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In 1996, Congress passed the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA) to move welfare recipients off TANF, a new federally funded public assistance program, and into full-time work. Effective January 1998 California's legislature created the CalWORKs program to implement TANF. Among other provisions, the law required job search or work preparation, followed by full-time work, from 80% of aid recipients within two years and limited lifetime receipt of aid to 60 months. CalWORKs assisted the transition to work through work preparation and other services as well as child care subsidies which could continue for up to two years after departure from CalWORKs. California rules restricted participation by immigrants but permitted continued aid payments for children during periods when sanctions restricted assistance to the parent or other household head.

Shortly after the start of CalWORKs, the Public Health Institute's (PHI's) Alameda County CalWORKs Needs Assessment and Outcomes Study began to follow the progress from welfare to work of 512 randomly selected welfare recipients. White, Black, Hispanic and Vietnamese respondents who were subject to work requirements were interviewed up to three times over the next two years: in late 1998 through early 1999, mid-2000, and mid-2001.<sup>i</sup> The study was designed to examine the prevalence and assess the impact of health problems and other potential barriers to employment. Respondents were asked about many aspects of their lives, including physical and mental health, child care arrangements, and access to transportation.

In this Brief we report on the final phase of analysis, examining the effects of barriers to employment on welfare and work status over time. We compare factors contributing to or limiting full-time vs. part-time work and receipt of cash aid for 323 respondents who were in single-parent cases when selected for the study. The prevalence and impact of barriers to employment have many implications for CalWORKs program design.

We enrich the analysis by combining survey data on demographics, childcare arrangements, and barriers with State administrative data on monthly aid status and quarterly earnings from 1994 to mid-2002.<sup>ii</sup> We consolidate monthly aid status by quarters, categorizing as *on welfare* respondents receiving TANF cash benefits

## Welfare and Work Status under TANF: Effect of Barriers to Employment and Implications for Program Planning

**Public Health Institute Brief**  
from the Alameda County CalWORKs  
Needs Assessment and Outcomes Study

Jean C. Norris & Richard Speigman

for themselves in at least one month of the quarter<sup>iii</sup>. We count respondents as *working* in any quarter with reported earnings of at least one dollar.

Our assessment of the impact of barriers on work and welfare status is limited by the short length of time covered by administrative data after TANF implementation (1998 – mid-2002) and by having only three measures of barrier status. Nevertheless, we were able to identify differences among the barriers in their impact on employment.<sup>iv</sup>

### Trends in Welfare and Work Status

Prior to CalWORKs, about 50% of first-time aid recipients in California exited welfare within 12 months, and more than 70% left within two years. Many returned to welfare, but only about 15% remained on aid for five years.<sup>v</sup> Just before the passage of PRWORA and for the first few years afterward, welfare caseloads declined dramatically across the United States and in California, raising the question of whether those remaining on welfare differed from those who departed. If single parents in the CalWORKs program were similar to pre-TANF (AFDC) recipients, we would have expected at least half of the respondents to be both working and receiving aid at some time during the three years of the study. We would also expect about half of them to have left welfare by the end of the study in mid-2002, without the CalWORKs program.

Chart 1 shows the progression in welfare and work status over time for our sample, including a pre-TANF baseline period, the four quarters of 1997.

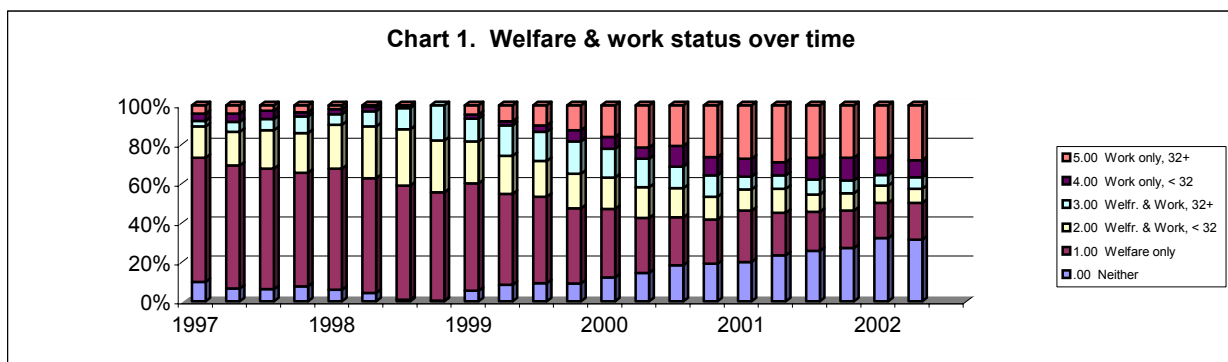
The data in Chart 1 are quarter-by-quarter averages for the sample. Individual respondents could move from one welfare and work status to another over time, and most did so. In the final 21 months of data, about 30% of the sample achieved the TANF program goal, being off welfare and working *full-time* (reported wages at least equaled 32 hours per week at minimum wage). An additional 5% worked full-time and also received welfare. Another group, about 20% of the sample, worked *part-time* (reported earnings less than 32 hours per week at minimum wage); half also received welfare.

### Key Findings: Welfare and Work over Time

- During 1997, about 30% of the sample worked (top four bar segments), and about 1/3 of those did not receive welfare (top two bar segments).
- From the start of TANF in 1998, the proportion working (top four segments) increased steadily to almost 60% in mid-2000, and then leveled off at about 50% until the end of the data in mid-2002.
- At the end of the data, about 1/3 of the sample were on welfare, some working and some not, fewer than we might have expected under AFDC.
- The fraction neither working nor receiving welfare increased steadily from mid-1998 to early 2002.

These simple comparative analyses, with no control group, can only suggest that Alameda County's CalWORKs program was more effective than AFDC at moving aid recipients off of welfare, as intended. Whether more people moved into work or to "neither" work nor welfare under TANF than under previous welfare programs, is less clear.

What permitted those who worked full-time to do so? What kept those working part-time from working more? Below, we examine factors contributing to working full-time and part-time, with and without welfare, including demographics, barriers to employment and supports for work.



### Barriers to Employment and Supports

Before TANF, several factors were known to predict long-term welfare stays – less than high school education, little work experience, very young children, non-White race and being a young single parent. Different factors predicted returning from work to welfare – such as low wages, temporary jobs, breakdown in child care, and lack of health care.<sup>v</sup>

The factors thought to be most serious – inadequate earnings, lack of access to health care, the cost of child care, and lack of transportation – were addressed with added benefits under the TANF program. To understand individual differences in welfare and work outcomes since TANF, several research groups have worked out new measures with the concepts: *barriers to employment* and *supports for working*.<sup>vi</sup>

Some of the newly proposed barriers to employment do hinder working, and the various barriers differ in their impact. Human capital barriers such as lack of education and few work skills are still among the most important factors keeping aid recipients from either getting or keep work. The PHI Alameda County CalWORKs study also identified poor language skills as a liability, for immigrants as well as for US-born respondents.

Several health barriers – physical activity limitations, health problems that interfere with responsibilities, mental health symptoms, and alcohol and drug problems – are important predictors of not working, when examined one at a time, but they may not remain important in statistical models including other factors.

A few researchers have examined supports for working and found that having a car and family child care to be more important than any other factor.

Individuals with no barriers to employment are rare in welfare populations, and most aid recipients experience several barriers to employment. As the number of barriers increases, working is less and less likely at any one point in time.

However, barriers and supports can change over time. Some human capital barriers seem to be virtually permanent. Other barriers, such as health and childcare problems, come and go.

To learn what is important over time, we need to take account of change over time in welfare and work status, as well as changes in barriers and supports. To learn which factors among many are most important, we need to take all of them into account at once. The multivariate models described below accomplish both objectives.

## Characteristics of the Study Sample

To be consistent with earlier research, we limited the sample for these analyses to 323 respondents who were in single-parent cases when the sample was selected. Characteristics of the study sample (Table 1) were similar to the population of single-parent cases in Alameda County.<sup>vii</sup>

- Most respondents were:
  - Female
  - Between 25 and 44 years of age
  - Non-White
- Half of the sample lived with another adult
- About 10% lived with a spouse or partner.

**Table 1.** Sample description: demographics and household composition

<b>Demographics</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>
Immigrant	42	13.0
Male	16	5.0
Age: 18 to 24	69	21.4
25 to 34	120	37.2
35 to 44	102	31.6
45 to 59 (& over)	32	9.9
White	42	13.0
Black	188	58.2
Hispanic	36	11.2
Vietnamese	18	5.6
Other race/ethnicity	39	12.1
<b>Household composition</b>		
Living with spouse or partner	38	11.8
Living with other adult(s)	127	39.6
Any child(ren) age 0 – 2	102	31.6
Any child(ren) age 3 – 5	109	31.7
Any child(ren) age 6 – 12	194	60.1
Any child(ren) age 13 – 17	106	32.8
<b>Work and welfare history, '94-'97</b>		
Proportion of months aided	avg.	77.3
Prop of quarters with wages	avg.	26.8

## Prevalence of Barriers and Supports

With respect to barriers to employment (Table 2), the Alameda County sample differs somewhat from other California county welfare study samples.

At the baseline interview, almost two-thirds of the sample reported a transportation barrier. Over 40% lacked a high school diploma or GED. Almost one-third reported symptoms of drug or alcohol abuse, and 27% claimed fewer than five work skills. One-fifth to one-fourth of the sample reported problems with physical health, activity limitations, and children needing extra care. Over one-third of the sample reported four or more barriers at baseline.

On the support side, one in five respondents reported non-family childcare arrangements, while two in five handled child care within the family.

**Table 2.** Barriers and supports

<b>Barriers</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>
Limited language ability	27	8.4
Education less than HS or GED	136	42.1
Fewer than five work skills	86	26.6
In criminal justice system	26	8.1
Low English proficiency (n = 42)	23	7.1
No car use or no driver's license	209	64.7
Child(ren) needing extra care	79	24.5
Needs more child care than has	54	16.7
Physical health probs interfere	72	22.3
Health limits daily activity 'a lot'	71	22.0
Mental hlth symptoms need trtmt	60	18.6
Abuse/ control by spouse/partner	42	13.0
Alcohol/drug abuse (DSM-IV criteria)	105	32.5
<b>Number of barriers</b>		
One	49	15.2
Two	67	20.7
Three	64	19.8
Four or more	118	36.5
<b>Sources of child care</b>		
Family provides child care	135	41.8
Non-family child care	68	21.1

## Method

We used multinomial logistic regression models to estimate cumulative effects of barriers to employment and other factors on changing welfare and work status over the 18 quarters from January 1998 through June 2002. The welfare and work outcomes categories are the same ones shown across time in Chart 1. In separate models, we examined the effects of individual barriers to employment and the cumulative effect of the total number of barriers.

To make best use of the time-varying outcomes, we made as many of the independent variables time-varying as possible. Ages and of respondents and their children were extrapolated over time. Barrier and support variables used data from all three interviews.<sup>viii</sup> In each quarter, persons with a barrier or support are contrasted with all others (1,0 coding).

Consistent with earlier research, we included in the models several variables that do not change over time – demographic characteristics and history variables for time on welfare and quarters with earnings.

Finally, we included as control variables markers for the passage of time under CalWORKs, time-varying unemployment rates, and the number of interviews.

## What Can the Models Tell Us?

The contrasts built into the models suggest a prototypical *comparison person* – a White, single mother on welfare and not working (*Welfare Only*) in 1998, 18 to 24 years old, born in the United States, living alone with her children, with little work or welfare history.

For that person, the individual barriers model answers the question: If she had this barrier, how likely is it she would be in this category, instead of in “Welfare Only”? Other independent variables – demographics, supports, or history – work the same way.

For each welfare and work outcome, the model answers two questions:

- What pattern of barriers, supports, and demographics is most likely to place a respondent in this category?
- Which factors matter the most for each outcome?

The answers – for each independent variable, for each outcome – are given as *relative risk ratios* (RRR). A RRR of 2 means a person with that characteristic was twice as likely to spend time in this welfare and work category, while a RRR of 0.5 means he/she was half as likely to spend time in the category.

## Part-time or Full-time Work: What Matters?

We shaped our models to test the merit of several hypotheses or questions.

- Persons working less than 32 hours per week are presumed likely to have specific reasons or barrier patterns either *preventing* them from working 32 or more hours or *permitting* them the option of working less.
- We expected that people who achieve the CalWORKs program goal of leaving welfare for full-time work (32 or more hours per week) at least some of the time, can do so because they have fewer barriers or more supports at those times.
- For those remaining on welfare while working, are earnings from work simply too low to make them ineligible for cash benefits, or do other factors contribute to keeping them on welfare?
- Neither welfare nor work lumps together those in the best and worst of circumstances: sanctioned recipients who receive aid only for their children, married persons supported by a spouse’s income, and those completely severed from CalWORKs and without earnings or between jobs. Given its heterogeneity this group would be of little interest, except that its size grows as time passes.

## Effects of Time, Work History, and Demography

The results of the first model, the effects of individual barriers, are shown for five welfare and work outcomes in the columns of Table 3. The one not shown, Welfare Only, is the comparison category.

The passage of time is the most powerful factor in the model. The longer the time since we started counting in 1998, the more likely a respondent was off welfare or working full-time while on welfare. Progression off welfare and into work over time is consistent with pre-TANF research and the data shown in Chart 1 for this sample. Welfare recipients want or have to get off welfare, manage to do so within a few years by working, and are too poor to work less than full-time.<sup>v</sup>

Recent work history was the second most important predictor of working. Generally, unemployment rates made little difference, but a higher unemployment rate reduced the likelihood of working full-time without welfare by about 10%.

Other household members affect welfare and work status. As we suspected, a spouse or partner increases the likelihood of working part-time without welfare or receiving neither welfare nor earnings, probably by adding income. A spouse/partner decreases the likelihood of part-time work with welfare, probably because additional income decreases the need, or ability to qualify, for welfare. Consistent with pre-TANF research, having very young children reduces the likelihood of working, especially of working full-time.

Demographic factors, which seemed very important in pre-TANF studies, were relatively less important in this model that includes barrier and support variables. Non-white respondents were only a little more likely to be working part-time, on or off welfare, than White respondents (the comparison group). Low educational attainment and immigrant status were not statistically significant variables.

## Effects of Barriers and Supports on Work and Welfare Status

Barriers have little or no relationship to receiving neither welfare nor earnings. Perhaps the variability of persons in this category “cancels” barrier effects, which might be visible with more homogeneous subsets of respondents. However, supports do matter. Respondents who used childcare, from family or non-family sources, were less likely to spend time with neither welfare nor earnings.

**Table 3: Individual barriers & number of barriers models, spanning 18 quarters January 1998 - June 2002**

First model <sup>1</sup> Individual Barriers	Welfare & Work Status (Comparison group: <i>Welfare Only</i> )				
	Neither	Work < 32 hrs, & Welfare	Work < 32 hrs, No welfare	Work 32+ hrs, & Welfare	Work 32+ hrs, No welfare
Variable (Comparison)	RRR Sig <sup>2</sup>	RRR Sig <sup>2</sup>	RRRSig <sup>2</sup>	RRR Sig <sup>2</sup>	RRR Sig <sup>2</sup>
<b>Time/program effects</b>					
Year 1999 (Year 1998)	4.84***	1.03	3.52***	2.17***	22.43***
Year 2000	18.06***	1.35+	15.70***	3.33***	102.15***
Year 2001	33.72***	1.13	24.68***	2.25***	188.11***
Year 2002	48.40***	0.99	25.22***	2.44*	277.20***
Unemployment rate	1.02	1.02	0.99	0.94	0.89*
Number interviews	1.56	1.35	2.66+	1.54	3.52*
<b>Individual history</b>					
Prop. paid quarters, 1994 – 1997	2.34*	6.64***	12.86***	13.47***	14.79***
Prop. aided months, 1994 – 1997	0.33***	1.90*	0.57	1.77	0.68
<b>Demographics</b>					
Immigrant (US-born)	1.25	0.61	0.40	1.38	0.60
Age 25 to 34 (Age 18-24)	2.09*	0.69+	1.31	1.24	1.54
Age 35 to 44	2.10*	0.74	1.40	1.21	2.11+
Age 45 & over	1.82	0.77	2.13	0.80	1.81
Gender, male (Female)	1.40	0.73	1.71	1.63	0.52
Black (White)	1.25	2.09**	1.87	1.19	0.71
Hispanic	0.83	1.74+	1.18	1.06	0.92
Vietnamese	0.34	2.25	3.89	0.92	0.33
Other race/ethnicity	1.96	1.25	3.69*	1.04	1.63
<b>Household composition</b>					
Coupled (all others)	2.37***	0.64+	1.86+	1.10	1.58
With other adult	1.30	0.84	1.30	0.71	0.83
# children age 0 - 2	1.00	0.76*	0.86	0.68+	0.63+
# children age 3 - 5	1.23	0.90	0.67*	0.89	0.75
# children age 6 - 12	1.02	0.97	0.92	0.85	0.81
# children age 13 - 17	0.74*	1.02	0.84	1.24	0.97
<b>Barriers to employment</b>					
Physical health problems, 2+	1.01	0.72+	0.58	0.94	0.56*
Activity limitations, 2+	1.29	0.72+	0.59+	0.60	0.47**
MH symptoms, need treatment	1.09	1.42	2.31**	1.09	1.38
Sp./partner abuse/control	0.95	1.11	0.84	0.62+	0.63
Alcohol/drug abuse	1.03	1.07	1.30	0.76	0.65+
Limited language ability	0.58+	0.97	0.66	0.24+	0.29**
Fewer than 5 work skills	0.93	1.00	0.70	0.60*	0.63
Education less than HS/GED	1.09	0.82	0.99	1.03	0.70
In criminal justice system	1.48	1.37	2.01+	0.74	1.11
No car or driver's license	0.80	0.90	0.54**	0.67+	0.32***
Child needing extra care	1.03	0.91	0.71	1.23	0.84
Needs more child care	1.09	0.69+	0.49*	0.32***	0.31***
Low English proficiency	0.64	2.21+	0.97	1.61	3.04
<b>Child care sources</b>					
Child care by family	0.61*	1.85**	1.27	3.15***	3.66***
Non-family child care	0.57+	1.82**	1.48	2.76***	4.19***
<b>Second model<sup>3</sup></b>					
<b>Number of barriers</b>					
One (None)	1.10	1.00	0.97	1.47	0.49*
Two	0.91	0.86	0.89	0.92	0.31***
Three	0.87	1.03	0.79	0.61	0.17***
Four or more	1.14	0.70	0.60	0.41**	0.09***

1 Model R-squared = 0.216, number of observations = 5,688

2 P-values corrected for clustering due to repeated measures on individuals: + ~ 0.1, \* < 0.05, \*\* < 0.01, \*\*\* < 0.001

3 Model R-squared = 0.201, number of observations = 5,724

With such powerful time effects, why wasn't everyone off welfare and working full time? What helped those who achieved this program goal, and what held back those who did not?

### **Barriers, Supports and Part-time work**

Barriers in general appear to be less important factors for part-time than full-time work. Nevertheless, barriers play a large role in working less than 32 hours per week, and the pattern of barrier effects is similar for part-time workers, with and without welfare.

Three barriers – physical health problems, health-related activity limitations and child care problems – made working even part-time less likely, as we would expect.

Conversely, two of the barriers – mental health symptoms and criminal justice involvement – made working part-time more likely (significant for those not receiving welfare). This unexpected “help” from mental health and criminal justice “barriers” suggests the possibility of an intervening agent – perhaps case management – promoting access to work, but only part-time.

For those without welfare, as with persons in the *Neither* category, the presence of a spouse appears to provide the option of working less than 32 hours per week.

#### *Part-time work with welfare*

Although time effects are very large for all other outcomes, time since the start of CalWORKS does not explain working part-time with welfare. It appears that something else – some specific problem or too little help – holds people in this category, regardless of TANF program rules and supports. For example, low English proficiency, which applies only to immigrant respondents, made working part-time with welfare more likely.

#### *Part-time work without welfare*

It seems impossible to maintain life while earning less than minimum wage for 32 hours per week without the benefit of welfare. What other factors contribute to this outcome?

Needing more child care and no access to a car each are significant, making part-time work without welfare only half as likely. But these do not explain the lack of welfare benefits for persons who obviously need the financial assistance.

With varying degrees of statistical significance, three conditions known to contribute to loss of benefits stand out as more important in the part-time work without welfare outcome category than others: mental health symptoms, alcohol or drug abuse, and criminal justice system involvement. If case management does

explain working part-time with some of these problems, then people in this outcome category may also have access to forms of assistance not included in our models, such as housing subsidies or emergency food resources. Another interpretation is that individuals in this group have both difficulties coping with welfare regulations and with engaging in full-time work.

Either family or non-family childcare makes working part time with welfare equally, and significantly, more likely. For those working part-time without welfare, childcare arrangements do not appear to be the issue.

### **Barriers, Supports and Full-time work**

Barriers – or their absence – contribute to being in the full-time work group. Limited language ability and child care problems are about equally severe barriers, each reducing the likelihood of full-time work by two-thirds or more. Not having access to a car reduces the likelihood of working full-time with welfare by one-third and by two-thirds for those without welfare.

Child care is extremely important among barriers and supports. Full-time work is three to four times more likely with either family or non-family childcare arrangements, and, as noted above, child care problems reduce the likelihood of working to one-third. The model answers our question about which type of child care is more likely to support full-time work. Non-family childcare outstrips family-provided care for those working full-time without welfare. Non-family child care may be more financially viable for those working full-time, or family members may be less able to sustain care for full-time work hours.

Although limited language ability has little or no effect on other outcome categories, it is a more serious limitation on full-time work than, for example, is few work skills. Language ability reduces the likelihood of working full-time to about one-fourth, and few work skills, to about two-thirds.

#### *Full-time work with welfare*

Though not separated from cash assistance, while individuals are in this status, they are counted as employed full-time. This status is only two to three times more likely in any CalWORKS program year after 1998. What differs for those still receiving welfare from those off welfare?

Compared to persons working full-time without welfare, those still receiving welfare were less likely to have physical health problems and activity limitations and more likely to be affected by family violence problems (marginally significant) and a child needing extra care (not significant, but substantial differences). These patterns affirm our guess that problems other than low income may keep people on welfare while working full-time.

### *Full-time work without welfare*

Only one demographic variable is associated with working full-time (without welfare). Being age 35 to 44 doubles the likelihood of full-time work, an age range consistent with having children old enough to be in school or in their teen years, and not yet having serious health problems.

Physical health problems that interfere with responsibilities, activity limitation due to health problems, and alcohol or drug abuse each reduce the likelihood of full-time work without welfare by one-third to one-half. These potential barriers do not have significant impacts for those with welfare.

### **Number of Barriers**

To learn about the cumulative contribution of all the barriers to each outcome, we counted the total number of barriers for each respondent.

The number of barriers model has the same terms as the individual barriers model, except that 12 individual barriers are replaced by indicator variables representing the total number of potential barriers (none, one, two, three, and four or more). These indicators vary over time, just as the individual barriers did, changing with each successive interview.<sup>ix</sup> Because every other term in the two models is similar, in Table 3 we excerpt from the second model only the number of barriers terms.

### **Number of Barriers and Full-time Work**

For the two outcomes in which individual barriers were murky – Neither work nor welfare and Part-time work with welfare – the total number of barriers hardly matters.

For all other outcomes, including Working full-time with welfare, the number of barriers forms a clear step pattern in which the likelihood of working decreases briskly with every increase in total barriers. The deepest drops in likelihood apply to working full-time without welfare (statistically significant at every step).

For those in the category Work only, 32 or more hours, the total number of barriers is critical. Even one barrier reduces likelihood of being in this category by half. Two barriers drops the likelihood of full-time work without welfare to less than one-third, and three barriers, to less than one-fifth. Those with four or more barriers to employment are less than one-tenth as likely to be working full-time and off welfare than those with no barriers to employment.

### **Implications for Program Planning**

CalWORKs program rules were written to move work-required participants from welfare to work. In Alameda County, for the first three years, the program seems to have moved people off of welfare faster than the previous AFDC program. Starting in 2001 the net movement into work stalls, while the numbers receiving neither welfare nor work continue to climb.

The analyses in this brief identify a number of factors contributing to working less than full-time, and to staying on welfare, which potentially could be addressed by changes to CalWORKs program design, and supported by state and national TANF policy.

- Because half of the barriers in these models appear to prevent recipients from leaving welfare and working full-time, and the impact increases steadily with every additional barrier, individual needs assessment early in each CalWORKs spell appears to be a priority.
- Prioritize case management or other assistance to manage or eliminate transient barriers, and assess the personal and program cost benefit of addressing more permanent conditions versus providing exemptions from the 60-month time limit.
- Maintain and improve services to address the most important barriers, childcare and transportation. Streamline access to transportation and childcare supports.
- Promote access to quality childcare with user-friendly payment systems.
- Develop ways to subsidize ownership and maintenance of reliable private vehicles.
- In the case of physical health problems and activity limitations, following health screening, determine whether treatment, access to supportive aids, modified work environments, or other interventions are appropriate. Support access to needed assistance.
- In the case of mental health and substance abuse, continue to promote access to appropriate services.
- To address limited language ability, emphasize literacy as part of the welfare-to-work program. Consider temporary or permanent exemptions as appropriate.
- For CalWORKs recipients involved with the criminal justice system, assess whether employer bias, conflicting demands on potential employees' time, or other factors are involved. Take appropriate steps.
- Establish quick and easy return to welfare and/or extend unemployment benefits during unemployed periods.

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## Notes

<sup>i</sup> Almost 94 percent of the study participants were interviewed all three times. Other information on project design and respondent recruitment is covered in the first of six project reports available at <http://www.phi.org/library.html>.

<sup>ii</sup> California Medi-Cal Eligibility Determination System (MEDS) and Employment Development Department (EDD) data were obtained for all respondents giving time-limited informed consent.

<sup>iii</sup> Sanctioned months and periods in which respondents received aid only for their children were not counted as *aided* months, analogous to the method of counting total time on aid toward time limits.

<sup>iv</sup> Most factors in the analysis are concurrent with the outcomes, thus establishing *association*, rather than *causation*.

<sup>v</sup> Handler JF and Y Hasenfeld. Challenging Myths about Welfare Recipients, in *New Research on the Transition from Work to Welfare*. California Policy Research Center Brief, Vol 7, No.7, May 1995

<sup>vi</sup> In addition to the Alameda County CalWORKs Study, Speigman and Norris conducted the San Joaquin County CalWORKs Needs Assessment and Outcomes Study. PHI colleague Laura Schmidt examined the dynamics of welfare history in a third Northern California county. The California Institute for Mental Health assessed behavioral health factors in several additional California counties. The work most similar to the Alameda and San Joaquin County

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Studies is from the Women's Employment Study in Michigan.

<sup>vii</sup> Because interviews were conducted only in English, Spanish and Vietnamese, the proportion of immigrants in the sample may be smaller than in the County caseload as a whole.

<sup>viii</sup> Values from the first interview are applied backward in time to January 1998 and forward in time to the second interview (mid-2000), a period ranging from 11 to 21 months. Second interview values are used for quarters from the second to the third interview (from mid-2000 to mid-2001), and replaced by third interview values until the end of the data (from mid-2001 through June 2002).

<sup>ix</sup> In the number of barriers model low English proficiency, defined only for immigrants, was not included in the count.