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## **Welfare Laws are Flawed and Hinder Self-Sufficiency: A Study of Transportation Issues**

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Welfare Laws are Flawed and Hinder Self-Sufficiency

A Study of Transportation Issues

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## Introduction

The Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 (PRWORA) shifted the emphasis of federal policy toward a "Work First" approach, making it more difficult for welfare recipients to pursue a college education. Minimum-wage policy changes have increased the benefits of moving from welfare to work somewhat.

The federal Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program was the centerpiece of the 1996 federal welfare reform legislation, the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act. The TANF legislation converted the majority of the funding for the previous individual entitlement program, Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC), to a block grant to states.

A sense of heightened concern about the transportation barriers welfare recipients faced was sparked with the passage of the (PRWO). With the PRWO's emphasis on reducing welfare rolls, the new legislation mandates state welfare agencies to establish programs to transition recipients into labor market or else risk dramatic increases in property. Access to transportation; either automobiles or public transit affect welfare recipients' ability to find and retain employment. To avoid financial penalties, each year states must place an increasing proportion of their caseload in work activities prescribed by the statute. Often when transportation problems can not be resolved the mothers are forced to quite school and remain on the welfare.

Prior to the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act, conventional wisdom states that it did not pay to move from welfare to work, according to Sheldon Danziger, (2002). Danziger posits economists emphasized a high marginal tax rate implicit in the Aid to Families with Dependent Children Program (AFDC). Rebecca Blank states that, "When a woman goes to work, her benefits decline rapidly as her earnings decrease. This means better income gains from employment are limited, since she loses close to a dollar in benefits for every dollar she gains from work" (1997, p. 146). Danziger states that sociologists emphasized the difficulties in coping with various barriers, caused by the transition from welfare to work.

#### Coping with Various Barriers

Without transportation, low income families and welfare recipients are stalled on their journey to self-sufficiency. For the poor, the biggest obstacle to getting and holding a job is often how to get there. The majority of them live in areas where there is public transportation only during peak commute hours, and few own cars. The hypothesis of paper is to determine: Is it possible for welfare recipients who are participating in work mandated assistance programs to achieve their educational goals with the transportation available to them? This paper examines how welfare reform now limits the time welfare recipients can collect benefits and places strong pressures on them to find employment. It reports the negative fallout from the work-first focus of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act which emphasizes a rapid transition to employment.

This paper also discusses various factors relating to the cost and accessibility to transportation for working people on welfare. These factors include the distance required to travel to most work locations, access to affordable, reliable transportation to obtain and sustain employment; and how unreliable transportation hampers regular attendance to work and school. It also discusses John Kain's spatial mismatch concept.

The primary data will be collected from questionnaire responses of individuals who have experience with one of the welfare to work programs in Solano County. The secondary data will be from various articles related to this subject.

After compiling the results of the questionnaires, the findings will be shared with the Deputy Director who agreed to distribute the questionnaires used in this study. Sharing this information will be to report either welfare recipients are finding adequate transportation and successfully completing their training programs or they need more financial assistance for transportation.

## Literature Review

There seems to be a vast amount of articles supporting the success of welfare to work programs in terms of reducing the welfare rolls. However, it is difficult to gather printed statistics illustrating whether or not welfare mothers are facing hardships with transportation to work. In an article on welfare reform laws, proponents of current welfare to work programs declared the program's success-and pointed a drop of 6.3 million cases in December 1999, down from 12.9 million when the law passed... However, critics say the booming economy helped reduce welfare rolls, while welfare reform has plunged many single mothers-90 percent of welfare parents receiving federal cash assistance deeper into poverty, (Mesce, 2000). In an article, a former welfare recipient, Woolsey, stated, "Those were all the support systems that I needed to keep my family together, and with that safety net we made it." She made that statement at an event sponsored by the Welfare Made a Difference National Campaign (Mesce, 2000). Woolsey represents Northern Californian's Marin and Sonoma counties in the House of Representatives, where she served since 1992.

Barbara Lee, Democrat-California, is another member of Congress who made the trip from welfare to the House of Representatives, earning a master's degree in social work along the way. She also said at the Welfare Made a Difference Campaign that the 1996 law, needed to be changed. "You can't just say we're ending welfare today, go to work tomorrow," said Rep. Barbara Lee, D.-California. "You've got to have that transition, you've got to provide support mechanisms for women" who need transportation, child care, housing, substance and alcohol abuse services, relief from

domestic violence, as well as education and job training opportunities," (Women's News, 2000).

In 1996 that support system was changed when Congress eliminated the welfare entitlement program that supported Woolsey thirty years earlier and replaced it with the temporary assistance program that require states to transition parents on welfare into jobs as quickly as possible. This 1996 welfare program requires recipients to work while receiving benefits, and sets two- year time limits on cash assistance.

Evelyn Blumenberg stated "transportation services are a significant component of a successful welfare to work program. It is essential to employment that these women travel to work and to the many other destinations such as day care centers, and schools". Across the country, welfare recipients report difficulties such as missed bus connections, broken down cars, long commutes, and limited transit service. Their likelihood of finding and holding employment is limited by not having access to cars. "Single-parent households comprise close to 70% of adults on welfare in the United States. If welfare-to-work programs are to be successful, they must address the particular transportation needs of these women." (Bloomberg, 2001). The debate over support for public transit versus private automobile ownership has focused mainly on the viability of public transportation systems in urban areas. Comparatively little is known about the link between access to public transportation and the ability of households to participate in the labor force or meet other needs. Only recently has much attention been given to the value of car ownership, prompted by welfare reform mandates that many low-income households enter the labor market. Studies in Los Angeles, Milwaukee, and several other urban areas support the conclusion that access



to a car is an important determinant of labor market outcomes (Taylor & Ong, 1995; Ong, 1996, 2002; Leete, Bania, & Coulton, 1999; Bania, Coulton, & Leete, 2000, Danziger et al., 2000; Raphael & Rice, 2000; Raphael & Stoll, 2001). Recent studies have examined the more complex travel needs of welfare mothers traveling to work and child care while maintaining other domestic responsibilities. A General Accounting Office report (1998) and Urban Institute data (2000) concluded that public transit was not likely to be able to meet the complex trip needs of many welfare mothers.

Blumenberg (2000) outlines the difficulties women encounter using public transportation, and indicates that it is generally not set up for the specific needs of women. Public transit stations and vehicles are not equipped to accommodate strollers, young children, or shopping carts. Flat fees are charged regardless of the length of the trip, and women commonly trip-chain, adding non-work stops to their commute while commuting shorter distances than men commute. Safety issues contribute to women feeling less comfortable using public transportation. Typically, a welfare family is a single mother in her twenties or thirties with two children. In most instances these single mothers do not have adequate transportation to transport them to child care and work locations in a reasonable amount of time.

Typically welfare participants are single parents, responsible for their travel, and their children. They are solely responsible for making more stops on their way to and from work, as well as returning home whenever there are family emergencies. A typical example of the problem is a woman who needs to take one child to day care and another to school, and then travel to the worksite. With a car, this is not necessarily difficult, although it may take a little time. Studies show shown that a very small

percentage of CalWorks participants have a car, so all the trips to day care, school, and then work must be on foot or by transit. Transit delays, or bad weather, are taking a sick child to a relative instead of day care may it even harder for the woman to reach her job on time. Due to this transit dependency, welfare recipients have more transportation difficulties and subsequently lower employment rates than those who own their own vehicles.

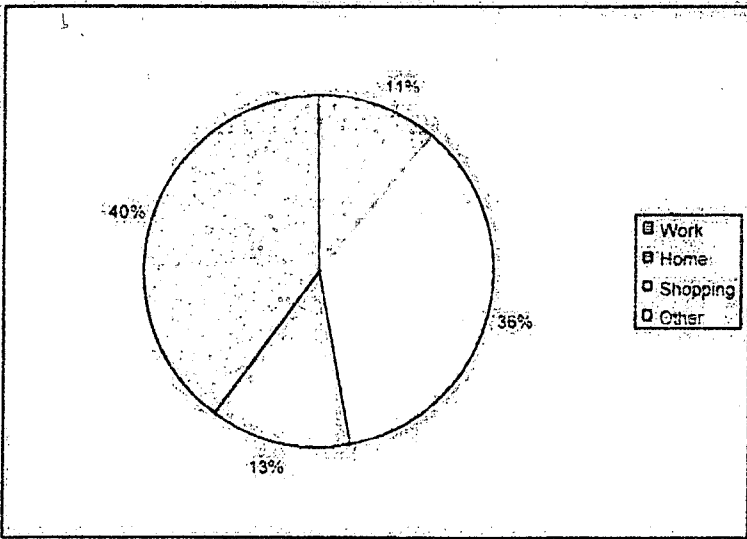
Data from a panel survey of single mothers, all of whom received welfare in 1997 was analyzed by Edin and Lein. They concluded that a higher work related transportation and child care cost were one reason wage-reliant mothers experience more material hardships, then welfare-reliant mothers. Also, working women in this study had higher child care and transportation costs than did welfare-reliant mothers. The majority of both groups of working mothers -86 percent of the wage reliant and 67% of combiners-reported work related transportation expenses that averaged \$91 and \$71 per month, respectively (Edin, 1996).

#### Linking Welfare Recipients to Job Locations

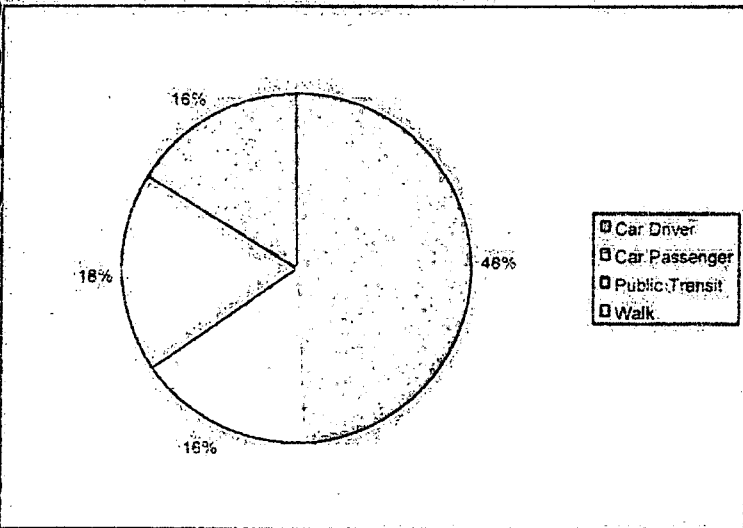
The locations of gainful employment and the residents of most welfare recipients add another dimensions to the transportation problem that make the provision of transportation for welfare recipients very challenging. This is due to the fact that there are (i) pockets of welfare recipients in the suburbs that now have to be linked to other suburban areas with job growth and (ii) pockets of welfare recipients in rural areas. On the employment side, while it is true that suburban areas have witnessed the highest levels of growth in jobs, entry-level jobs openings, for which

current welfare recipients are qualified, have been increasing in some urban areas in and near central business districts. Hence, provision of accessibility to welfare recipients in urban areas highlights a need for a region-wide transportation plan targeted at four linkages: city to suburb, suburb to suburb, suburb to city and city to city. Many low income employed mothers work nights or weekends, when transit service is either very limited or not available. At such times women typically experience high levels of fear for their personal safety and deserted transit stops on sparsely populated buses and trains.

The travel patterns of recipients are complex. They are made on the average slightly more than three trips a day. In addition to work trips, a typical recipient makes multiple daily trips to fulfill family and household obligations. Work trips account for only 11% of all trips. Nearly two-thirds (64 percent) of the trips were taken in private vehicles. Modal choice was highly correlated with whether or not a household processes a car. Among car, owners a large majority of their trips (83 percent) was by car, compared to only a third (35 percent) of the trips among those without car. Additionally, the job search process, a second group comprised of those employed and undertaking job search and/or job preparation activities, and a final group comprised of those working (Ong & Houston, 2001). These data are represented by the following illustrations: Graph1. Purpose of Trips Made by Welfare-to-Work Participants and, Graph2. Mode of Trips Made by Welfare-to-Work Participants.



Graph 1. Purpose of Trips Made by Welfare-to-Work Participants



Graph 2. Mode of Trips Made by Welfare-to-Work Participants

Welfare-to-work requirements impose substantial changes to recipient travel patterns, trip characteristics, and travel mode. Table 1 describes the trips by welfare-to-work activity: (1) a baseline group comprised of those not working and not engaged in

job search, (2) a second group comprised of those unemployed and undertaking job search, and/or job preparation activities, (3) a final group comprised of those working. Their study found employed recipients made more daily trips compared to the baseline group. Recipients in job search activities to experience the greatest travel burden. They made almost twice as many trips daily. The reason they have a higher travel burden is because the job search requirements of welfare to work programs mandate that participants complete several job applications per day.

Job searchers not only have the heaviest travel demand, but they were dependent on the least reliable and least flexible forms of transportation. In most cases, they were most likely than others to take public transit rather than private vehicles. Many recipients in the job search activities attempted to offset the heavy burden of travel by chaining their trips. This means, these recipients often combined travel to many destinations (e.g., child care and attendance two job search activities) in one trip. This was reported to be very difficult, particularly for those relying on public transit.

Working and job search activities often shift the time of day that recipients travel in addition to increasing the number of trips. Ong and Houston found that only a third of the baseline group initially left home during the morning peak hours, but three quarters of those engaged in job search left home at this time. Even though this proportion decreases after finding a job, approximately two thirds continue to leave home for work early in the morning.

Table 1. Trips, Characteristics by Welfare to Work Activity

	Unemployed, Not in Labor Force	Unemployed, Job-Search Day	Employed Working Day
Avg. # Of Trips per day	2.5	4.3	3.4
More than 5 trips per day	19%	38%	27%
Travel AM Peak Hours	33%	74%	65%
By car	56%	53%	68%
By public transit	16%	28%	20%
By walking	25%	18%	10%
Involved in Trip Chain	12%	26%	22%

Source: *Travel Patterns and Welfare to Work*, Paul Ong, & Douglas Houston, 2001

“As welfare recipients enter the work force, their travel patterns began to appear as those of other low income parents. This can be seen by comparing some of the above statistics on recipients”. Ong and Houston compared the statistics of recipients to comparable statistics on low income, single-parent respondents in the 1995 Nationwide Personal Transportation Survey (NPTS). They reported the average number of trips per day for a recipient is only slightly lower than that of other low income single-parents. “Work trips comprise only one tenth of all trips, while shopping and other purposes dominate for both populations”. The average commute distance for employment is about 7 miles for NPTS low income single parents. They found it difficult to determine the exact degree of convergence between the travel patterns of those two populations since the survey of welfare-to-work participants conducted in Los Angeles County in 1999-2000 and the NPTS was conducted nationwide in 1995, but they found available evidence of convergence compelling. They were not surprised by these findings since; the goal of welfare

reform has been to transform the welfare population into a working for population.

Ong & Houston concluded that there should be a convergence of transportation policies and programs that currently treat those on welfare and other working poor as disparate populations (Ong & Houston, 2001).

When Edin and Lein (1997) compared the material well-being of wage-reliant and welfare-reliant single mothers in the late 1980s and early 1990s, they concluded that it usually "did not pay" for welfare mothers to take a job. In their research, they also found modest financial gains among welfare recipients who became wage-reliant after the 1996 welfare reform. Using fall 1999 panel data from a random sample of single mothers who had received welfare they discovered that those who had moved from welfare to work were objectively and subjectively better off financially than those who remained welfare reliant. Working mothers had higher household incomes, lower poverty rates, experienced a similar level of material hardships, were less likely to engage in activities to make ends meet, and reported less difficulty living on their current incomes.

Several factors contributed to these differences in well-being. First, some combination of a tighter labor market, a higher minimum wage, a much increased EITC, increased medical insurance for children, and increased subsidies for child care made work pay more relative to cash assistance in the late 1990s than at the beginning of the decade. Second, a substantial portion of our respondents combined welfare and work. This reflects a recent policy shift, as many states increased the amount of earned income that is disregarded in the computation of welfare benefits. Women whose

earnings would have disqualified them from cash assistance a decade ago can now receive some welfare benefits and maintain Medicaid for themselves and their children.

Danziger's results are consistent with those of Edin and Lein and others in several respects. First, they confirm that many working mothers could not make ends meet on their paychecks alone; they continue to receive government assistance (e.g., TANF, Food Stamps, EITC) and/or to rely upon cash contributions from friends and family. Second, poverty remains high, even among the wage reliant; about half of the wage-reliant mothers reported experiencing at least two material hardships during the previous year; and about one-quarter of the wage reliant and one third of combiners reported receiving food, shelter or clothing from a charity.

The policies now in place have changed economic incentives so that they are in accord with the goals of PRWORA—i.e., on average, wage-reliant mothers and those combining work and welfare are financially better off than welfare-reliant mothers. Yet, insufficient policy attention has been paid to factors that may have prevented those who remained welfare-reliant about three years after the Act's implementation from making the transition to work. The new economic incentives and the increased pressure to leave the welfare rolls suggest that few welfare-reliant mothers are able to reject work and choose to stay on welfare. It seems more likely that many of them have problems, such as poor physical and/or mental health or lack of job skills, which prevent them from getting jobs even when unemployment rates are low (Danziger et al., 2000; Danziger, 2001).

Looking at TANF's reauthorization, welfare-reliant mothers in many states are at risk of losing their welfare benefits due to impending sanctions and/or time limits. And,



in many states, mothers combining work and welfare are also at risk of losing benefits due to time limits. Even though it now pays to move from welfare reliance to wage reliance, there remains a need for additional policy enhancements to make work pay enough so that a greater percentage of working mothers can escape poverty and afford medical insurance, as well as a need for enhanced policies to help welfare-reliant mothers move into regular jobs or into subsidized employment.

#### Net Monthly Income

Edin and Lein (1997) combined income from nine sources, and subtracted federal income and payroll taxes and transportation and child care expenses. According to their calculations, mean net monthly income is \$1,649 for wage-reliant mothers, \$1,205 for combiners, \$1,014 for welfare-reliant mothers, and \$1,193 for women neither working nor receiving welfare. Net monthly income excludes the estimated value of the EITC and state tax credits because most women receive them as an annual lump sum and not each month.

#### Statewide Initiatives

The California legislature allocated \$65 million to help community colleges in 1997 through 1998 to expand and redesign their programs to meet the new requirements are welfare reform. All colleges that wish to participate in file and it an application with fine funds available. Allowable usage of the funds included childcare; worked/study employment; job development and placement for students and graduates; curriculum development and redesign to emphasize shorter -- term programs; and coordination with welfare departments and other agencies and between programs and services for TANF recipients on campus.

Solano Community College

Program and scholarship opportunities are currently available for Solano College students. MESA/CCCP stands for Mathematics, Engineering, and Science Achievement (MESA)/California Community College Program (CCCP). The MESA/CCCP is a statewide academic program that supports economically and educationally disadvantaged students to excel in math, science, or engineering related majors so they can transfer to four-year institutions as majors in these fields. Within the community colleges that sponsor MESA programs, MESA students comprise 35% of all underrepresented student transfers to the University of California/ And 89% of MESA/CCCP transfer students go on to major in math, science, computer science, or engineering at four-year universities. All students who are interested in participating in the MESA Community College Program (CCCP) must meet the following academic and economically disadvantaged criteria in order to take part in the program.

Spatial Mismatch

The spatial mismatch concept was introduced by John Kain; it asserts the deepening poverty in many central city African-American neighborhoods (Kain, 1968). The proponents of this concept argued that (1) the shift in the demand for labor toward some urban areas, (2) racial discrimination in housing markets which limits housing mobility among minorities, particularly African-Americans, and (3) poor transportation linkages between cities and suburbs combine to increasingly isolated African-Americans in poor, central city neighborhoods. Their argument is that joblessness and low wages, African-Americans result from their spatial separation from low-wage job opportunities increasingly located in suburban areas. Inadequate

public transportation and the location of suitable jobs and areas inaccessible to welfare recipients posed a formidable barrier to obtaining and maintaining employment for those seeking to make the transition from welfare to work. Additionally, most welfare recipients are concentrated in inner cities along with a shifting of employment opportunities to their suburbs. The use factors magnify the challenges of job placement for welfare clients. Welfare agencies should develop strategies that defeat these types of transportation barriers so that clients can become economically self-sufficient.

Transportation barriers are defined as in the following ways: (1) in adequate public transportation, (2) the lack of personal transportation, and (3) spatial mismatch. Welfare recipients are disproportionately concentrated in big cities and very few all-new and automobile, so most must rely on transit to access implement and related services. The problem arises because many of the entry-level jobs for which recipients are qualified are located in the outer suburbs of metropolitan areas each are not typically served by public transit. Studies have shown a strong relationship between job access and employment outcomes. Blumenberg and Ong (1998) and Alland and Danziger (2003) found that access to employment leads to better economic outcomes for welfare participants. Other studies show that cars increase welfare participants' likelihood of employment (Cervero et. al., 2003; Danziger et .al, 2000; Ong. 1996, 2002).

Empirical evidence which support spatial concepts has become the foundation for public policy is to enable low income, central bank city residents to go look calm transportation spatial to employment. One policy strategy focuses on

improving the mobility of the poor through transportation services that better connect urban residents with suburban job opportunities. The Bridges to Work demonstration project, a joint project of public/private ventures, a Philadelphia-based nonprofit organization, and the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). By providing job placement and transportation services, the goal was to connect inner-city residents with suburban employment opportunities. This project paved the way for the National JobLinks Employment and Transportation Initiative. This initiative was administered by this community transportation Association of America (CTAA) with funding from the Federal Transit Administration and the US Department of Labor. Underlying these projects was the premise that "current transit service routes and schedules rarely fit the needs of the inner-city poor and unemployed" who have two reached jobs, two out of three of which are "... being created in the suburbs, outside of the urban core" (Community Transportation Association of America, n.d.b.n.p.).

A significant number of welfare recipients are women with children. This situation creates a group of recipients with specific needs including childcare and access to schools. The needs of women with children are not being met by current welfare to work programs that focus on transporting welfare recipients to workplaces. Low-income women with children often rely on personal contacts and networks because of their need for employment near their residences. It has been shown that a third of women on welfare with children and without access to a car walk to work. Due to their lifestyle choices, women with children will be better supported by policy that focuses on community economic development instead of

transportation (O'Regan and Quigley 1999). There are several approaches to improving transportation alternatives for welfare recipients. A study by Bruce and Richards at the University of Tennessee confirms many of the previous findings on car access and its impact on assistance program participants (Bruce and Richards 2003). The study uses survey data from the Family Assistance Longitudinal Study, which includes a large number of individuals from Tennessee's Families First, a low-income assistance program. This study draws data from urban as well as rural participants, which is important in analyzing its conclusions. One important conclusion that can be drawn from the study is that car access is essential in maximizing the effectiveness of welfare to work programs. Car access increases the probability of becoming employed and staying employed, and also increases the number of hours worked. Results of the Tennessee study reinforce previous research done on access to cars and indicate that that among forms of transportation, private and public, private mobility is most effective in moving participants from welfare to work (Cervero, Sandoval and Landis, 2000 in Bruce and Richards 2003).

Kain states "the success of welfare as a philosophy will continue to be attacked and defended by opposing political forces. There seems to be little debate, however, about the dominant current mode of transportation that Americans use to go to work. Without addressing this fundamental issue, or the certainly related issue of how and where American workplaces develop in relation to residences, programs that attempt to move people from welfare to work will only be addressing a symptom, rather than the problem" (Kain, 1968). As William Wilson asserts, "Perhaps at no

other time in the nation's history has it been more important to talk about the need to promote city and suburban cooperation, not separation. The political fragmentation of many metropolitan areas in the United States has contributed to the problems of joblessness and related social dislocations of the inner-city poor" (Wilson 1997).

Indeed, the cooperation between cities and suburbs seems increasingly important as one examines the necessity for car travel among those receiving welfare. While increasing the availability of cars for those on welfare would seem to be a quick fix, the long-term costs, including congestion, the true cost of automobile ownership, and increased environmental impact, may be great. A strong policy of urban revitalization, combined with commitment to an equitable public transit system, seems to hold greater hope for those on assistance.

## Methodology

### Overview of Methodology

The objective of this study is to determine: Is it possible for welfare recipients who are participating in work mandated assistance programs to achieve their educational goals with the transportation available to them? The effectiveness of the welfare-to-work program will be measured with the data gathered from questionnaires and secondary data from reports and articles. The independent variable is receiving welfare and participating in the work assistance program. The dependent variable is not having the financial resources to obtain transportation needed to successfully work the required hours of the program

The research methodology of secondary data focuses primarily on a review of pertinent literature, and reports from nonprofit organizations. Data will also be presented from a previous study in Solano County and other areas outside California. An emphasis was placed on literature available from various organizations and scholarly journal articles dedicated to learning how transportation and spatial mismatches affects welfare to work reform.

The results from studies by Edin and Lein and Ong and Houston regarding work-related transportation and child care expenses will be discussed.

Primary data will be used to evaluate the effectiveness of the welfare to work programs from the perspectives of the welfare recipients. This is a qualitative study. The target population will be Solano County welfare recipients within the cities of Fairfield and Suisun. The questionnaire was distributed by a Solano County Deputy

to the welfare recipients. The Solano County Deputy Director returned the completed questionnaires for use as primary data.

For the purposes of this study, the following terms are defined: Reliable transportation means vehicles in working condition; educational goals is defined as training programs to pursue secondary education, or vocational training; financial resources means access to funds to pay for needed materials; welfare recipients: a person(s) who is receiving financial assistance for housing, food and shelter-the system that provides this assistance is government based such as Temporary Assistance to the Needy Families (TANF), formerly known as Aid to Dependent Children (AFDC); lastly, spatial mismatch concept: the term spatial mismatch refers to lowered job opportunities in the declining urban labor market and the increased job opportunities in metropolitan areas outside central cities.

#### Questionnaire Design

Participants in the survey were informed that they would remain anonymous. It is clearly stated on the questionnaire, "Do NOT provide your name". Questions are asked in a closed-ended format in which participants answer "Y" for yes or "N" for no. Several questions asked for the number of modes of transportation to work and childcare and one question asked how many times they were late for work due to transportation.

#### Data Collection

A written questionnaire was developed to ascertain if transportation problems are encountered in Solano County while participating in the welfare to work program.



The questionnaire (Appendix D) is a one-page document, which includes instructions describing the purpose of the survey, and it informs the respondents that they have been chosen randomly. The questionnaire consists of thirteen questions. Also, instructions on the questionnaire stated: Do Not enter your name on the questionnaire. The questionnaire could be completed in approximately seven to 10 minutes. The questionnaire was to design to be as easy to understand as possible. The Deputy Director returned 25 completed questionnaires. She was only able to contact 25 welfare recipients within the short timeframe; therefore, the response rate was 100%.

#### Summary of Research Process

The questionnaire was designed with general questions to establish transportation modes and led to questions requiring greater specifics in terms of time. Questions 1-13 asked for a "yes" or "no" response. In the first question, welfare recipients were asked do you own a car. In the second question, they were asked do you commute to work in your car. These two questions were to determine the need for public transportation.

The third and fourth questions were to address the issue of time and distance from the recipient's residential areas to work locations. The third question asked if public transportation was used to commute to work. The fourth question asked is your commute over an hour.

The purpose of questions five, six, and seven was to find out if extra time was being spent for childcare transport and satisfaction with transportation.

Question eight asked for the recipients perspectives on completing the training program, and question nine, did they see transportation as an obstacle to completing the training program. Question ten was to find out if transportation was convenient to where they lived.

A second category was added to questions eleven through thirteen. Question eleven asked; have you missed work or been late to work because of transportation problems; and the second category requests the recipients to enter the number of times. Question 12 asked; does your commute to work require more than one type of transportation, such as transferring to another bus, bus to Bart etc.? The second category asked; if yes, please state the number of additional types of transportation used. If walking over 10 minutes is required, please state the number of minutes.

Question 13 is related to childcare. This question asked; does your commute to childcare require more than one type of transportation. If yes, please state, the number of additional types of transportation used. If walking over 10 minutes is required, please state the number of minutes.

For purposes of quantifying the questionnaire results, an Excel spreadsheet was established to capture the survey responses. The responses to the yes and no questions were entered into the spreadsheet. Formulas entered to calculate the percentage of each yes or no response. The percentages were converted to graphic form using the Microsoft Chart Wizard program (Appendices B and C).

## Findings

### Summary of Key Findings

The data collected demonstrates that welfare recipients need to have assistance in obtaining reliable transportation to have a successful training experience. Responses from the survey are as follows: Thirty six percent of the respondents said they own a car and 64%, said no. To question number two, 32% commute to work in a car and 68% said they do not. When asked is your commute over an hour and 24% said yes 4% responded no and eight people did not respond to that question. When asked do you pickup their children from childcare after work, 72% said yes, and 32% responded no they do not. Question six, are you satisfied with the options that you have available for transportation, 72% responded, yes, and 2% responded no, to people did not answer that question. Forty eight percent of those surveyed said yes they are the only person picking up their children from childcare, 52% said no. When asked do you feel you will complete your training program 88% said yes and 4% said no. In answering do you see transportation as an obstacle to completing the training program; their response was 88% yes, and 4% no. Seventy two percent responded yes, there is public transportation convenient to where they live, and 28% responded no. Only 28% responded yes to the question, have you missed work or been late to work because of transportation problems. Only 12% responded yes, they are commute to work requires more than one type of transportation while 92% responded no. To the question does your commute to childcare, require more than one type of transportation such as transferring to another bus, bus to Bart etc., each of the twenty-five surveyed answer

the question and 56% responded yes. Many of the welfare recipients who did not use public transportation live in the rural areas of Vacaville. They made notations on their surveys that they relied on relatives and/or friends to assist them with transportation to childcare, work in school.

### Transportation Assessment

Transportation programs designed to meet the needs of low-income people are not simple to execute. They will work more effectively when integrated with other services and afford the flexibility needed to adapt to the work schedules of entry-level workers (i.e., account for multiple start times for work shifts, emergency rides home, or other elements of the daily "trip chain" undertaken by low-income people, particularly mothers). Table 1, on page 13, illustrates that as welfare recipients moved into the world of work, their travel patterns start to converge to those of other low income parents in many ways. Public policies should not discourage low-income car ownership while they facilitate the car-based commute of the vast majority of middle- and upper-income workers (Pugh, 1998).

Transportation was not originally considered in planning welfare-to-work programs, but the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) responded to the need with County by County assistance to identify transportation related barriers for CalWorks population and develop workable solutions to overcoming those barriers. Planning funds have been designed to develop County transportation plans for CalWorks programs. Each County has his own projects, and brings together keep disappearance in implementing welfare reform (social service agency staff, Cal Works participants, private industry councils, job training and education providers)

with their counterparts in transportation (transportation authority staff, transit operators, and rideshare agencies) to develop the County's plan. Local agencies and MTC are assisted by MTC-funded consultants to help with workshops, meetings, and one-on-one interviews.

The first MTC Welfare to Work Transportation Planning Project was done in Santa Clara County in corporation with the Santa Clara Social County Services agency and Bill Valley transportation authority. Contra Costa counties implemented a similar project, followed by Alameda in Napa counties.

Typical barriers found to transportation use include:

- Lack of extended hour transportation: Many entry-level jobs require evening, night shifts or weekend work. Transportation options are usually limited to 6:00am-10:00 pm on weekdays with less frequency and shorter hours during the weekend.
- Complex multi-leg trips to childcare, school and work: The woman who needs to drop children off before work must check for an elderly or retired relative everyday; they cannot simply go from home to job site.
- Cost: Long trips, transfers, and transporting children, who must pay fares, add to cost, which is often significant for low-income individuals.
- Lack of access to reliable automobile transportation: Costs for purchasing, insuring and operating a car, and lack of driver's licenses, makes automobile use impractical for many low-income people.

- Safety: Many single mothers have safety concerns, particularly at night and on weekends, about waiting at transit stops or walking home or to work.
- Emergency flexibility: People may be reluctant to travel long distances or certain hours if they feel they may not be able to return quickly to children at school or childcare, or relatives at home.
- Difficulty planning trips: New jobs, which frequently create the need for new childcare arrangements, meaning that people need to plan the most efficient, least expensive way to make their complex trips.

In the early years of welfare to work programs, there aren't many solutions, to address the barriers to success in the programs. During the last ten years many counties have devised viable solutions to childcare problems, spatial mismatch in transportation, distance base problems in transportation, and the cost of transportation. Solano County, in particular, has incorporated assistance programs for the welfare recipients to address these areas. These programs provide reliable, safe, and efficient transportation. Transportation barriers were defined earlier in this paper in three following ways: (1) inadequate public transportation, (2) the lack of personal transportation, and (3) spatial mismatch.

Welfare agencies have developed strategies to defeat the various transportation barriers to enable clients to become economically self-sufficient.

First, the agencies identified the services clients need. The agencies determined that the burden of finding transportation was too difficult for the recipients alone, and this burden should not have been placed directly on the

shoulders of the welfare recipients. In light of the fact that the welfare reform regulations placed strict time limits on the recipients and subsequent penalties on the agencies, the agencies quickly realized that it was a win-win situation to address the barriers and lack of transportation that posed problems to employment. They have incorporated the following support mechanisms in Solano County and throughout California.

#### Coordination of Service Programs

Social workers have coordinated service programs between welfare agencies and local public and private transportation systems. These programs provide services such as discounted fares by the local transits, training by the local transit Authority on available transit routes, and case worker training by the transit authority, which provides a computer-based mapping system to coordinate welfare client needs with available services. There are also enhanced services programs that provide transportation by helping clients obtain personal transportation, such as program that leased vehicles or distribute donated vehicles. This program is in effect in the Ventura County, California, for example, cars are purchased at public auctions. For six vehicles, Ventura County agency officials paid from \$1,500 to \$2,000 for each car. In Wytherville, Virginia, cars are purchased at low-cost through the Commonwealth of Virginia Department of General services division of purchases and supply. For six vehicles, Wytherville officials paid \$9,450. These organizations enter into monthly payment plans with their welfare clients to expedite the lease or long repayments, and the welfare agencies can recycle the recovered vehicle cost for future lease purchases. The Job Ride Program in Wisconsin reportedly spends

about \$19 per client per ride. This program provides transportation through privately owned systems and spends anywhere from less than \$10 to more than \$100 per client per ride. This program has provided reverse commute or some other form of transportation to job sites for more than 500 welfare recipients and enabled them to obtain full-time employment. These types of employment integration efforts range from quite small to fairly large are very effective. Service coordination efforts hold the promise of providing services to large number or welfare recipients.

The advantage of utilizing service coordination programs is that they can generally provide services to a large number of clients; therefore, they tend to have the lowest for client cost. Although there are differences in the patterns of recipients compared to not recipients, there are certainly many similarities. The most fundamental similarity is that most workers traveled to work in cars and leave work during peak work. However, the opposite is true with most welfare recipients traveling to work.

Looking back at policy evaluations of welfare reform; low unemployment and strong at, economic growth have dampened the potential negative effects of welfare reform. Secondly, welfare reform has not been uniform across the United States. Some states have benefit caps, and others have lucrative finding. Subsequently, it is impossible to evaluate on national level, which specific elements of welfare for war and which do not. Subsequently, while welfare caseloads have declined dramatically since the passage of welfare reform, welfare reform its staff may not be the cause of the decrease in the caseloads.



In coordinating service programs it is important to understand that the relationship between automobile ownership and welfare uses is complicated. Coordination of these services must include a provision for free bus passes, reduced fares and increased hours of public transit service can passes to enable welfare recipients to have an efficient way to increase their access to employment. There's no one solution to this complex problem of transporting welfare recipients to work, therefore, combined efforts of agencies produces the best results. When funds are available service programs have been courted eight to include residential relocation programs such as The Moving to Opportunity Program. In most instances, these type of support that works that low-income people count on or localize and fragile.

## Conclusions and Recommendations

Research demonstrates that employment earnings are often used too address welfare recipients' transportation barriers. However, welfare agencies throughout the country have launched innovative and diverse programs, from small-scale efforts that serve a limited number of specific clients to large-scale efforts that seek to expand the local infrastructure.

Some people have reaped abundant benefits from the welfare – to – work program, while others plummeted deeper into poverty. Many people who have not fared well in the assistance to work programs live in distant neighborhoods without the necessary transportation to benefit from them (Ong; 2001, Ong et. al. 2001; Ong & Houston forthcoming).

The hypothesis of paper is to determine: Is it possible for welfare recipients who are participating in work mandated assistance programs to achieve their educational goals with the transportation available to them? Based on the findings of this paper, given the fact that 72% of the respondents say they are satisfied with the options they have available for transportation, and 88% say they feel that they will complete their training program in Solano County; I surmise that the success here has improved greatly improved since the inception of the 1996 welfare to work PWORA program. Also, based on the findings of the research, recommendations encourage non-profit organizations to assess cost-effectiveness of contracting with a public transit agency for transportation services as an alternative to operating their own vehicles. This success Solano County is experiencing is enlarged due to the diligence of the deputy director and

staff of all of the Solano County agencies, pulling together resources and constantly encouraging the welfare participants to utilize all available services. I spoke briefly with the Vallejo Deputy Director of social services, and she said that they are continually encouraging expansion of opportunities for low-income families to become car owners. They are supporting existing efforts by transportation programs to enable welfare recipients to become car owners.

Recommendations for Solano County is for the welfare recipients to keep abreast of the programs available to them, attend the meetings held by their local agencies to gain information and training on the transit mapping especially for new jobs in unfamiliar locations. One of the Deputy Directors stated that some of the recipients are not taking advantage of the services available to them and often quit their training programs without utilizing all available services.

Blumenberg stated, "the real measure of success will not be the number of transportation programs, nor the declining percentage of people who are on the welfare. True success will be measured by the numbers of former welfare recipients who no longer live in poverty (Blumenberg, 1998).

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APPENDIX A

**SOLANO WELFARE TO WORK PROGRAM  
SURVEY QUESTIONS**

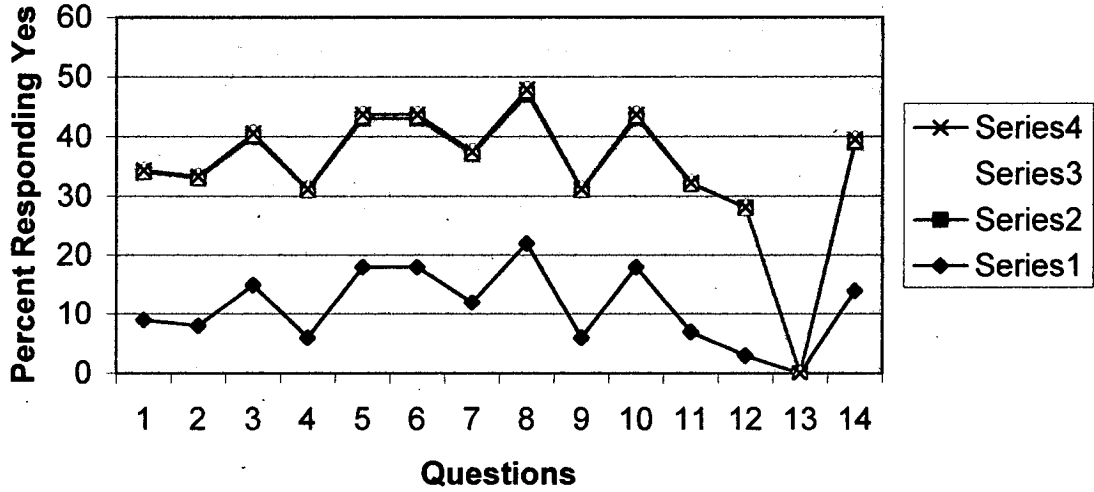
	Yes Responses		No Responses	N		
	Y					
Y N 1. Do you own a car?	9	25	0.36	16	25	0.64
Y N 2. Do you commute to work in your car?	8	25	0.32	17	25	0.68
Y N 3. Do you use public transportation to commute to work?	15	25	0.6	10	25	0.4
Y N 4. Is your commute over an hour?	6	25	0.24	10	25	0.4
Y N 5. Do you pick up children from childcare after work?	18	25	0.72	8	25	0.32
Y N 6. Are you satisfied with the options that you have available for transportation?	18	25	0.72	5	25	0.2
Y N 7. Are you the only person who picks up your children from childcare?	12	25	0.48	13	25	0.52
Y N 8. Do you feel you will complete your training program?	22	25	0.88	1	25	0.04
Y N 9. Do you see transportation as an obstacle to completing the training program.	6	25	0.24	18	25	0.72
Y N 10. Is public transportation convenient to where you live?	18	25	0.72	7	25	0.28
Y N 11. Have you missed work or been late to work because of a transportation problem? If your answer to number 11 is yes, please enter the number of times.	7			13		
Y N 12. Does your commute to work require more than one type of transportation such as minutes is required, please state the number of minutes.	3	25	0.12	23	25	0.92
Y N 13. Does your commute to childcare require more than one type of transportation such as transferring to another bus, bus to BART etc.?	14			21		
If yes, please state the number of additional types of transportation used. If walking over 10 minutes is required, please state the number of minutes.		25	0.56		25	0.84
If yes, please state the number of additional types of transportation used. If walking over 10 minutes is required, please state the number of minutes.						

Survey Response Total

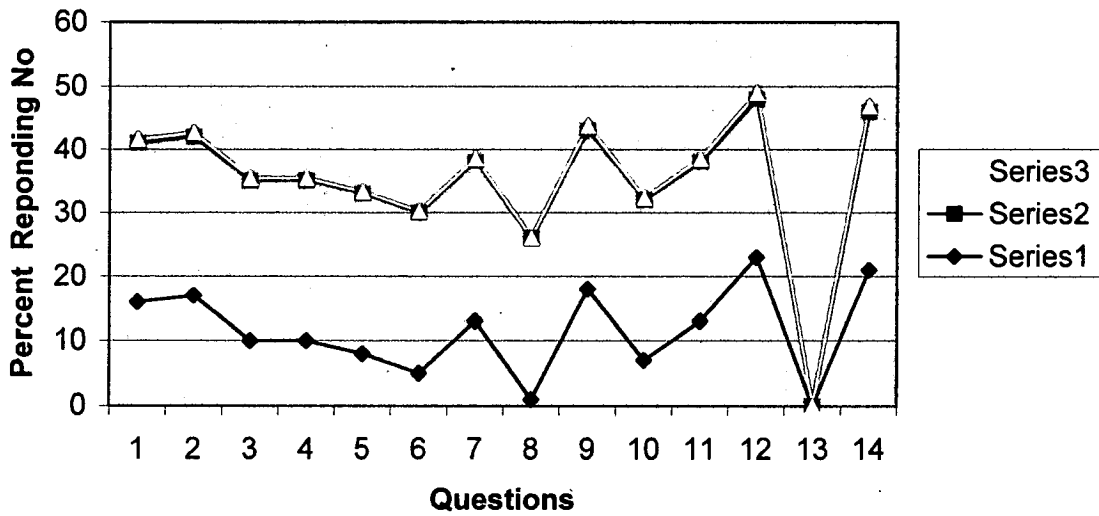
156

162

**Appendix B  
Solano County Yes Responses**



**Appendix C  
Solano County No Responses**



APPENDIX D

Dear Participant,

The following questionnaire is designed to find out if transportation problems are encountered in Solano County while participating in welfare to work programs.

You have been chosen as part of a random sample of Solano County's welfare to work participants. This survey is being conducted by Thelma Sanders as part of a graduate student research project through Golden State University, San Francisco. Information from the survey will only be used in this research paper. **Your help in answering the following questions would be greatly appreciated, and is very important to the success of this project.** It should only take a few minutes.

Enclosed is a stamped, self-addressed envelope for your completed survey. Please return your response by the December 3, 2004. PLEASE DO NOT enter your name on the questionnaire. Your opinion is important - thank you in advance for your anticipation!

APPENDIX D

Please *circle* Y for yes and N for no to questions 1 through 11. Please enter number of different types of transportation you use to commute to work and the childcare facility in questions 12 and 13.

- Y N 1. Do you own a car?
- Y N 2. Do you commute to work in your car?
- Y N 3. Do you use public transportation to commute to work?
- Y N 4. Is your commute over an hour?
- Y N 5. Do you pick up children from childcare after work?
- Y N 6. Are you satisfied with the options that you have available for transportation?
- Y N 7. Are you the only person who picks up your children from childcare?
- Y N 8. Do you feel you will complete your training program?
- Y N 9. Do you see transportation as an obstacle to completing the training program.
- Y N 10. Is public transportation convenient to where you live?
- Y N 11. Have you missed work or been late to work because of a transportation problem? If your answer to number 11 is yes, please enter the number of times \_\_\_\_\_.
- Y N 12. Does your commute to work require more than one type of transportation such as transferring to another bus, bus to BART etc.?

If yes, please state the number of additional types of transportation used \_\_\_\_\_. If walking over 10 minutes is required, please state the number of \_\_\_\_\_ minutes.

- Y N 13. Does your commute to childcare require more than one type of transportation such as transferring to another bus, bus to BART etc.?

If yes, please state the number of additional types of transportation used \_\_\_\_\_. If walking over 10 minutes is required, please state the number of \_\_\_\_\_ minutes.

Thank you for completing this survey. Please return your response in the stamped envelope provided.