980s was the development of what would be called the Family Support Act of 1988, an Act developed under the aegis of the Reagan Administration but passed into law under President Bush. It should be noted that early in the Reagan Administration, there was a growing recognition that the various federal and state assistance programs were failing to provide those services needed to move assistance recipients from dependency to self-sufficiency.

THE FAMILY SUPPORT ACT OF 1988

O'Neill (1993) has described the Family Support Act of 1988 (FSA), which passed in the U.S. House of Representatives by votes of 374 to 53 and in the Senate by 96 to 1, as an effort to provide for meaningful welfare reform. Of particular importance in the Act was a recognition that AFDC and the WIN program had not proven successful in fostering the transfer of single parents with needy children from public assistance to meaningful self-sufficiency. The FSA had the effect of directly revising the Social Security Act. It repealed Title IV-C or the WIN program, added Title IV-F (JOBS), and instituted other specific changes to the sections of the Act which affect AFDC (O'Neill, 1993).

When passed, FSA was described and characterized as a forward-looking AFDC reform vehicle that had the capacity for fostering the transfer of hundreds of thousands of welfare recipients from the welfare rolls to the payrolls of the public and private sector. Chilman (1992) described the goals and objectives of FSA as focused on fostering a shift from dependency to self-sufficiency.

The Family Support Act has four key elements, each of which is regarded as integral to facilitating the welfare-to-work transition of single parents receiving AFDC. Each of these elements are regarded as critical components of this transition process and are of relevance in the present discussion. These elements include: (a) employment assistance through the JOBS program that includes education, job training and placement, and child care; (b) enforcement of child support decrees, along with assistance to the states with respect to determination of paternity and collection of child support payments; (c) provision of guaranteed child care services to all JOBS participants and other AFDC recipients in accepted educational or training programs designed to lead to employment; and, (d) provision of 12 months of transitional services to JOBS and other program participants who

leave AFDC. These services include child care and Medicaid (Congressional Budget Office, 1988).

Paul Offner (1992), in assessing and evaluating the WIN program, has argued that this program, which is the logical forerunner of the FSA in general and JOBS in particular, failed for several distinct but related reasons:

- First, the state agencies and their local adjuncts administering the WIN program were also charged with the responsibility for AFDC, General Assistance, and other public aid cash and benefit program management. Thus, eligibility issues were their main focus.
- Second, WIN failed, at least in part, because the potential public and private sector employers did not embrace the program with marked enthusiasm, creating new jobs for WIN graduates.
- Third, WIN failed partially because the type of training and education programs provided to AFDC recipients were inherently limited, and the coordination of supportive services to WIN participants was generally poor.

Offner (1992) has also stated that while the goals and objectives of the Family Support Act of 1988 are far more specific and narrowly defined — as well as more comprehensively linked to specific support services — the FSA has failed in achieving massive transfer of AFDC recipients to paid employment because of a chronic lack of adequate funding. This has prevented as many as 80% of all possible participants from involvement in some jurisdictions. He argues that the cost of the JOBS and supportive components of the Family Support Act is generally higher than members of either political party find acceptable. Traditionally, those parties interested in reforming AFDC have looked, he states, for the *quick, cheap fix* as opposed to the more costly, time-consuming, and potentially effective avenues that can foster a permanent transition from dependency to self-sufficiency.

Peterson and Rom (1990) have also analyzed the impact of the Family Support Act of 1988. In their view, the four key elements of the Act as previously identified address the critical elements that need to be included in order to achieve real and lasting reform. This must be accompanied by a reduction in dependency and an interruption in the poverty cycle. It is their opinion that the Act has failed to achieve its goals and objectives because, to a degree, the program remains a federal rather than a state-centered initiative. They also argue that local institutions are better suited to recognize and resolve local problems, and that were the states provided with greater autonomy in distributing resources, more significant results in terms of a reduction in AFDC rolls would occur.

The following section of this review of the literature will focus specifically upon the JOBS program — its history, its goals and objectives, and its performance outcomes.

THE JOBS OPPORTUNITIES AND BASIC SKILLS (JOBS) PROGRAM

The Jobs Opportunities and Basic Skills (JOBS) program, established under the aegis of the Family Support Act of 1988, offers AFDC recipients various opportunities for employment through basic education, work experience, and skills training. It is the central intent of the JOBS program to redirect families dependent upon AFDC toward self-sufficiency. Unlike earlier programs provided by the states under the AFDC banner, JOBS focuses on development of work-specific skills and attributes that can foster meaningful, long-term employment (U.S. General Accounting Office, 1991). The program targets three populations: (a) custodial parents under age 24 who lack a high school or GED diploma; (b) members of families in which the age of the youngest child is within two years of making the family ineligible for continued assistance; and (c) individuals receiving AFDC for any 36 of the preceding 60 months (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 1989).

Established under Title II of the Family Support Act of 1988, JOBS programs are required in all states; Rovner (1989) and Turner (1990) have noted that the JOBS effort, unlike other welfare-to-work transition programs, focuses on providing supportive services as well as education and skill training. These supportive services are provided in recognition of the fact that welfare recipients often face enormous barriers and challenges when entering or participating in the work force. The Federal Register (1989) has described the four critical elements that must be included by a state in a JOBS program as follows:

1. Any educational activity below the post-secondary level that the administering state agency determines to be appropriate to the participant's employment goal.
2. Job skills training, including vocational training.
3. Job development and placement activity by the agency to solicit employment for participants.
4. Job readiness activities to prepare participants to enter the world of work.

Additionally, a JOBS program must also include any two of the following components: (a) group and individual job search; (b) on-the-job training; (c) work supplementation; (d) volunteer work experience activities.

JOBS programs may also access post secondary educational programs, such as those offered by community colleges (Johnson, 1992). JOBS program participants enrolled in a community college receive various supportive services such as personal and academic counseling, tutoring, job placement assistance, assessment, and career development activities. These services are clearly designed to eliminate potential barriers to meaningful employment and self-sufficiency, as well as educational achievement. As Greenberg (1990) has noted, JOBS can pay the direct and indirect costs of enhanced supportive services delivered to JOBS participants, though costs for tuition, fees, and books are generally not covered by this effort.

As demands for welfare reform continued to escalate, the JOBS program offered an excellent opportunity to the states to reduce AFDC long-term costs while simultaneously fostering the welfare-to-work transition. Hagen and Lurie (1992) have pointed out that the JOBS program encourages states in this initiative by creating a financial penalty that reduces the federal share of funding to a state that fails to serve a certain proportion of AFDC recipients each year and to spend at least 56% of its JOBS funds on targeted individuals regarded as either at risk for or actual long-term AFDC recipient status. Johnson (1992) has noted that states have certain flexibilities with respect to serving this population, developing service criteria, and other aspects of JOBS program management. However, it is clear that the goal of the JOBS program is to develop an effective mechanism for reducing dependency upon welfare and fostering an efficient, cost-effective transition to economic self-sufficiency.

The Family Support Act authorizes two types of funding payments to states to defray the cost of JOBS programs. The first is a capped entitlement which is provided yearly; as Rovner (1988) has stated, this entitlement was set at \$600,000,000 in 1989, and should increase by 1996 to a total of \$1 billion. This capped entitlement is allocated across the states with respect to each state's share of AFDC adult recipients. Numerous regulations impact upon the allocation of federal funds, state eligibility for funds, and dispersal of these funds. In general, the states are charged with the sole responsibility of targeting, recruiting and subsequently serving potential JOBS participants, and there are significant financial penalties for failure to meet these requirements (U.S. House of Representatives, 1992). In addition, a portion of these funds are specifically designed to be used in providing for child care costs for JOBS participants. The federal matching share of this cost is set at 50%, and these funds are not limited by the federal funding cap (U.S. House of Representatives, 1992).

As of November 1990 all states had met the deadline established for the creation of state JOBS programs and most had moved to implement these programs on a state-wide

basis (Palmer, 1990). In 1991, for example, between January 1 and March 31, about 510,000 individuals (of the total of four million AFDC families) had participated in a JOBS program (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 1991). The U.S. General Accounting Office (1991) (CBO) has reported that prior to JOBS, states tended to report that they focused their efforts on placing AFDC recipients into jobs. Following JOBS implementation, the states have refocused their efforts on preliminaries to job placement, particularly training and skill enhancement as well as long-term education. This philosophical and ideological shift follows from the basic thrust of the JOBS effort, which recognizes that without preparation of AFDC recipients for work, job placement and job development are doomed to failure as a means of fostering self-sufficiency.

Bliss (1994) has investigated and evaluated the problems confronted by states in implementing and managing successful JOBS programs. Among the various barriers to successful JOBS activities he identifies the following:

1. Targeting and participation requirements under the Act have been difficult to meet.
2. Reporting requirements under JOBS are often complex and require new policies and procedures at the state level.
3. Service shortages, particularly in basic, remedial and alternative education programs, have been endemic.
4. Child care and transportation, in rural and urban areas, are often in short supply.
5. Most states have limited spending on JOBS due to internal fiscal problems.

This, in turn, reduces the federal funding received by states.

6. The general economic climate has been somewhat unfavorable, causing many states to experience substantial budgetary cuts in this and other social service/welfare programming areas.

7. Similarly, poor economic conditions at the state and local level have limited the number of jobs available to JOBS participants. In many states, demand for jobs, particularly entry level jobs, exceeds supply (Bliss, 1994).

These factors have, naturally, had a limiting impact upon JOBS goal attainment at the state and national levels. The Congressional Budget Office (1991), however, has reported that it was anticipated that the JOBS program would have only a limited effect on AFDC rolls in the early years of program operation. The CBO estimated, for example, that only 50,000 families would leave AFDC for work between 1989 and 1993 as a result of JOBS participation. Like other meaningful efforts to break the cycle of poverty in the United States, the JOBS program does not offer a quick fix. Rather, it offers a long-term solution to welfare dependency that allows for local rather than national goal-setting and program development. The following section of this review of the literature will describe the barriers to effective JOBS program delivery as well as the various barriers encountered by AFDC recipients who attempt the welfare-to work transition.

BARRIERS TO SUCCESS: JOBS AND JOBS PARTICIPANTS

Those issues identified as barriers to the success of the JOBS program and its participants have been identified and evaluated by several researchers. This study has reviewed this literature with an eye toward identifying the elements that are critical to the design of a post-employment services program.

Both the JOBS program and the JOBS participant regularly encounter barriers to success at the programmatic and the individual levels. Berg, Olson, and Conrad (1992) have stated that long-term job retention rates among participants in programs like JOBS are generally low. They argue that numerous reasons for this problem, and the welfare recidivism that it fosters, have been identified. Among those reasons are such diverse factors as:

1. There is a general unfamiliarity with the rules and expectations of the work place.
2. The social isolation of many actual and potential JOBS participants causes them to have a hard time adapting to the demands of the work place.
3. Many of the jobs available to JOBS participants are often low paying and lack benefits.
4. The demands and burdens of poverty continue to impact JOBS participants.

Other researchers (Berg et al., 1992) have noted that many first-time or entry level workers lack the social skills needed for success in the service industry and few job training and placement programs have, to date, provided these new workers with the type of social skill training and education that is necessary. The development of these skills must be among the critical elements that should be incorporated into a model post-employment service program.

In addition, many of the new workers in such positions learn quickly that the economic benefits of work are less than the economic benefits of continued welfare dependency. Berlin and Sum (1988) and Kasarda (1989) have pointed out that while many new workers who have received AFDC do not initially experience economic setbacks as a result of working, over time the loss of cash assistance, food stamps, and medical benefits can reduce the willingness of workers to remain employed. Many service industry jobs offer only

part-time employment and limited medical or health benefits. Over time the loss of these benefits can be both economically and emotionally devastating to former AFDC families.

Lack of adequate, dependable child-care resources is yet another critical element related to sustained employment among AFDC recipients, many of whom rely upon informal child care networks and resources (Polit & O'Hara, 1989). Numerous studies of welfare recidivism have all indicated that access to safe, dependable, and affordable child care is a major deterrent to sustained employment (Polit & O'Hara, 1989). A study by the Washington State Institute for Public Policy (1993) noted that the presence of an infant or toddler in the home, as well as the physical condition of the children, is a major barrier to sustained employment among this population of workers. The study also noted that age is a significant factor in determining whether or not an AFDC recipient will remain in the work force, with older women (32+ years) less likely to remain employed than younger women. Therefore, these studies have identified that child care is a critical element that can impact upon successful employment following JOBS program participation.

Other critical elements have been identified by Webster, Hu, and Weeks (1993). These researchers argued that enhanced educational status is positively linked to a successful welfare-to-work transition and that former AFDC recipients who are actively involved in either post secondary educational program or other educational and training programs are less likely to return to welfare than other former recipients. They found a positive correlation between ongoing academic, remedial, vocational, technical, skill, or other programming participation and job retention. Similarly, Herr, and Halpern (1994) also argued that these types of programs have a positive effect upon the behaviors and attitudes of new workers. In particular, ongoing personal development, whether academic or vocational in orientation, demonstrates the possibility of career enhancement and progress that can lead to increased economic sufficiency and stability.

Weiss (1992) has stated that among the poor, the social and economic American mainstream is often regarded as foreign territory; adapting to the demands of participation in this mainstream presents enormous difficulties to individuals whose familiarity with the mainstream is limited.

The foregoing discussion of some — though hardly all — of the barriers to a successful and permanent welfare-to-work transition is offered to highlight some of the central problems encountered by JOBS participants as they make this effort.

THE ROLE OF COMMUNITY COLLEGES

Bliss (1994) has also stated that there are several significant barriers to the effective delivery of JOBS services. He has noted that the welfare department has traditionally been regarded as in opposition to the educational and career aspirations of AFDC recipients. When AFDC recipients have indicated an interest in pursuing long-term educational or training programs, they have often been encouraged by welfare counselors to seek short-term training as a precursor to an entry level work position. Few concerted efforts have been made to date to employ the facilities of community colleges and other institutions as a locus for fostering long-term career planning. Bliss (1994) also stated that many, if not all, welfare administration agencies tend to stress the viability of job and vocational training as a spur to leaving AFDC. For the most part, prior to the JOBS program implementation, welfare agencies have tended to focus their efforts on identifying easily obtained entry level jobs that can be mastered by AFDC recipients with poor secondary education profiles and limited job or technical skills. As Bliss (1994) has noted, community colleges have not been regarded as an ideal locus for the implementation of welfare-to-work transition programs in the past. The following section of this literature review will focus on the community college as such a locus.

Bliss (1994) cites several successful welfare-to-work transition programs located in community colleges, including New York City's LaGuardia Community College (which has a long and successful history of cooperative education with low-income people) and the North Carolina community college system (which uses vocational education funds to educate students for specific jobs connected to economic development activities). Since 1901, when the first community college in the country was opened in Joliet, Illinois, these institutions have become more and more significant to America's academic and vocational training scene. Dilcher (1993) has stated that these institutions are major and logical providers of work force training. They possess the capacity to identify local employment and training needs and to respond in a timely manner to those needs.

There are more than 1,200 public community colleges in the United States. Each has an open admissions policy, most are community-based and accessible to potential students and enrollees (with a community college located within commuting distance of 90% of the total population). These institutions now serve more than 43% of all the nation's post-secondary students (American Association of Community Colleges, 1993). Further, these institutions serve a diverse student population, enrolling more than 45% of all minority college students. Women represent more than 58% of the community college student body. The average age of students is nearly 30 years (American Association of Community Colleges, 1993). Smith (1991) has stated that community colleges may well represent the best hope for retooling the work force. They are capable of translating employers' rapidly changing needs into effective training for workers and, perhaps more significantly, are capable of providing an ideal learning environment to potential workers.

Bliss (1994) stated that by the year 2000, fully 87% of all new entrants into the national work force will be non-traditional workers, defined as Asians, blacks, Hispanics, returning women, and immigrants. These populations possess special needs, both

academically and personally, that can be met through programs offered by the community college. He further states that there are now about 15 to 40 million Americans who could benefit from additional job training or educational programming. These individuals are drawn from among the pools of employed, underemployed, unemployed, dislocated workers, labor force re-entrants and new entrants, the disabled, and immigrants. Women who have received or do receive AFDC, single females caring for young children, and women seeking work without necessary job or social skills also stand to benefit from the myriad services and programs offered by the national's community colleges.

Steps-to-Success, the Mount Hood Community College JOBS program that serves as the locus for the present study, is evidence of the ability of the community college to respond to the mandate for welfare reform implicit in the Family Support Act of 1988. As DeParle (1994) has stated, the current demands for additional reform of welfare, particularly AFDC, will undoubtedly continue to escalate. While it is as yet unclear what shape welfare reform will take as the Republican leadership in the 1995 Congress moves its *Contract With America* forward, it is clear that some concerted effort will be made to reduce the AFDC cost burden. The JOBS program has demonstrated that it is possible to reduce AFDC dependency through the provision of job and vocational training, coupled with the development of supportive services that can eliminate or reduce the barriers to sustained employment. There is a growing recognition that while it may initially be cheaper to simply continue to mail out AFDC checks than to pay for the child care assistance, training, and wage subsidies that may be needed to foster the welfare-to-work transition, these latter efforts have the best chance of long-term AFDC reductions.

CONCLUSION

This chapter has reviewed the relevant literature prior to the development of an empirical research component. It has demonstrated that under the mandate of the Family Support Act of 1988, efforts to significantly reform AFDC have been implemented. Through the JOBS program, and particularly through the involvement of community colleges in this program, AFDC recipients have been assisted in making the welfare-to-work transition. The problem that remains is how additional, ancillary JOBS supportive programs and services for employed participants can be developed to effectively reduce welfare recidivism while strengthening individual participants' ability to sustain meaningful employment.

A number of critical elements that inhibit a successful welfare-to-work transition have been identified in this review of the literature. For a significant number of participants, the transition from welfare to complete economic self-sufficiency is extremely difficult and often unsuccessful. The literature has revealed that the most common elements or reasons for an unsuccessful transition are as follows:

1. Because of their low educational and technical skill level, AFDC recipients often find themselves in jobs characterized by low pay, few benefits, and unpredictable work hours. This, coupled with loss of welfare benefits, creates an extremely unstable financial situation. An unexpected bill or unforeseen financial crisis often propels individuals back on welfare.
2. For single AFDC parents, maintaining quality, affordable child care is a constant struggle. Of particular concern is acquiring child care to cover irregular shift hours and sick children.
3. Many AFDC recipients lack a basic understanding of the work place and its inherent rules.

4. Many lack the social skills to develop positive working relationships with their supervisors, co-workers, and/or customers.

5. Participants confronted with the daily pressures exerted by poverty often find they lack the resources and support to maintain a stable living environment that is essential to a successful work transition.

It is these critical elements that must continue to be addressed with former welfare recipients if they are to have lasting success in the work place.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

RESEARCH DESIGN

The research undertaken in this thesis includes an in-depth review of the relevant literature, presented in Chapter II. It also presents an empirical component designed to capture information specific to both the Mount Hood Community College JOBS program and the experiences of other JOBS program administrators who work within the framework of the community college setting. The purpose of this empirical component of the research is to address issues identified as critical to the success of individuals participating in the welfare-to-work transition offered via the JOBS program.

A primary objective of the research was to identify and evaluate the critical elements necessary to design a model post-employment services program. In order to make this kind of evaluation, it was necessary to first identify the critical elements involved in a successful welfare-to-work transition, as described in the literature. It was then necessary to have the three major players in the welfare-to-work transition process (participants, employers, and program administrators) evaluate the relative importance of those elements from their own unique experience and perspective. The congruence between the literature review and the surveys form the basis for the researcher's evaluation. This then forms the basis for the development of a framework upon which post-employment services for JOBS participants could be modeled.

To this end, this researcher developed three survey instruments, the key elements of which are derived from the review of the literature contained in Chapter II. The literature indicates that a number of barriers exist which impact negatively upon the ability of welfare

recipients JOBS participants to successfully make the welfare-to-work transition. Further it also tends to demonstrate that while job training and placement programs, such as JOBS, offer vitally important services, there are numerous deficits in these programs that also impact negatively upon this transition process. Based upon the critical elements and evaluative information obtained in the literature review, three target groups of subjects were identified: Mount Hood Community College JOBS participants, employers in the Mount Hood Community College cachement area who have hired significant numbers of JOBS participants, and community college administrators who responded to a national study, titled "The Involvement of America's Community Colleges in the JOBS Training Program" (Bliss, 1994). Selection of subjects will be described below.

SELECTION OF SUBJECTS/SAMPLE DESCRIPTION

In order to assess the effectiveness of the JOBS training program and to develop a better understanding of those barriers to long-term employment encountered by JOBS graduates as a preliminary step to the development of post-employment services opportunities, the empirical component of the research included a survey of three distinct groups of subjects.

Group A consisted of individuals who participated in and completed the Mount Hood Community College JOBS program between January 1, 1994, and June 30, 1994, and subsequently obtained unsubsidized employment. From the available pool of 161 potential subjects, a random sample of 50 was developed. Gravetter and Wallnau (1992) have stated that as a general rule, the larger the size of the sample, the more probable it is that the sample mean will be close to the population mean. In the present study, almost one-third of the entire population was included in the study sample. This ratio should serve to

overcome the limits of the sample size itself and to permit the data generated by the study to serve as indicative of the central tendencies among the larger population.

The 50 subjects were initially identified by randomly selecting every third name appearing on the JOBS roster during the selected time period. This process is known as the *n*th number technique. The *n*th number random selection technique consists, in essence, of selecting a number between 1 and 10 and then using that number to identify potential subjects from a listing of such subjects. The fifty potential subjects identified in this manner were then contacted and asked to participate. It was anticipated that a certain number of the potential subjects selected in this manner would be unavailable for interview because of various factors, such as a move and lack of new address or telephone number or a shift in employment. In order to obtain a Group A sample of 50 respondents, after the initial round of interviews the researcher returned to the JOBS participant roster, again employing the *n*th number technique, to complete the sample.

The second group of subjects, Group B, consisted of the 25 area employers identified in the JOBS program records as having hired the largest number of JOBS participants in the period between June 1, 1993, and June 30, 1994. Because it was of importance to interview employers with substantive experience in working with JOBS participants, randomization in this selection process was viewed as inappropriate.

The third group of subjects, Group C, consisted of 54 community college administrators drawn from a nationwide pool of respondents to a previous study conducted by Bliss (1994). Each of these potential respondents had previously been identified by Bliss (1994) as having experience with JOBS programs.

SURVEY INSTRUMENTS/DATA COLLECTION

Included in this thesis as Appendix A-B-C are copies of the three survey instruments, designed by the researcher and based upon the review of literature, employed in the present study. Survey A is addressed to the JOBS participants, Survey B to the local area employers, and Survey C to community college administrators.

In order to survey the JOBS participants in Group A, telephone interviews were employed. The instrument developed to assess the experiences and needs of these respondents included items capturing basic demographic information (i.e., age, marital status, number of children, education, ethnicity) and services received from the Mount Hood Community College Steps to Success program. Section II of the instrument sought information regarding the assistance profile of the respondents. This included such items as number of years on AFDC (known as ADC in Oregon) and number of times applying for ADC, age when ADC began, current assistance levels (cash, food stamps, medical card, transportation, and child care subsidies), and services either offered by or received from the Mount Hood Community College Steps to Success program. Section III focused on general employment data, including such items as current job title or classification, length of employment, benefit levels, hours worked, previous work experience, and utilization of earned income tax credit. Section IV focused on attitudes: Eleven statements requiring Likert-style numerical responses indicating level of agreement were presented, as were four open-ended questions soliciting comments from respondents. A Likert scale consists of a series of statements which relate to an individual's attitude toward a single subject (Triandis, 1981). Individuals are instructed to indicate the extent to which they endorse each statement. Response options are strongly agree (1), somewhat agree (2), unsure (3), somewhat disagree

(4), and strongly disagree (5). This method attempts to capture both the range of attitudes reported by subjects and the general, sample-wide attitudes of those respondents.

The second survey, directed to area employers, consisted of 15 items. Information was requested regarding the type of business, total number of employees and entry level employees, average entry level hourly wages, and recruitment activities. Respondents were asked to identify five characteristics of ideal and successful entry level employees, along with five issues or problems that inhibit the success of entry level workers. Respondents were asked to identify specific employee assistance programs offered by their organization and, in the absence of such services, their perception of the most beneficial services. A total of five items were presented that required a Likert-style numerical response indicative of level of agreement; these items were designed to facilitate correlation between JOBS participants' responses and those of employers. Again, telephone interviews were used to collect these data from Group B subjects.

Group C subjects consisted of community college administrators with JOBS training program experience. Letters identifying the researcher and the purpose of the study were mailed to these potential respondents, along with a copy of the Community College JOBS Administrator Survey. This instrument solicited basic information from respondents, including name of college, environmental setting, enrollment data, total number of JOBS participants, level of JOBS funding, identification of post-employment services for JOBS participants, data regarding recidivism among JOBS graduates, reasons for recidivism, and assessment of services that could prevent recidivism. Five statements requiring a numerical Likert-style response indicative of level of agreement were included to facilitate correlation with Groups A and B.

As previously noted, copies of each of the three survey instruments, along with either oral scripts identifying the researcher and the purpose of the study or, in the case of Group

C (community college administrators), a cover letter stating the purpose and nature of the project, are contained in the Appendices. To facilitate confidentiality and autonomy, the names of all respondents in each of the three groups were not recorded; each completed instrument was assigned a code number.

DATA ANALYSIS

While the study was empirical in nature and generated a substantial body of data, sophisticated data analysis techniques such as analysis of variance or measures of central tendency were not appropriate because of the nature of the data themselves. The basic statistical procedures of computing the average, the mean, and the percentage were utilized. In all cases where subjects' responses consisted of data lending themselves to computation of averages (number of years employed, number of entry level employees), this basic statistical procedure was completed. For the items on each of the three survey instruments that required Likert-style numerical rankings, average scores for each group were also computed. Open-ended questions and items calling for a listing of several responses were tabulated by creating lists of specific responses and collapsing those responses into categories.

The data generated by the study are presented in Chapter IV with tables visually depicting the data as appropriate. Chapter V contains the findings and conclusions of this researcher with a discussion of the results, implications of the data, and recommendations for the development of a model post-employment services program and future research possibilities.

CHAPTER IV

SURVEY RESULTS

INTRODUCTION

This chapter of the thesis presents the results of the three surveys of: (a) Mount Hood Community College JOBS participants, (b) employers who have hired JOBS graduates, and (c) community college Job Opportunities and Basic Skills (JOBS) program administrators. Tables presenting the data are included as indicated. The first section of this chapter describes the results of the JOBS participants' survey. The second section details the results of the survey of employers. The final section of results presents the survey responses of community college JOBS program administrators. Chapter V will analyze these findings with respect to the key themes in the literature as outlined in Chapter II and will provide answers to the research questions listed in Chapters I and III.

JOBS PARTICIPANTS' RESPONSES

Initially, a computer run of all graduates of Mount Hood Community College's Steps to Success Program between January 1 and June 30 of 1994 was obtained to serve as the population pool for this study. A total of 161 potential subjects was identified in this manner. Using the *n*th number randomization technique, and selecting every third individual on this listing, a total of 53 subjects were initially selected to participate in the study. Of those initial 53 subjects, only 29 could be contacted or agreed to participate. Using the remaining 108 names of potential subjects, and again employing the *n*th number selection technique, additional subjects were contacted until a total of 50 JOBS graduates were identified.

Among the problems encountered in constructing the sample of JOBS graduates were the following: (a) three potential subjects in the sample declined to participate in the study; (b) one subject agreed to participate, but because of language barriers could not be interviewed adequately by the researcher; (c) several potential participants identified in the initial selection process could not be reached by phone.

Table 1 presents a demographic profile of the JOBS participants involved in this study. The sample was comprised of 49 females and 1 male. It is interesting to note that, although 100% of the sample had at one time been married, 90% were currently single heads of households raising children on their own. The average number of children in the sample was 1.84. The number of children ranged from one to five. This is important, as it contradicts the public perception as identified by Peterson and Rom (1990) that individuals on welfare have more children so they can collect additional welfare benefits.

On the surface, the sample appears to be well educated with 90% reporting as least a high school degree or equivalent. However, it should be noted that the vast majority of individuals reporting some college (34%) took college courses as part of their JOBS or Steps to Success Program. Similarly, two of the three individuals reporting college degrees earned those two year degrees while in the Steps to Success Program. This study points to the community college as being an effective provider of JOBS services if the goal is to increase the educational attainment of JOBS participants.

The second section of the JOBS participants survey sought data that would enable the development of a general assistance profile of the sample. Table 2 depicts that information.

The average age of the sample when they first received welfare was almost 24 years old. The ages ranged from a low of 16 years to a high of 42 years. Thus, this sample did

TABLE 1
 DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF JOBS PARTICIPANTS
 (N = 50)

	Number	Percent
Female	49	98
Male	1	2
Average Age	29.4	
Average Number of Children	1.84	
Marital Status:		
Married	5	10
Divorced	15	30
Separated	29	58
Other	1	2
Education:		
Some High School	5	10
High School Diploma	12	24
GED	13	26
Some College	17	34
College Degree	3	6
Ethnicity:		
Caucasian	39	78
African American	6	12
Asian American	1	2
Native American/Alaskan	2	4
Hispanic American	0	0
Other (Hawaiian & Kenyan)	2	4

did not, as would be expected (Elwood, 1986), demonstrate a high level of births to young, unwed teenage mothers.

Elwood (1986) has also stated that nationally the average length of time an AFDC family remains on assistance is about 2 years. The average length of time on assistance in this study sample was 3.79 years. Elwood (1986) also reports that 25% of the national

TABLE 2
ASSISTANCE PROFILE OF JOBS PARTICIPANTS
(*N* = 50)

	Number	Percent
Number of Years AFDC (average)	3.79	
Number of Times Applying for AFDC (average)	2.91	
Age First Received AFDC (Average)	23.58	
Currently Receiving:		
Cash Assistance	9	18
Food Stamps	25	50
Medical Aid	25	50
Transportation Aid	6	12
Child Care Aid	16	32

caseload remain in the system for ten or more years. This was not the case in this sample as only one individual reported being on assistance longer than 10 years. This can probably be explained by the fact that, because of budgetary constraints, only about 25% of the AFDC population is currently being served in a JOBS program (Offner, 1992). Therefore, it makes sense that individuals who are more job ready and less disadvantaged would be served first.

Only eight individuals (16%) are no longer working and have had to go back on cash assistance (AFDC). This demonstrates a highly successful welfare-to-work transition among this sample. However, it is critical to note that fully one-half (50%) of the sample are still receiving food stamps and medical assistance. This, again, documents how difficult it is for single female heads of households to become totally economically self-sufficient.

Approximately one-third of sample participants receives assistance in paying for or obtaining child care while at work. The literature tends to stress the significance of appropriate and consistent child care as perhaps the most significant barrier to continued

employment among this population. The literature also highlights the need for continued assistance in this area (Hamilton, 1993).

The third section in this survey sought general employment data that would facilitate the creation of a profile of the work situation of the sample and its members. The results indicate that over three-fourths (78%) of the subjects are currently working full-time. Two individuals (4%) are working part-time and nine (28%) are not working at all. Of the nine subjects not working, eight (16%) had returned to AFDC. Two subjects returned to assistance because of pregnancy, three were injured on or off the job, two were laid off due to business fluctuations, and one subject was married and left work to care for her children full-time while the family was supported by the spouse. One subject did not provide any explanation for the return to assistance.

Eighty-two percent of the total sample were still working. The average time on the job was 8.98 months. Again, it should be noted that of the 41 subjects (82%) still working (39 full-time), only 16 are totally independent of all types of public assistance in the form of cash or other subsidies. This demonstrates the inherent difficulties in the welfare-to-work transition and suggests that the relatively low wages paid to these workers are not adequate to meet the needs of their families. When the average hourly wage was computed for the working respondents, an average wage of \$7.70 per hour was determined. However, wages ranged from a low of \$3.75 PER hour (self-employed) to a high of \$14.50 per hour.

Of the 41 subjects reporting current employment, 54% were receiving some type of insurance benefits through their employer. Thirty percent of the working subjects have jobs which do not provide for paid sick days, a condition of both part-time and hourly-paid employment that can be detrimental to the continued employment of low-income single parents. Paid vacation time was claimed by 64% of the working subjects.

Over half (56%) of the sample participants reported utilizing the Earned Income Credit available to them, 28% stated they did not use this tax advantage, and 16% reported that this was not applicable (due to a return to assistance). This is significant as it demonstrates that a large number of individuals are unaware of the financial advantages of utilizing the Earned Income Tax Credit. This is an important tool in helping working individuals move beyond the poverty level. It suggests that a key element of post employment services should be financial counseling to ensure that individuals understand how to access all the financial resources available to them.

The respondents were asked to identify the specific services they received from the Mount Hood Community College Steps to Success program. The subjects reported a wide range of services received. Those participants who were initially assessed as reasonably job ready were provided with one week of Lifeskills and one week of Job Club. Lifeskills is a 25-hour class which focuses on personal development, motivation, self-esteem building, and career assessment. Job Club is a 32-hour class which focuses on the basic elements of job search. These include such things as the hidden job market, resume and cover letter preparation, interviewing techniques, and job retention skills. These classes are followed by assisted job search until placement. This final component includes structured activities such as networking sessions and utilizing the resources available through the resource center. The resource center includes such things as computers, fax machine, photocopier, phone bank, professional staff assistance, job leads and referrals provided by a marketing staff, and access to an on-site state employment department liaison.

Participants assessed as not job ready receive longer term services. These services include the following: (a) over 100 hours of career and life planning instruction, (b) Adult Basic Education classes, (c) professional and technical training, (d) volunteer work experience, (e) individual and group counseling, and (f) job placement services. It is

interesting to note that, of the eight individuals who were no longer working, only one received longer term education and training services from the Steps to Success Program.

The fourth section of the survey used the Likert method of measuring attitudes. Sample members were asked to respond to 12 statements. The numerical response for each of these items was computed and is presented in Table 3 by category.

TABLE 3
JOBS PARTICIPANTS ATTITUDINAL STATEMENTS
(*N* = 50)

	Mean Response
Program assists transition (Steps to Success)	1.54
Services adequate to needs (Steps to Success)	1.64
Adequately prepared for job (Steps to Success)	1.52
Working easier than expected	1.96
Like present job	1.41
Coworkers friendly/supportive	1.33
Supervisors helpful/supportive	1.63
Supervisors responsive	1.68
Family/children supportive	1.71
Life improved after work	1.33
Increased self-worth since employed	1.11
Children happy about work	2.30

Given that a numerical response of 1 indicates strong agreement and of 2 that the respondent somewhat agrees with the statement, these data indicate a generally positive attitude about work, work site, and at-home interpersonal relationships, self-image, and a sense that working is related to overall improvements in life. Though few variations of any

importance can be identified in the responses to these statements, it is interesting that while respondents averaged a response of 1.71 to the statement that "my family and children have been supportive in my new position," they also averaged a response of 2.3 with respect to the statement "my children are happy with my being at work. "This suggests that the welfare-to-work transition may be as demanding and difficult for young children as it is for their parents.

The final section of the survey directed to this group of subjects offered an opportunity for open-ended responses. The first of these items sought information from the subjects regarding the type of problems they encountered in beginning to work. The most frequently cited problem identified difficulties with respect to child care (18 mentions, or 36% of the subjects). The second most often listed problem was the difficulty of making ends meet with low wages (12, or 24%). Five subjects (10%) identified both adjustment to the work routine or unpredictable hours associated with shift work as problematic. Four subjects stated that transportation was a difficulty, while three subjects identified fear of work, lack of education and training, unhappiness of children, and lack of child support from father as creating difficulties. Either one or two subjects stated that unsupportive significant others, lack of work experience, inappropriate clothing, problems at home or work, low self-esteem, and difficulties with working conditions and lack of necessary work hours were problems.

When asked to identify the ways in which they resolved these problems, the subjects almost universally failed to identify specific coping mechanisms. Respondents tended to just "struggle through" difficulties. An evaluation of these data could mean that, even after they enter the work place, most participants continue to feel socially isolated and do not perceive community resources as being available to them. This would suggest that post-employment

services, which include supportive counseling and information and referral services, would be helpful.

Interestingly, more than one-half of the subjects indicated that they and their children had gradually adapted to new life situations and those who appear to have been most adept at making the welfare-to-work transition stated that they developed a network of supportive family members and friends who assisted with such concerns as child care. Again, post employment services such as counseling might allow for a smoother transition into the work place.

Other subjects indicated that as they gained work experience and received pay and benefit improvements, along with increased self-confidence and assurance, the problems initially encountered in working were diminished. Over one-half (54%) of the respondents stated that the transition process could be better facilitated by increased supportive services in such areas as:

- Child care assistance
- Medical assistance
- Transportation assistance
- Counseling
- Clothing assistance
- Employer advocacy

This kind of evaluative statement from JOBS participants substantiates the need and importance of continuing to provide post employment services.

The final item in this section of the survey asked respondents to identify current assistance needs. Over one-half of the subjects indicated that additional vocational training and/or education would be beneficial. Job-specific skills, such as data processing, material

handling, and equipment management (e.g., forklift operation) were noted as being of value. Other subjects indicated that assistance in obtaining the financial and other assistance needed to obtain an Associates' or Bachelors' degree would be beneficial.

This suggests that, as welfare recipients move into the labor market, they, like other workers, see the need for continued training and education. Helping to facilitate the acquisition of such education should be a critical element in the design of a post employment services program.

EMPLOYER SURVEY

The second component of the research was addressed to the 25 employers who had hired the most Mount Hood Community College Steps to Success students between July 1, 1993, and June 30, 1994. These employers were identified by the researcher from program records and interviewed by telephone.

All of the employers except for two were in the private sector. The types of businesses ranged from small retail stores with 50 employees to medical care providers with between 50 and 7,000 employees to insurance agencies and banks with 350 to 12,000 employees. The average number of employees of the 25 participating businesses was 1,873 individuals. It should be noted that this average is of no meaningful value in profiling companies employing entry level workers in this area because of the enormous diversity in the areas of type of business or industry and total number of employees. Similarly, though an average of 345 total entry level employees were reported by these respondents, this figure is also directly related to the overall nature of the business and its size.

More important than company size is the fact that the average entry level hourly wage paid by these employers is \$6.04 per hour. Wages ranged from a reported low of \$4.75 per hour for the hotel business to a high of \$8.36 per hour for county government workers.

When asked how entry level workers are recruited, the responses in Table 4 indicate that employers utilize multiple sources to recruit entry-level workers. Other recruitment sources consisted of word-of-mouth referrals, walk-ins, internal sources, other types of employment agencies, television advertisements, and job hotlines. It is interesting to note that most employers utilize a range of recruiting methods. This documents that finding suitable entry level employees is not an easy process. The fact that almost half of the sample regularly recruits entry level employees from community colleges demonstrates the important role that these colleges play in work force development.

TABLE 4
EMPLOYER ENTRY LEVEL RECRUITMENT METHODS
(*N* = 25)

	Number	Percent
Newspaper advertisements	19	76
State Employment Department	18	72
Community College Placement Offices	11	44
Social Service Agencies	9	36
Other	18	72

Respondents were asked to identify the five characteristics of a successful entry level worker. Table 5 highlights those characteristics that received four or more responses:

It is clear from these data that for entry level employees, this sample of employers is not demanding a high level of education and training or prior work experience. Rather, they are primarily looking for individuals who are dependable and present a clean and neat appearance. Dependability can be a problem for welfare recipients. The literature has

documented that problems with child care and unreliable transportation can cause absenteeism among individuals attempting to make the welfare-to-work transition.

TABLE 5

EMPLOYER DESIRABLE ENTRY LEVEL WORKER CHARACTERISTICS
(*N* = 25; 4 or more responses from employers)

	Number	Percent
Dependable (Attendance/Punctuality)	17	64
Good Appearance	13	52
Customer Service-Oriented	8	32
Good Attitude	7	28
Solid Basic Skills	6	24
Prior Work Experience	5	20
Flexibility	5	20
Willing/able to Learn	5	20
Team Player	4	16
Self-Directed/Motivated	4	16
Enthusiasm	4	16

When asked to identify five issues or problems that most directly prevent entry level employees from being successful, the respondents again provided a wide variety of responses. Poor basic skills, insubordination, lack of job knowledge, skills and understanding, an inability to maintain an adequate work load, and inappropriate behavior all received one mention. Personal conflicts, poor work ethics, poor appearance, and transportation problems were noted twice as problematic. Three respondents each indicated that unwillingness to work, dishonesty, poor communication skills, poor customer service, and poor job performance were problems among entry level workers.

It is interesting that the most often identified trait desired among entry level workers — dependability with respect to attendance and punctuality — was also identified as the problem most often impacting negatively upon the success of these workers. Again, it is important that the majority of problems reported as impacting worker success relate to personal and social skills. Many employers (44%) report poor attitude as a major problem.

TABLE 6
PROBLEMS IMPACTING ON ENTRY LEVEL WORKERS SUCCESS
(*N* = 50)

	Number	Percent
Poor Attendance/Lateness	23	81.2
Poor Attitude	12	44
Unable/Unwilling to Learn Job	5	20
Personal Problems	4	16
Lack of Training/Experience	4	16
Lack of Motivation	4	16
Inflexible	4	16

It should be remembered that this is the employer's perception. It is impossible to know whether that perception is real or the result of misunderstandings, cultural differences, or different expectations. These data demonstrate that both pre- and post-employment services should be focused on educating individuals about the rules and expectations of the work place.

Employers were asked what services, if any, they offered to troubled or problematic employees. The entire sample, 100% or 25 respondents, stated they provide job training to all new workers. Eighty-four percent of employers also stated they offer individual

counseling to workers, while 41% provide financial counseling and 76% offer counseling referrals. In addition, 80% of employers offer grievance remediation and 41% offer educational benefits. Twenty-eight percent stated they offer health and fitness programs, and only one out of four (24%) offer day care assistance. This is important in light of the fact that for the workers surveyed in this study, lack of adequate child care is the most often cited problem negatively impacting upon the welfare-to-work transition process.

A majority (64%) of the employer respondents indicated that these types of services would be valuable to their firm and their employees. One-third stated that such services would not be beneficial to their entry level employees. When probed as to what types of services would benefit entry level workers, 44% stated that child care would be most beneficial, and 20% of the respondents indicated that both counseling and education subsidies would be valuable. Financial counseling, health and fitness programming, and grievance remediation were regarded as less vital.

These employer respondents were asked to employ a Likert-type rating scale to provide responses to five statements. With a rating of 1 indicating strong agreement and 5 strong disagreement, respondents provided a profile of their attitudes toward several of the key issues identified in the literature as impacting upon entry level workers in general and former welfare recipients in particular. When asked to respond to the statement "Many entry level workers would/could benefit from supportive services during the first weeks and months of working," the average score was 1.82.

When asked to indicate agreement with "Steps to Success offers valuable services from which entry level workers could benefit," an average score of 1.76 was computed, again indicating agreement.

Employers also responded to the following statement: "For new entry level workers, problems and issues unrelated to work itself often inhibit employment success." An average score of 1.62, indicating generally high agreement, was obtained.

The response to item 14, "For new entry level workers, there are often problems or issues in the work place that inhibit employment success," was an average score of 2.66. Given that a score of 3 was presented as indicative of uncertainty, it appears that these employers did not, on the whole, have clear ideas as to the validity of this statement. This is particularly interesting because they did indicate a higher level of agreement with the idea that personal, non-work-related issues impact negatively upon entry level workers. In other words, employers tend to see the problems as originating with the individual, not the work place.

The final statement, "Recognizing these problems and issues, and providing supportive services, can facilitate the success of entry level workers with respect to maintaining employment," received an average score of 1.62. This indicates a significant level of agreement with the concept expressed in the statement. Given that these employers appear, according to their own reports, to provide substantive supportive services to their employees, this finding is not surprising.

Finally, it should be noted that the employers surveyed in this study are almost all in either the service or retail industries. This gives credence to their expressed concern with such issues as the personal appearance, service orientation, and attitudes of their staff members. In addition, because of the broad disparity in the number of employees maintained by these employers, it is important to recognize that not all employers participating in the study possess the internal resources needed to offer employee assistance programs. Such programs are generally expensive to maintain and require specialized personnel. Smaller firms lack the capacity to provide this type of assistance, and may

therefore tend to dismiss potentially valuable entry level workers who experience difficulties in adapting to the work environment and its requirements.

COMMUNITY COLLEGE ADMINISTRATOR SURVEY

The third and final component of the study was a survey of community college JOBS program administrators identified in the national study of community college involvement in the JOBS program by Bliss (1994). A total of 54 surveys were sent to JOBS program administrators identified by Bliss (1994). Of that total, 27 (50%) were completed and returned. Three of those responses were eliminated from the final data analysis because they were incomplete. The respondents were either no longer involved in JOBS programming or not involved in the job search and employment phase of the program and could not, therefore, respond to retention or post-employment services questions. The total number of completed responses in this phase of the research, therefore, consists of 24 questionnaires. Unlike the first two surveys, this survey was conducted by mail rather than by telephone.

Of the total, 13 colleges (54%) described themselves as rural. Five (20%) described themselves as urban, four (16%) as suburban, and two as mixed with respect to setting.

The average enrollment (full-time equivalency) for these community colleges was 9,630 students. This figure is misleading, given that the actual full-time equivalency enrollment varies from a low of 433 students at Clatsop Community College in Astoria, Oregon, to 60,000 students at Miami, Florida's Miami Dade Community College. Several schools had enrollments of more than 18,000 students, while most had full time student bodies in the range of 2,000 to 5,000 students.

The participants also reported vastly different numbers of JOBS program participants. One school did not maintain a separate record of its JOBS participants, bringing the total number of responses in this category to 23 of a possible 24. JOBS participants served during

the time period July 1, 1993 to June 30, 1994, ranged in number from a low of 47 at Fort Scott Community College in Fort Scott, Kansas, to a high of 8,133 at Mount Hood Community College. The average number of JOBS participants reported by these respondents was 1,128. This number is misleading in that it does not reflect the relationship between JOBS participants and total college enrollment, college setting, or other variables.

Respondents were asked to identify their total budget for the on-site JOBS program. Four administrators reported "0 dollars" in this category; this is most probably due to the inclusion of the JOBS program funds in other budgetary line items or programs. Based upon 20 reported budgets, an average JOBS program budget of \$867,434.45 was calculated. This would indicate that the typical JOBS program spent an average of \$668.18 per program participant. Again, these figures are misleading in that the actual JOBS budgets reported by these respondents ranged from a low of \$4,500 total budget (reported by Kankakee Community College in Kankakee, Illinois, which served 420 participants) to a high of \$5,000,000 total budget reported by Mount Hood Community College (which served 8,133 JOBS participants). Little or no relationship between funding level and number served could be identified.

It is not possible to determine a typical profile of the community college based upon these data. The definition of such a college as presented in the first chapter of this study indicates that such variables as size, budget, and location are less significant than the mission, and curricular focus of such institutions. It is this focus which fostered the selection of the community college as a JOBS program site, regardless of student population demographics, setting, or JOBS program funding level.

When asked if they currently provide post-employment services to JOBS participants, 15 respondents (62%) indicated that they did, while nine (37%) stated that they did not offer such services. Responses to this question requires some analysis. The administrators

answering yes to this question indicated that follow-up services, as opposed to structured services, or additional JOBS programming were offered after employment. The post-employment services identified by the JOBS administrators included follow-up (42%), 90 day transitional support services such child care and medical assistance (16%), counseling (13%), support groups (8%), and employer follow-up (4%). In general, it can be concluded that except for JOBS program mandated follow-up transitional support services, virtually none of these programs offer additional structured post-employment services that could be beneficial in facilitating the welfare-to-work transition process for JOBS participants.

When asked to define the level of welfare recidivism (i.e., a return to assistance within one year of completing the JOBS program) among JOBS participants, 21 responses were analyzed. An average of 26% of all participants in these programs do experience recidivism. Respondents were then asked to identify the five primary reasons why JOBS participants either leave or lose their jobs and subsequently return to welfare dependency. Three categories of responses emerged from this question. The first can be summarized as consisting of personal and social issues. For example, among the reasons mentioned once or twice by respondents that fit this description were: housing difficulties, low self-esteem, re-emergence of bad debts, legal problems, inability to manage barriers outside of jobs, family mobility, repeat pregnancies, domestic abuse or violence, lack of a support system, and mental health difficulties.

In the category of *Work Related Issues* impacting upon job retention, respondents identified several issues of importance (1 to 3 respondents identifying the issue as important). These were lack of upward mobility, unrealistic expectations, poor work performance, dislike of job, racial discrimination, lack of problem-solving/critical thinking skills, and lack of training/work experience.

In the third category, *Support and Service Issues*, two substantive barriers to job retention (child care and low wage/benefit jobs) were identified as having enormous impact upon JOBS participants. These issues, and other issues receiving four or more listings by respondents, are presented below in Table 7.

TABLE 7
PROGRAM ADMINISTRATOR PERCEIVED PROBLEMS THAT
FOSTER RECIDIVISM AMONG JOBS GRADUATES
(*N* = 24)

	Number	Percent
Lack of Child Care	14	58
Low Wage/Low Benefit Jobs	14	58
Family Crisis/Problems	10	42
Transportation Problems	10	42
Lay-Off	6	25
Poor Interpersonal/Social Skills	6	25
Drug/Alcohol Problems	5	21
Lack of Work Ethic	5	21
Lack of Work Knowledge	5	21
Health Problems	4	17
Lack of Basic Skills	4	17

It is interesting to compare the above administrator responses to the employer responses regarding problems that impact on worker success. Employers reported what they saw (e.g., poor attendance/lateness) whereas JOBS administrators shared their knowledge about what caused the problems (e.g., child care difficulties).

JOBS administrators delineated a wide range of problems that they perceive cause JOBS participants to lose their jobs. This suggests that, if given the financial resources, JOBS administrators could design and implement post-employment services.

The respondents were asked to indicate whether or not they believed that post-employment services designed to address these specific issues and provided under the umbrella of the JOBS program could assist in reducing welfare recidivism. Twenty respondents (80%) indicated that they believed this to be the case, while only one respondent (4% of the sample) said such services would not effectively reduce recidivism. Three respondents (13%) indicated that they were not sure what effect would be realized.

JOBS administrators were queried in this survey as to what specific post-employment services they would offer if they were to be charged with designing a post-employment service program. The development of support groups and the provision of child care services led the list of services to be provided. Table 8 is a presentation of all the responses.

Only 21% of the administrators listed emergency cash assistance as a desirable benefit, even though it was the highest need reported by the participants. It is clear that administrators perceive that ongoing contact with former JOBS participants via support groups, counseling or case management would be beneficial.

The final section of the community college administrators' survey presented five statements to which a Likert-type numerical rating was assigned. As in the previous two surveys, a score of 1 indicated a strong agreement, while a score of 5 indicated an equally strong level of disagreement.

When asked to indicate their attitude toward the idea that post-employment services for JOBS participants would facilitate maintenance of employment, an average score of 1.41 was obtained. This is indicative of a high level of agreement with this statement. Similarly,

TABLE 8

PROGRAM ADMINISTRATOR PERCEIVED DESIRABLE
JOBS POST-EMPLOYMENT SERVICES
(*N* = 24)

	Number	Percent
Support Groups/Workshops	15	62.5
Child Care Services	13	54.2
Counseling Services	11	45.8
Education/Training	11	45.8
Case Management	7	29.2
Emergency Cash Aid	5	20.8
Employer Intervention	5	20.8
Mentoring	2	8.3
Career Counseling/Job Placement	2	8.3

when asked to indicate whether JOBS participants encounter family and/or work place issues and problems that negatively impact upon continued employment, an average score of 1.04 was obtained. This demonstrates a program-wide recognition of the difficulties inherent in the welfare-to-work transition and near-perfect agreement with the statement itself.

One item in this section of the survey asked community college JOBS administrators to indicate level of agreement with respect to the following statement: "Welfare recidivism rates, after JOBS participation, could be reduced through the provision of additional, post-employment supportive services." The average score for this item was 1.66, again indicative of a positive agreement with this statement. Survey participants also responded positively to the statement, "These services would be successful if placed under the JOBS program umbrella." Their composite ranking of 2.08 reflects some agreement.

The final item for program administrators stated, "Recidivism is a major reason many local employers are sometimes reluctant to hire JOBS participants." This statement was given an average score of 2.41, indicating only partial agreement among the respondents as to the validity of the statement and the attitude it identifies. At the same time, however, a score in this range also indicates that a substantial number of respondents do not agree that employers regard the possibility — and the actuality — of welfare recidivism as a reason for being hesitant to hire JOBS participants. Some respondents commented that other factors, including the problems they identified as impacting upon the job performance of JOBS participants, were probably more significant deterrents to the hiring of JOBS participants than the possibility of recidivism.

Table 9 summarizes these elements and highlights both the consensus and disparity between the documented literature and the respondents in this study. As illustrated, no new factors or elements emerged from this study that have not been discussed in the literature. This is to be expected, as many previous studies have examined the barriers inherent in the welfare-to-work transition.

Some differences exist among the three groups of survey respondents as to the key elements needing to be addressed in a post-employment services program. Participants perceive that their greatest need is for financial assistance to help them make ends meet each month. This is especially important in the first months after their AFDC grant closes. Thus, participants want post-employment services that would help them cope with the financial difficulties inherent in leaving welfare. Interestingly, participants do not relate interpersonal skills, social skills, and work ethic to successful employment, which is in great contrast to the opinions of the employer.

TABLE 9
SUMMARY TABLE:
CRITICAL ELEMENTS OF POST-EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

Elements	Literature Review	JOBS Participants	JOBS Employers	JOBS Administrators
Personal and Social Issues:				
Individual/family problems	X	X	X	X
Poor interpersonal/social skills	X		X	X
Drug/alcohol problems	X			X
Repeat pregnancies	X			X
Health problems	X	X		X
Work-Related Issues:				
Low wage/low benefit jobs	X	X		X
Shift work/unpredictable hours	X	X		
Lack of work ethic/attendance	X		X	X
Lack of basic skills/work experience	X	X	X	X
Lay off	X			X
Unfamiliarity with rules of work place	X		X	X
Support Services Issues:				
Child care	X	X	X	X
Transportation	X	X		X
Emergency Assistance	X	X		X

(X = Documented)

Employers focused more on personal and social issues. They would like to see post-employment services targeted at helping their employees solve individual and family problems that impact their work performance. It is interesting to note that employers do not see work place issues (e.g., low wages, no benefits, irregular hours) as barriers to long-term employment success.

JOBS administrators tend to take a more holistic approach to the situation. Administrators see the need for a comprehensive package of post-employment services which would address personal and social issues, as well as work-related issues and support services issues.

CONCLUSION

This chapter has presented the data generated by the empirical component of the research. Through narrative and tabular description of that data, it has summarized the central issues identified in the research as impacting upon job retention by JOBS participants, their employers, and community college JOBS program administrators.

Overall, there exists agreement among JOBS participants, employers, and program administrators as to the key elements involved in a successful, long-term transition into the labor market. These issues have also been documented in the literature review. It is these elements that must be incorporated into the design of a model post-employment services program to ensure a successful welfare-to-work transition.

Based upon this data analysis, a number of critical issues emerge that indicate the critical elements needed in a post-employment services program for JOBS participants at the community college. These issues will be discussed in Chapter V and linked to the central themes contained in the review of the literature contained in Chapter II. Finally, Chapter V will present a summary of the key critical elements identified in both the literature and via the empirical study and make recommendations as to what a post-employment services program should provide.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this study is to identify and evaluate the critical elements necessary to design a model post-employment services program for JOBS participants at an urban community college. Such a program would facilitate the welfare-to-work transition process and help overcome the structural barriers to the success of this transition process. In Chapter IV, we discussed the results of the three empirical surveys. This chapter of the study will analyze and discuss the implications of those results and compare them to the key themes identified in the research literature.

This chapter will present recommendations for the development of a model post-employment services program addressed to the specific needs of JOBS participants who have entered the work force. The critical elements of such a program, as identified in both the review of the literature and the empirical study, will be set forth in this model. Finally, this chapter will offer recommendations for further study and action.

IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY

Barriers to Successful Employment

Thomas (1993) stated that reform in the AFDC program is an essential ingredient in any comprehensive effort to break the poverty cycle in this country. Efforts to reform AFDC (or welfare as we know it) must incorporate a strong focus on facilitating the welfare-to-work transition process. While most analysts who have studied reform options would agree that this transition - from dependency to self-sufficiency - is critical to ending the

poverty cycle and moving families from the welfare rolls to the tax rolls, there is enormous disagreement as to how the reform process in this critical area should be undertaken. Perrucci and Knudsen (1983) have argued that traditional job placement and training efforts have failed either to significantly reduce the AFDC rolls or to foster an environment in which employment becomes more meaningful and viable as an alternative to dependency. Levitan (1985), in an early assessment of the Work Incentive Program (which attempted to move AFDC recipients into long-term, financially adequate work situations), strongly suggested that this effort was compromised by such factors as a lack of job opportunities, a failure on the part of welfare agencies to properly prepare AFDC recipients for the work force, and the inability of most entry level jobs to adequately meet the economic needs of a family.

Economic Benefits

In this context, the present study demonstrated that the typical JOBS participant in the Portland, Oregon, region earns an average of \$7.70 per hour after being on the job an average of 8 months. Of the subjects participating in the study, fully 50% who were working still required medical and food stamp assistance. Others required assistance in the areas of child care and/or transportation. This suggests that, in the beginning, the economic benefits of entry level employment are not substantially greater than the economic benefits of welfare dependency. Chilman (1992) has stated that a major problem confronting welfare administrators is not only the development of an adequate number of employment opportunities for entry level workers, but also the recognition that such work positions generally do not provide workers with substantial economic improvements that would, in and of themselves, motivate a worker to remain in the work force.

Insurance Benefits

In the present study, only 54% of the JOBS participants in the work force reported that they received medical insurance benefits as a part of their compensation. Medical care is critical to the maintenance of a stable, healthy family (Janda, Berry, & Goldman, 1987). Any effort to move large numbers of JOBS participants into the work force must incorporate provisions for continued medical care subsidies in those cases where employment does not offer this benefit. Additionally, given the overriding importance of nutrition as a key element in the development of children, such reform efforts must also incorporate provisions for continued food stamp assistance. Low paying jobs, such as those held by the majority of JOBS participants in the present study, must be supplemented by these forms of ongoing assistance if the welfare-to-work transition is to be successful.

Berg, Olson, and Conrad (1992) have stated that entry level jobs such as those generally available to former welfare recipients are invariably accompanied by low wages and a scarcity of necessary benefits, particularly medical insurance. Often the economic benefits of working at low wage and benefit levels are less than the economic benefits of continued dependency. Berlin and Sum (1988) and Kasarda (1989) have noted that over time, the loss of such welfare benefits as medical coverage and food stamps can reduce the ability of workers to remain employed.

For service and retail industry workers, and especially for workers who are employed on a part-time basis as were a number of the JOBS participants in the present study, working for a living may well represent an economic setback for the entire family. The loss of medical and nutritional benefits can be both emotionally and financially devastating to former AFDC families. It should be noted that the employers who participated in the present study tended to represent either retail or service firms. These firms traditionally pay low entry level wages and tend to hire part-time rather than full-time workers to avoid paying for costly

benefits (Kasada, 1989). Thus, the very nature of the type of employment available to JOBS participants and other AFDC recipients is itself a barrier to sustained employment and is associated with welfare recidivism. The research literature, which stresses the significance of this barrier, is validated by the present study, in which 24% of JOBS participants stated that low wages and lack of benefits made it extremely difficult to make ends meet. If the State of Oregon were not continuing to provide medical coverage and employment-related child care subsidies, many of the JOBS participants would be forced to return to welfare.

Child Care

Sustained employment for JOBS participants is often dependent upon the availability of affordable, safe, and reliable child care services (Polit & O'Hara, 1989). As a nation, America faces what can legitimately be described as a crisis in child care service provision. Rix (1989) has noted that women of all ages, educational and economic backgrounds, and ethnicities share a common problem with respect to working: when women with younger children who wish to work, either from necessity or choice, seek employment, that employment is conditional upon the availability and affordability of child care.

While it is true that women at the middle- and upper-levels of the economic spectrum have greater flexibility in obtaining child care services than less affluent or poor women, it is also true that the nation has experienced a definitive shortage of safe, accessible child care service programs (Rix, 1989). A study by the Washington State Institute for Public Policy (1993) further highlighted the importance of quality and affordable child care as a precondition of sustained employment. When the child(ren) are under school age, or are infants, the problem is further exacerbated. This issue, which is of importance to all female workers, is of particular importance to JOBS participants because all of them have children in the home.

The present study tends to support these findings in the literature. With an average of 1.84 children, 36% of the JOBS participants who responded to the survey stated that the most inhibiting factors mitigating against successful employment were problems associated with child care. More than one-half of these subjects indicated that the welfare-to-work transition process would be greatly facilitated by post-employment services that included child care assistance. Similarly, while only 24% of the employers participating in the study indicated that they offer some type of child care assistance to entry level workers, more than 64% indicated that having such services available to their employees would be mutually beneficial.

Social Barriers

Low wages and inadequate benefits (particularly with respect to medical care insurance) and a lack of adequate child care services may be regarded as the primary structural barriers to sustained employment. Other barriers identified in the literature as having a negative impact upon this goal are also described by the three groups of subjects in the present study. For example, Weiss (1992) and Berg, Olson and Conrad (1992) have stated that many AFDC recipients who attempt the welfare-to-work transition lack the social skills, ideological orientation, and values that are needed to participate in the work force. For individuals who live in poverty, social isolation and alienation from the work ethic of mainstream society is typical. While JOBS and other training and placement efforts incorporate some skill enhancement activities, the transition from dependency to self-sufficiency and sustained involvement in the work force is nonetheless extremely difficult.

Employers participating in the study indicated that among the most desirable characteristics of entry level workers were dependability, punctuality, good appearance, and an orientation toward customer service. Other qualities mentioned included a willingness

and ability to learn, motivation and self-direction, and enthusiasm. The lack of these and other related characteristics, according to these employers, is the primary barrier to continued employment for many entry level workers. Entry level workers, they stated, tended to experience problems at home that negatively impacted upon their job retention. Problems generated at work were, they believed, less important than those emerging from the personal and home life of the worker. This suggests that these employers believe that entry level workers often lack the basic attitudes and work ethic that is necessary for long-term employment and career advancement.

Community college administrators also stated that a number of problems affect the ability and the capacity of these workers to remain employed. Frequent family crises and problems, poor interpersonal and social skills, drug and alcohol problems, a lack of a work ethic or work knowledge, and health problems often combine to interfere with work. It should be noted that each of these issues has been associated with life in the poverty cycle and recognized as having a damaging effect upon efforts to end welfare dependency (Weiss, 1992).

Education and Training

Virtually all participants in the study, from JOBS graduates, to employers, to community college JOBS program administrators, stated to some degree that an additional barrier to continued long-term employment is a lack of job skills, education, and training. Webster, Hu and Weeks (1993) have stated that those former AFDC recipients who make the transition to self-sufficiency successfully are generally individuals who have pursued (or been assisted in pursuing) enhanced educational or professional training. Similarly, Herr and Halpern (1994) also stated that vocational and other training programs, secondary and post secondary education, and remedial education programming are all positively associated with

job retention and career development. Such programs have a positive impact in two vitally important areas. Not only do they enhance actual job-related skills and increase knowledge, but also they foster a sense of improved self-esteem and self-confidence and have a positive effect upon the behaviors of participants. Again, the present study tends to support the literature in this regard.

Among the JOBS participants responding to the survey, 50% stated that they possessed a GED or High School diploma, while 34% claimed some college and 6% possessed a college degree. Over one-half of these subjects stated that they believed that additional educational and training programs would be beneficial to them as they pursue employment and enhanced work opportunities. This indicates a recognition on the part of these workers of the importance of work-related education and training.

Employers participating in the study also noted that in addition to the on-the-job training they all provided to entry level employees, they believed that these workers could greatly benefit from additional, ongoing training and education. Similarly, more than 45% of the community college JOBS administrators also stated that continued education and training for JOBS participants was a critical element of job retention and the transition to self-sufficiency, and they recommended that this component be incorporated into a post-employment program. Thus the importance of ensuring that JOBS participants continue to pursue programming that will enhance their skills and their attractiveness to employers is affirmed by the present study.

Other Barriers

The economic insufficiency of most entry level positions is a major barrier to the transition process. More than one-half of the JOBS participants responding to this study stated that working would be made easier if assistance in the form of medical aid, food

stamps, and child care and transportation subsidies were made available to them for longer periods of time. Similarly, well over half (58%) of the community college JOBS administrators responding to the survey also stated that low wage and benefit jobs, such as those generally held by JOBS graduates, represented a major barrier to sustained employment for these workers. In addition, over 20% of these administrators suggested that a post-employment service program should include funds for emergency cash assistance which is often needed to enable new workers to continue working and to avoid welfare recidivism.

Other barriers to successful job retention can be described as linked to the conditions of poverty itself. The literature demonstrates that poverty creates a mental attitude as well as a set of physical conditions which exert enormous influence over individual attitudes, behaviors and mores (Webster, Hu, & Weeks, 1993). In this study, the lack of adequate support networks and systems, the need for counseling and supportive services, and the necessity of teaching basic life skills such as cash management, social skills, and the elements of personal grooming are all highlighted. While these issues may be of less importance than those described above, they should be considered when developing a post-employment services program for JOBS participants.

CRITICAL ELEMENTS OF A POST-EMPLOYMENT SERVICES PROGRAM

This study has generated data that facilitates the identification and evaluation of the critical elements needed to construct a model post-employment services program for JOBS participants, at Mount Hood Community College, that could further reduce welfare recidivism rates among this population. Based upon an evaluation of the information provided in the surveys and the research literature, there appear to be seven critical areas

of concern in constructing a model post-employment services program for JOBS participants.

These are as follows:

- Child Care Services (information and referral; access to financial assistance)
- Emergency Services Support Funds
- Ongoing Job Search/Placement Activities
- Counseling (family, individual, peer, career, financial)
- Education and Training Programs (workshops and short-term training)
- Training/Educational Funding Assistance
- Participant Tracking System

Child Care

Child care emerges as the most pressing issue to be considered in creating a post-employment services program. JOBS participants, even after initial employment, must be understood to still be living in poverty. The basic conditions of their lives do not change immediately upon employment. Employment does not automatically create a stable family or neighborhood environment, or foster the development of child care support systems. In point of fact, employment may create additional strains for former AFDC recipients, who must continue to struggle with the effects of poverty while simultaneously coming to grips with the problems and challenges of working. All participants in this study, particularly JOBS graduates and JOBS administrators, agree that a post-employment services model should include a child care component. Employers agree that having safe, accessible, affordable and reliable child care has a positive correlation with on-the-job success. Thus the model program should include a child care component. In addition to ensuring that individuals are accessing available child care subsidies, there is an ongoing need for providing child care information referral and helping newly employed JOBS participants build a child care

network. This network of family, friends, and providers is crucial in supplying care for sick children, respite care, and child care for unforeseen emergencies.

Emergency Services Support Fund

Because the welfare-to-work transition often is accompanied by short-term financial losses and deficits, and because entry level jobs have correspondingly low wages and limited benefits, the post-employment services program should include an Emergency Services Support Fund. These funds would supplement the already established transitional support services allowed under JOBS. During the first year of employment, often viewed as the critical period of transition (Hamilton, 1993), JOBS participants should have reasonable access to these funds in times of crisis.

Ongoing Job Search Placement Activities

It should be recognized that the vast majority of all former welfare recipients tend to lose their first job. Hamilton (1993) has noted that the transition from dependency to complete self-sufficiency is difficult and time consuming, and that any post-employment services program should include a component which facilitates easy access to ongoing job development and placement assistance. Aiding the individual in quickly finding and securing a second job can reduce welfare recidivism.

This study also documented the difficulty JOBS participants have in making the financial transition off welfare. The number one problem reported by participants was "making ends meet." It is extremely difficult to provide for a family, as a single parent with entry level wages. Transitional benefits (child care and medical) make it possible, but many families are always one financial crisis away from being forced to go back on welfare. An emergency services support fund which could be accessed for unforeseen bills such as car repairs or other work-related expenses would reduce recidivism. Additionally, knowing such

a fund was available would greatly reduce the emotional stress experienced by single parents as they struggle to provide for their children.

This study supports the need for ongoing placement assistance. Sixteen percent of the sample had lost their job and were back on welfare. A post-employment services program which could have quickly intervened and provided placement assistance may have prevented this recidivism. An additional 21 individuals surveyed had changed jobs since they left the Steps to Success Program. Although the reasons for the job changes were not specifically elicited in the survey, it is clear that job turnover is high among this sample. Ongoing placement assistance may have helped these individuals obtain better jobs.

Counseling

Counseling is another critical element that must be included in such a program. Two types of counseling are clearly indicated in both the literature and the responses of survey participants. The first type of counseling should focus on personal/familial issues such as drug and alcohol issues, parenting skills, and coping with work and family crises. The second component should focus on work-related issues such as coping with on-the-job stress, social skill development, and attitude change. Through a case management approach, JOBS graduates in the work force can be assisted in further developing the type of attributes, skills and abilities that facilitate success at work and at home. Linked to counseling services is the creation of network and peer support groups, job-related workshops, and other similar activities that also foster enhanced self-esteem, attitude and behavioral change, and job retention. These programs and services should be offered during evening and weekend hours to enable working participants to attend with child care provided.

Education and Training Programs

Webster, Hu, and Weeks (1993) have documented that former AFDC recipients who are actively involved in educational and training programs are less likely to return to welfare than other former recipients. Herr and Halpern (1994) also found that ongoing education had a positive effect upon the behaviors and attitudes of new workers.

In this study, over one-half of the participants surveyed indicated that additional vocational training and/or education would be beneficial. Several individuals expressed an interest in pursuing a two or four-year college degree. The study results indicated the many participants, now that they had been in the workplace, had a much better understanding of the benefits of increased education.

Therefore, ongoing skill and educational programming, which has been identified and evaluated as a key ingredient in long-term employment, should be included in a model post-employment services program. The community college, which has long been in the forefront of efforts to ensure that the American work force will have easy access to state-of-the-art vocational and career training, possesses the inherent capability of linking JOBS participants and other workers to these vocational and educational programs.

Training/Educational Funding Assistance

This study confirmed that the average JOBS graduate was able, with the education and training obtained through the JOBS program, to obtain an entry-level job paying about \$6.00 per hour. It is clear that many individuals are going to need additional education and training to move into higher paying jobs. Over one-half of the participants surveyed reported an interest in additional training. However, none of them had been able to accomplish this. This suggests that a post-employment services program which could provide career counseling and access to financial resources for continuing education would be utilized.

Using JOBS and community college scholarship funds to assist these workers in obtaining ongoing education and training constitutes a critical element of the program. Exploring the use of tuition reductions, employer-assisted funding, and the use of tuition and fee incentives linked to job retention should be considered in this context. Long-term career planning, which is also indicated in this model, can thereby include an emphasis upon the acquisition of necessary skills and knowledge through these program opportunities. The goal of this component of the program is to enable the entry level worker to achieve greater self-sufficiency through career advancement and, thereby, further reduce the possibility of welfare recidivism.

Participant Tracking System

Another critical element necessary in a post employment services program is a tracking system. Hamilton (1993) stated that this program component is key to several programmatic functions, including both program evaluation and the development of services that are responsive to clients' needs. In the present study, the need for a tracking system was highlighted by the fact that several successive attempts were necessary in order to construct a sample of 50 JOBS participants from the available pool of 161 individuals exiting from Mount Hood Community College JOBS program during a 6-month period. Further, a tracking system which fosters ongoing contact between program staff and clients can further other goals of the program. It can keep clients informed as to service options and opportunities while also providing support to those clients during a difficult transition period.

SOME PERSONAL OBSERVATIONS

In addition, though few JOBS participants, employers, or community college JOBS administrators focused on this issue, it is the experience of this researcher that a good post-

employment services program should ideally include a component which serves as an advocacy unit for employed clients. The literature indicates that many AFDC recipients, particularly those who have either been long-term recipients or whose familial history is one of welfare dependency, experience difficulties in adapting to the foreign environment of the mainstream work setting (Perrucci & Knudsen, 1983; Weiss, 1992; Wilson, 1987). Conflicts between the new worker and the organization are commonplace; the very culture of the work place and that of poverty are often incompatible and tend to clash. In cases where such conflicts occur, the JOBS program and its staff can serve as client advocates and mentors and aid in reducing the tensions caused by such conflicts. The regular program components of the JOBS effort focus on assisting clients in developing the basic attitudes necessary to mesh with the demands of the work place, and a post-employment services model should also recognize the existence of this problem and work to ameliorate its effects.

Finally, the post-employment services program should have built-in flexibility and the capacity to respond in a timely manner to emergent issues and needs. It should be easily accessible to potential participants and take a long-term approach to problem resolution and service orientation. The literature demonstrates that the problems of poverty have not, over time, been readily amenable to resolution. From the era of the New Deal through the Great Society and to the present day, public policy administrators have gradually come to the realization that there are no quick fixes for the welfare-to-work problem. Thus while demands for cost-effective welfare reform must be addressed in the immediate future, the reform efforts that are implemented must take into consideration the nature, severity, and extent of the problem being addressed. Carefully preparing AFDC recipients for successful, long-term participation in the permanent work force requires pre- and post-employment services such as those described in this chapter.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY AND ACTION

Recommendations for Further Study

1. Further studies, expanded with respect to such variables as the demographics of the sample, setting, type of employment, and type of services offered would be of value.
2. Studies which seek to determine if there are any relationships between such factors as client case levels, program costs and expenditures, specific JOBS program components, initial wage at place, and recidivism levels would be of importance to program planners.
3. Hamilton (1993) identified a number of salient considerations in developing and implementing a post-employment services program for JOBS participants, many of which have been discussed in this thesis. This study as well as that conducted by Hamilton (1993) strongly suggest that tracking of JOBS clients after initial employment is necessary in order to develop a better and more complete understanding of the issues that impact upon job retention and to structure service options for this population. A study focused on the creation and evaluation of such a tracking system is also indicated by the present study. The difficulties encountered in this project with respect to finding former JOBS participants demonstrates the need for such an effort.
4. Further study is needed addressing the question of how the various barriers to a successful welfare-to-work transition can be ameliorated. Some barriers cannot be addressed by the JOBS program, either in its present state or if a post-employment services component were to be added. For example, some of the JOBS respondents in this study indicated that they returned to welfare because of a new pregnancy; others indicated that family problems negatively impacted upon job retention. Community college JOBS administrators stated that many JOBS participants have extensive family and personal

problems (e.g., alcohol or drug abuse, domestic violence) which effect the ability of an individual to work or retain a job. JOBS programs can help in identifying the existence of such problems and make referrals to appropriate service agencies and institutions, but such issues are often beyond the expertise of JOBS program staff. Further study into how JOBS program staff can be effective in both identifying these problems and aiding clients in obtaining services should be of value.

Recommendations for Further Action

1. Existing JOBS programs should consider revising their curriculums to emphasize teaching more job retention skills prior to placement.
2. Current JOBS policy focuses on first time placements and does not allow clients access to further placement services. Given the relatively high rate of job turnover, it would seem desirable to allow clients continued access to job placement services.
3. Employers should consider examining their practices that most effect entry level workers (e.g., wage and benefits, work schedule, ongoing support).
4. State and federal policy makers and educators need to explore ways in which participants making the welfare to work transition can access further education and training.

SUMMARY TO THE STUDY

The goal of the present study was to identify and to evaluate the critical elements needed to create a model post-employment services program for JOBS participants at Mount Hood Community College. To achieve this goal, an extensive review of the relevant literature and a three-part empirical study were conducted. Based upon both components of the research, a descriptive listing of the critical elements needed in such a program was

developed and presented above. Recommendations for additional study and action were also generated and included in the study.

The mandate for welfare reform necessitates the creation of new and more effective strategies for aiding welfare recipients in making the welfare-to-work transition. This transition is extremely difficult and fraught with challenges. The JOBS program, created and maintained under the Family Support Act, offers perhaps the best vehicle for the development of a more comprehensive, focused, and coordinated effort to reduce the number of families dependent upon such public assistance programs as AFDC. JOBS programs, generally located in community colleges that have taken a lead role in preparing new generations of effective members of the work force, possess the inherent capacity for furthering welfare reform and fostering self-sufficiency among new members of the work force. This study has presented a detailed analysis of the critical elements that must be included in developing new, expanded, and more effective post-employment services for JOBS participants.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

PHONE SURVEY: JOBS PARTICIPANTS

ORAL SCRIPT FOR INFORMED CONSENT
OF PARTICIPANTS

Hello, my name is Nan Poppe and I am the Director of the Mt. Hood Community College Steps to Success Program. As part of a doctoral program at Oregon State University I am doing a research project relating to the job retention of Steps to Success participants. The purpose of my research is to gather information that will be used to design a post-employment services program for future Steps to Success participants.

Your name was randomly selected as a person who completed the Steps to Success program and went to work within the last year. As part of my project I would like to interview you and get your opinions and perceptions about your experiences at Steps to Success and going to work.

Your participation in this interview is voluntary and not participating will not affect your current or future AFS (Adult and Family Services) benefits in any way. The interview will take approximately 15 minutes. Your responses are confidential and your name will not be kept on file or referred to in any written report.

Are you willing to be interviewed?

PHONE SURVEY: JOBS PARTICIPANTS

The first questions we will ask you to answer are to provide basic background information on your personal situation, your involvement with welfare assistance, and your current and past work history.

I. DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

Age: _____

Marital Status: _____ (M/S/D/W)

of Children: _____

Ages of Children: _____

- Education: Some high school High school degree
 GED Some college
 College degree Other (specify) _____

Which best describes your ethnic identity?

- Caucasian African American
 Hispanic American Asian American
 American Indian/Alaskan Native Other (specify) _____

Steps to Success Services (list all that were received by respondent):

II. ASSISTANCE PROFILE

years ADC: _____

times applying for ADC: _____

Age at which first received ADC: _____

Current cash assistance: _____ (if yes, in \$/mo)

Current Food Stamps: _____ (if yes, in \$/mo)

Medical Card: Yes No

Transportation subsidy: _____ (if yes, in \$/mo)

Child care assistance: _____ (obtain type of service if day care provided and/or \$/mo subsidy)

Services offered/received from Steps to Success/AFS (check all that apply):

- Family Counseling
- Job Training
- Job Placement
- Parent Skill Training
- Housing Assistance
- Other (specify) _____

III. GENERAL EMPLOYMENT DATA

Current job title classification: _____ (specify work type if needed)

Wages: _____ (in \$/week or month)

Benefits: Insurance Yes No
 Sick Days Yes No
 Vacation Yes No

Hours at work/week: _____

Previous work experience (list other jobs held and time on job): _____

Are you utilizing the earned income tax credit? Yes No

If no, why not? _____

IV. ATTITUDINAL QUESTIONS

The following set of questions are designed to obtain information from you as to your feelings and attitudes about the Steps to Success Program, your job and work in general, and your ideas as to how this program can be made more beneficial to other individuals who will be involved in the program. Please give your opinion on each issue, rating the statement that will be presented with the following numbers:

- 1 = Strongly Agree
- 2 = Somewhat Agree
- 3 = Unsure
- 4 = Somewhat Disagree
- 5 = Strongly Disagree

- A. Steps to Success provided the assistance I needed to move from welfare to work.

- B. The services of Steps to Success were adequate for my needs.

- C. I feel that I am prepared for my job with respect to work-related skills.

- D. I find working easier than I expected.

- E. I like my present job.

- F. My coworkers are friendly and supportive.

- G. My supervisors are helpful and supportive.

- H. My supervisors are responsive to my personal needs and problems.

I. My family and children have been supportive of my new position.

J. My life has improved since I began working and left welfare.

K. I feel better about myself since I began to work.

L. My children are happy with my being at work.

Please give your own answers to the following questions when they are applicable to you personally and to your own work situation.

M. The problems I encountered in going in work were: _____

N. I resolved those problems by: _____

O. After beginning to work, I would have been helped by additional services from Steps to Success; those services are:

P. I would like further assistance or training with respect to: _____

APPENDIX B

PHONE SURVEY: EMPLOYER

ORAL SCRIPT FOR INFORMED CONSENT
OF EMPLOYERS

Hello, my name is Nan Poppe and I am the Director of the Mt. Hood Community College Steps to Success Program. As part of a doctoral program at Oregon State University I am doing a research project relating to the job retention of Steps to Success participants.

During the last year, your company hired a number of entry-level employees who completed the Steps to Success program. As part of my research, I would like to interview you regarding your perspectives on entry-level employees. The information obtained will be used to design a program for post-employment services aimed at increasing the job retention of Steps to Success participants.

The interview will take approximately 10 minutes. Your responses are confidential and your name or company's name will not be kept on file or referred to in any written report.

Are you willing to be interviewed?

PHONE SURVEY: EMPLOYER

1. Type of business: _____
2. Total number of employees: _____
3. Total number entry-level employees: _____
4. Average entry-level wage (hourly): _____
5. How do you recruit or find entry-level workers? (Check all that apply):
 - Newspaper ads
 - State employment agencies
 - Social service agencies
 - Community college employment office
 - Other
6. Please list five characteristics of an ideal and successful entry-level worker:
 - (1) _____
 - (2) _____
 - (3) _____
 - (4) _____
 - (5) _____
7. Please list five issues or problems that most directly prevent entry-level workers from being successful at your company:
 - (1) _____
 - (2) _____
 - (3) _____
 - (4) _____
 - (5) _____

8. Does your company offer all/any of the following employee assistance programs:
- Job Training Individual Counseling
- Financial Counseling Counseling Referrals
- Day Care Assistance Educational Benefits/Subsidies
- Grievance Remediation Health/Fitness Programs
9. If your company does not offer these types of services, would such services be beneficial to your entry level employees?
- Yes No
10. If yes, please list the types of services that you would regard as valuable.
-

Please use the following rating scale to respond to the following questions:

- 1 = Strongly Agree
 2 = Somewhat Agree
 3 = Unsure
 4 = Somewhat Disagree
 5 = Strongly Disagree

11. Many entry-level workers would/could benefit from supportive services during the first weeks and months of working.
- _____
12. Steps to Success offers valuable services from which entry-level workers could benefit.
- _____
13. For new entry-level workers, problems and issues unrelated to work itself often inhibit employment success.
- _____
14. For new entry-level workers, there are often problems or issues in the workplace that inhibit employment success.
- _____
15. Recognizing these problems and issues, and providing supportive services, can facilitate the success of new entry-level workers with respect to maintaining employment.
- _____

APPENDIX C

COMMUNITY COLLEGE JOBS
ADMINISTRATOR SURVEY

November 8, 1994

Community College Administrator
Street
City, State, Zip

Dear [Community College Administrator]:

My name is Nan Poppe and I am the Director of a JOBS program called Steps to Success at Mt. Hood Community College in Portland, Oregon. I am also working on a doctorate in Education at Oregon State University.

As part of my doctoral program, I am doing a research project concerning the job retention rate of JOBS participants served by community colleges. My research involves surveying former participants, employers, and community college JOBS administrators. The information I collect will be used to design a model post-employment services program for JOBS participants. The goal of such a program would be to reduce recidivism by continuing to provide services to our participants after they go to work.

Your name was given to me by Dr. Timm Bliss, Oklahoma State University, who recently conducted a national study on the involvement of community colleges in running JOBS programs. Your program was identified as a model JOBS program.

I would appreciate your completing the enclosed survey and mailing it back to me in the envelope provided. Your input and perspectives as a program administrator are critical to my study.

I appreciate how busy you are and thank you in advance for taking a few minutes to complete the survey.

Sincerely,

Nan Poppe, Director
Steps to Success Program
Mt. Hood Community College

COMMUNITY COLLEGE JOBS
ADMINISTRATOR SURVEY

I. Basis Information

1. Name of College: _____
2. College setting: Urban Suburban Rural
3. Full-Time Equivalency (FTE Student): _____
4. Total enrollment (including non-credit): _____
5. Total JOBS participants, FY 1993-94: _____
6. Approximate JOBS funds for FY 1993-94: _____
7. Do you now provide any post-employment services to JOBS participants?
 Yes No
8. If yes, please list those services:

9. Please estimate the percentage of participants in your program who obtain employment but return to welfare within a year of employment.

10. From your experience, please list the five major reasons why participants lose or quit their jobs and have to return to welfare.

11. Do you believe that, given available resources, post-employment services to JOBS participants would reduce recidivism?
 Yes No

12. If yes, please list the five major services you would offer.

II. Please use the following scale to respond to each of the statements listed below:

- 1 = Strongly Agree
2 = Somewhat Agree
3 = Unsure
4 = Somewhat Disagree
5 = Strongly Disagree

- A. Post-employment supportive services to JOBS participants would facilitate maintenance of employment.

- B. JOBS participants encounter family and/or workplace issues and problems that negatively impact upon continued employment.

- C. Welfare recidivism rates after JOBS participation could be reduced through the provision of additional, post-employment supportive services.

- D. These services would be successful if placed under the JOBS program umbrella.

- E. Recidivism is a major reason many local employers are sometimes reluctant or hesitant to hire JOBS participants.

Please use the balance of this page to add any comments you feel are important.