CALIFORNIA WORK PAYS
DEMONSTRATION
PROJECT

PROCESS EVALUATION

WELFARE REFORM IN
CALIFORNIA:

PHASE II (SEPT 1993 - SEPT 1994)

CAL LEARN:
PRE-EXISTING PROGRAMS

COMMUNICATION
OF WORK INCENTIVES:

PHASE I AND PHASE II

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In addition to data collection activities for an impact study, UC DATA is responsible for a process evaluation of the demonstration project, as required by the Terms and Conditions of the federal APDP/CWPDP waivers. Broadly speaking, the process evaluation is a description of how the demonstration project was implemented and operated, and comprises the qualitative research component of the DSS project.

UC DATA began the process study in June 1993, six months after the start of the demonstration project, with three student researchers and one supervisor. As of August 1995, the process study involves a team of seven student researchers and two supervisors. The work of the team is focused on two distinct policy programs, Cal-Learn and the package of reforms labeled “Work Pays.” The work of the process team is conducted in yearly “phases,” with a concentrated effort to conduct field research in the summer months, and to produce reports at designated times during the academic year. Researchers travel extensively to the four research counties, collecting comparable information across counties. Five reports have been drafted and presented in Research Advisory Committee meetings, and several more reports are in development. After review of the process study of the first year of the demonstration project, DSS staff decided that UC DATA, rather than the evaluation contractor, should complete the actual process “evaluation” to be presented to the federal Department of Health and Human Services. However, the evaluation contractor (UCLA) provides input to the process team and will use process evaluation reports to inform the impact evaluation.
The first challenge for the process team was defining and designing the process study. There were very few formal requirements for the content of the process study, other than the four items which the Terms and Conditions specifies to be examined in the demonstration:

- The organizational aspects, such as the planning process, staffing structure, funding committed, and procedures for verification;

- The contextual factors, such as, the social, economic, and political forces that may have a bearing on the replicability of the intervention or influence the implementation of the demonstration;

- The contextual factors which may have affected the observed impacts of APDP and what those factors say about extrapolating the experience in California to the rest of the nation; and

- The differences between the demonstrations and the comparable services, activities, staffing, etc. available to those not participating in the demonstration.

In addition, the team found few examples of process studies from other demonstration projects, and those they found tended to be extremely narrow, brief and without a description of methodology, so they did not lend themselves to be used as models. Instead the process team took direction from the policy implementation and “street-level bureaucracy” literature, and began formulating an implementation study.

As the process study developed, it actually served many purposes: a case study of policy implementation, a history of the demonstration project, a description of the context in which data on welfare recipients was collected, and a study of the impact of demonstration project research on service organizations. These multiple functions made the project overwhelming at times, as the research staff felt obligated to collect any information related to
the demonstration project and to know everything about both the content and the history of the project. As research was conducted and reports developed, the team learned to focus on the critical process events. As the data collection progressed, critical contextual issues arose for investigation by the process team, issues which could not have been foreseen earlier.

The process study involved data collection from at least four distinct sources, in-person interviews with program staff, observations of program staff interacting with clients, program documents, and minutes from regular meetings with research and county program staff. Conducting in-depth interviews using semi-structured interview guides was the primary data collection activity of the team, providing information about implementation events, working relationships, the experience of staff involved, client flow, communication of information within the agencies and to clients, and standard organizational and programmatic processes potentially affecting program outcomes. Careful analysis of official program documentation allowed the reconstruction of historical events, as well as depiction of the formal aspects of program implementation and operation. Using these sources, detailed time-lines were developed to trach the historical development of the project, which were then chronicled in reports summarizing major events, challenges, problems, resolutions, and successes characterizing the project.

Like other research components, the process study had its own set of unique challenges. One very practical difficulty was recreating the history of the project over a year during summer-time interviews. Sometimes state and county staff were unable to remember specific events relating to the demonstration project, which often constituted only a small fraction of their overall work responsibilities. Ideally a process study would entail periodic
(monthly) communication with key staff to update the history of the project and record salient
issues at the time of contact.

In the Cal-learn component, researchers faced the difficulty of mapping out the "key
players" in the less centralized health and education bureaucracies in the research counties.
Beginning with the Cal-learn coordinators in each welfare office, the process team utilized a
snowball sampling methodology to identify the primary agencies and individuals involved with
pregnant and parenting teens. By nature, snowball sampling extends the period over which
relevant interviews are completed, as new contacts are continuously made; consequently,
scheduling of site visits was less predictable and required more flexibility on the part of
researchers.

By far the most challenging aspect of conducting process evaluation research is
establishing and maintaining positive relationships with the subjects of the research,
specifically with employees of state, county and non-profit organizations involved directly in
program implementation. In order to create a non-threatening situation and motivate subjects
to contribute to the study, the team emphasizes the function of the process study to allow all
perspectives, especially from the local level, to be brought to policy makers and administrators
at higher levels of government. Much of the first year involved gaining the trust and respect of
county administrative staff, which was accomplished after these individuals were interviewed
several times and reviewed the teams preliminary reports. Line staff in the welfare offices
tended to perceive process team researchers as "auditors," accounting for their initial resistance
to being studied through personal interviews and observations. These issues contributed to
logistical difficulties in arranging site visits and interviews, as well as considerable time spent
ensuring comfort and willingness of research subjects, so that valuable information could be obtained.

The team also struggles with the presentation of information collected in the field. All of the research subjects, whether in public or private agencies, have a stake in any type of “evaluation,” and therefore are concerned about the content of the process study. Despite its best efforts, in the first phase of research the team was not able to identify the issues of concern to each player until the reports were drafted and reviewed. For example, counties’ primary criticism of reports surrounded the portrayal of agency management structure rather than specific demonstration project activities. As the process team learned how to address this concern, composition of subsequent reports proceeded more smoothly.
WELFARE REFORM IN CALIFORNIA

PHASE II: 1993 - 1994

During first phase of California's state-wide welfare reform program, known as the Assistance Payments Demonstration Project, the state successfully implemented two reforms and a rigorous evaluation of AFDC program changes. The major effort during the first phase of the demonstration project, which began in December 1992, was creating the structural components of the evaluation study in four counties. Just as the research design was reaching a state of stability and routine activity at the county level, a whole new set of reforms were passed into law. The first of these changes was implemented in September 1993, and started a second phase in the state's welfare reform program.

Along with new policy changes, the second phase of welfare reform included incorporation of the Assistance Payment Demonstration Project into the new California Work Pays Demonstration Project, fielding of major components of the data collection on welfare recipients, and launching of the "Work Pays Campaign" by the state. This report outlines the history of those events as well as preliminary findings of research at the state and county level about the experiences of those involved in phase two of the project.¹ This research covers roughly the period from September 1993 through September 1994, when the latest information was collected.

¹ Discussion of the "Work Pays Campaign" at the state and county levels is contained in a report entitled "Communication of Work Incentives" which covers this topic in both phase one and two.

In contrast to 1992, the budget negotiations in 1993 (for the 93-94 FY) produced a dramatic set of changes to the AFDC program. A bipartisan working group in the Legislature worked tirelessly to come to agreement on welfare reforms to be implemented in the following budget year. The result was Senate Bill 35 and Senate Bill 1078, which created several new programs, new work incentives, as well as some grant reductions. Within the 93-94 budget, savings from grant reductions were used to pay for other work incentive features of the legislation. The following describes the major components of SB 35 and SB 1078 and related budget provisions:

**Grant Reduction:** reduced Maximum Aid Payment (MAP) levels by 2.7%

**Work Incentives:** provided funding to remove the time limit on the income disregard which allows recipients to keep $30 and $30 and 1/3 of their earning each month; MAP reduction provided addition work incentive as it allows recipients to earn back the reduction through "fill the gap budgeting"

- **Work Support:** to help AFDC recipients to become more self-sufficient, increases resource limits, increases automobile equity amount, and allows recipients to establish restricted saving accounts to save money for children's college education and training, down payment on a home, or for starting a business.

- **Supplemental Child Care:** provides working AFDC families with a cash payment to cover child care costs exceeding their current disregard up to 75th percentile of the market rate

- **California Alternative Assistance Program:** permits working people who qualify for AFDC to reject a cash grant and still receive Medi-Cal and child care benefits.

- **GAIN Reforms:** Among other changes, provides that the exemption for a child under three is available only one time during continuous AFDC eligibility except for four months after birth or adoption of another child
Cal-Learn: provides financial incentives, case management, and support services to pregnant and parenting AFDC recipients under 19 to encourage them to pursue a high school diploma or equivalent

Of all the provisions in this legislation, the newly developed version of the Cal-Learn Program was by far the most innovative and significant new program. It differed from earlier Cal-Learn proposals in many ways, stemming from more attention to operational needs and problems which might be faced in implementing the program and influencing teen parent behavior. Together these provisions signalled a move by the state towards more comprehensive efforts to provide AFDC recipients with realistic assistance in making the transition from welfare to work.²

State Implementation of SB 35

Senate Bill 35 was signed on June 30, 1993, and its companion "clean-up" bill, SB 1078 was signed on October 11, 1993. At the state-level, implementation activities began immediately upon passage of SB 35 and the 1993-1994 budget. First of all, the state Department of Social Services had to secure federal waivers as needed for the new provisions. In addition, DSS initiated changes which already had federal waivers, began meeting with counties, began developing regulations, and began promoting the new set of policies.

² It should be noted that in July 1994, the Ninth U.S. Circuit Court of Appeal ruled against the state in the Beno vs Shalala case in July 1994, shedding doubt on the viability of grant reductions and effectively stopping further reductions. Although the outcome of this ruling on California's current welfare reform program is unclear, it does represent one obstacle in an otherwise sweeping set of changes to the state's AFDC system.
The Waiver Process

This was the second time around for DSS in the waiver process and, like the first time, approval was secured fairly easily. The entire process took five months, from submission of waiver proposal on September 20, 1993 to final approval on March 1, 1994. This was comparable to the six months of negotiation for waivers approved in 1992, although the federal approval process had changed. Issues and questions were raised simultaneously by staff of all affected federal programs, slowing the arrival of a first response to the waiver proposal. Then negotiations and draft revisions ensued. State staff reported that the final draft did not vary greatly from the original. Fortunately, they were informed by federal staff at DHHS that several provisions in their original proposal did not need waivers at all. While this made the process simpler, some state program personnel reported a lack of clarity about which provisions were approved during the process. For this waiver, staff from several different units in DSS were involved.

The new waiver held the title "California Works Pays Demonstration Project" (CWPDP). The original APDP waiver was extended so that both waivers would have a life of five years starting April 1, 1994. Although both waivers stand alone, operationally they have become combined into the same demonstration project, CWPDP. For purposes of the research, the federal government approved the state's request to continue to use the same sample, and simply not apply any waived provisions to the control cases. Therefore the APDP sample became the CWPDP sample, as the new provisions were rolled into the original research project.
Program Implementation

The state Department of Social Services was able to implement two provisions of SB 35 and the 93-94 budget because they had been approved in earlier waivers. The 2.7% reduction in Maximum Aid Payments and the elimination of the time limit on the $30 and 1/3 disregard became effective September 1, 1993. These policy changes were implemented through All County Letters and emergency regulations. The emergency regulations survived the subsequent public comment process with few changes. Supplemental Child Care was implemented on November 1, 1993.³

While waiting for waiver approval, DSS developed regulations and documents for other provisions in SB 35 and this task was spread over different units within the Welfare Programs Division. The AFDC program staff were responsible for the work support features, while child care section staff had the lead on CAAP, and GAIN had the lead on changes to the GAIN program and set up a new unit to implement Cal-Learn. AFDC staff commented that development of regulations for the new policies changes went smoothly compared to development of regulations for the original APDP demonstration project.

At the request of the counties, DSS staggered the implementation dates of these programs, beginning with the start date set forth in the waiver, April 1, 1994. The work support features, restricted accounts and resource limits, became effective April 1, and the CAAP program began on May 1. Implementation of Cal-Learn must begin in each county by

³ Supplemental Child Care didn't require a waiver and therefore does not require evaluation; all recipients, including APDP/CWPDP control cases, are potentially eligible.
April 1, 1995; however, one county (Placer) was able to start as early as April 1, 1994.

In order to prepare the research counties for the upcoming changes, DSS held several informational and planning meetings in October and November. On October 6, 1993, representatives from the research counties were invited to Sacramento to learn about the new policies and how they would affect the research, assuming that the waivers would be approved. The state solicited ideas from the counties about different data collection methods and also requested information from the counties on which to base cost estimates for the program. Then the DSS research staff and UC DATA staff traveled to each county to discuss site-specific implementation issues. County concerns at the time included adequate reimbursement for electronic data systems changes required for SB 35 implementation and research, as well as planning for the Cal-Learn program. All parties were acting on the assumption that the federal waiver approval would come sooner than it actually did and that SB 35 programs would be implemented as early as January 1994. State staff also anticipated that the GAIN reforms would be a larger part of the demonstration project, as this was before they learned only one GAIN change required a waiver.

Data Collection Process

During phase two of APDP/CWPDP, several components of the data collection effort were implemented and substantial progress was made in preparing data bases for analysis and eventual public use. Most notably, the telephone survey was fielded in November 1993, and the data validation of the cases surveyed began in February 1994. Both of these projects represented extensive cooperative efforts between different agencies within CDSS and UC
Berkeley and tireless development and revision of data collection instruments and procedures.

The Data Validation Project, conceived by the Research Branch of CDSS, was developed primarily by the Review and Evaluation Branch (REB) of CDSS and UC DATA. The state chose REB because of their experience with (quality control) case review and their existing field staff. REB and UCDATA began working together in spring of 1993, and during fall and early winter had tested and revised the data collection instrument at least five times. This cooperative effort was a success for several reasons. First, the two organizations easily agreed on a division of tasks: UC DATA would provide the programming, and REB would develop the manual to instruct their field staff. Second, the two groups held frequent meetings where issues could be raised and resolve face to face; this was particularly important because the language and approach of the two organizations can be very different. Third, the instrument was tested by REB staff so that their experience as case reviewers could be brought back to UC DATA through their supervisors.

Although successful in the end, some of the frustrations of REB in developing this project are instructive for future projects. The Data Validation project was a particularly difficult undertaking because it was an entirely new project for all staff involved and no model was available to adapt. A preferred process would have been to start with an overall vision to work towards rather than to develop the project by trial and error. A lack of anticipation of the final result, particularly the size of the instrument, had two important impacts. One was insufficient budget requests at the beginning of the project to fund all the necessary field staff. Another was an inability to communicate to the counties and to field staff what would be required of them. Although REB staff tried their best not to interfere with county operations,
they are often are the ones who receive county complaints about data collection issues. In addition, REB staff need to understand why they have been assigned additional tasks, requiring a well developed explanation of the research process.

Once the telephone survey was developed and ready to be fielded, the process of updating phone numbers began, requiring a joint effort of the Survey Research Center and the CWPDP Coordinators. The experience of the counties with this task is summarized later.

County-Level Activities

As in the first phase of APDP, the process study team visited the four research counties to collect information on the experiences of the counties with the new policy changes and the ongoing evaluation research. Interviews were conducted with the CWPDP Coordinators and observations were made of a sample of worker-client interactions. This section summarizes the administrative-level perspectives; the worker-level findings are discussed in the report entitled "Communication of Work Incentives."

Research Cases

During the second phase of the project, many changes occurred in all four counties affecting the management of the APDP/CWPDP research cases. In three counties major events independent of the demonstration project influence its ongoing administration. Most notably, Los Angeles County suffered an earthquake which restricted access to CWPDP files. In addition, the CWPDP Coordinator was taken out of the office for four months in order to help staff an emergency shelter. In February 1994, Alameda's Social Services Agency
undertook a reorganization in which the CWPDP unit was reclassified into a section separate from other program staff in the main office. In addition, Alameda's CWPDP Coordinator had a new set of superiors who were not knowledgeable about CWPDP and began assigning her other tasks.

San Joaquin County undertook the massive project in 1994 of implementing the Statewide Automated Welfare System (SAWS), which automates the eligibility intake process during the client interview. In the early stages of training and conversion, adoption of this project transformed the work of the Human Services Agency, requiring massive amounts of time and staff resources and dramatically affecting client processing. All types of staff, administrative and line, have been drafted to convert cases. Three months into the training, intakes were taking twice as long as they did formerly and some clients were waiting a month or more for an interview.

The impact of SAWS directly on the CWPDP research may be heightened because the control cases will not be on SAWS. The control cases must be processed manually, because the system is unable to handle two sets of rules. However, their companion assistance units (AU's) must be taken out the system. Experimental cases will be on SAWS, and the system will not allow companion AU's to have the same serial number, requiring staff to find a new method to keep the AU's in an experimental case together. The four eligibility workers with control cases will be able to avoid direct involvement in SAWS; however, their supervisor was asked to allocate time to help with the conversion of other cases. In addition, the accuracy of data collection on CWPDP experimental cases could be compromised by the difficulties inherent in training on and working out "bugs" in a new system. For example, one worker in
training reported that when she typed in "yes" to a question in SAWS, the answer would turn to "no."

In two counties, structural changes were made to the organization of research cases. San Joaquin's Human Services Agency, which was the only county to not centralize research cases from the beginning of the project, decided in March 1994 to set up a special unit for control cases. As the SAWS system could not accommodate control cases, management wanted to avoid each worker having to work in both a manual and automated system. In April 1994, a new unit was formed with five workers. Unlike other counties, those that volunteered were chosen, rather than being selected for experience or through a competitive process. Partly, these workers volunteered because they were interested in avoiding involvement in SAWS, and they are not the most experienced in workers in the agency. Instead of an extensive training session, a discussion was held to determine the workers knowledge of control case procedures and their work was closely monitored. The only problem detected was that some workers discontinued cases when any client violated the 100 hour rule, rather than only the principal earner in a U-parent case. As caseload started out relatively small, the unit shifted to four workers with control cases.

In San Bernardino, three of the four CWPDP units were moved to different offices, in order to use new space and make room for other programs. The one control unit and one experimental unit in Fontana were moved to the brand new Colton Office, and the experimental unit in Redlands moved to San Bernardino. Although the number of workers has remained approximately the same, the experimental unit in Colton grew to eleven workers and the other two shrunk to three and four workers. CWPDP caseloads are no longer smaller than
the average in the county, and now the workers travel less because their clients are served by local workers, unless they specifically request their own workers.

In Alameda and Los Angeles the CWPDP cases are handled by the same units; however, the staff in those units have undergone significant turnover. In San Joaquin and Alameda counties, the Coordinator is in the same building as the CWPDP unit and able to work closely with the workers and their supervisors. In the two counties with multiple CWPDP units in different offices, Los Angeles and San Bernardino, the Coordinator holds meetings with the all workers to monitor their work and provide information and training. The Los Angeles Coordinator tries to hold two meetings per year, although impeded by the earthquake in 1994, and brings speakers on different operational tasks. At the last meeting, the workers estimated that their voluntary case cleaning efforts resulted in twenty cases being discontinued. The San Bernardino Coordinator meets with her CWPDP staff quarterly to answer their operational questions and bring them information about the research. The number of questions have decreased dramatically and the interest in the research results seems high. In addition, she tries to communicate with non-CWPDP staff about the demonstration project and finds that, although this is difficult, at least they know where the CWPDP units are located.

The job of the County Coordinators has not changed uniformly across the research counties. In some counties the time spent on CWPDP has been greatly or moderately reduced since the first phase, and in others its has stayed the same, depending on the circumstances in the agency and the demands of other responsibilities. Integrating replacement cases has become routine, and time spent resolving problem cases has been reduced. In Alameda county, the new cases don't generally need cleaning; while in San Bernardino they are cleaned
before being sent to their CWPDP unit, which may delay their arrival. The primary new activities include helping with the Data Validation project and finding phone numbers for the telephone survey. Three counties experienced a strain on staff resources in finding telephone numbers, and three had problems adjusting to the demands of the Data Validation project.

The major concern with the data validation and case-coding process was having case files away from the workers too long. One county adapted to this by pulling only 10-15 cases a day. In several counties, an additional strain was generated from a lack of knowledge about the exact requirements of these two projects before they began.

**SB 35 Implementation**

Implementation of the 2.7% MAP rollback was routine for the counties, requiring programming and notices to clients. As in phase one, counties generally didn't provide special training for the grant reduction or for the extension of the $30 and 1/3 disregard. In two counties, clients in the CWPDP control case sample complained or filed hearings for not receiving the $30 and 1/3 extension. Replacement cases selected for the control sample were particularly affected because if they were working their grants decreased substantially when their case was converted. Several county staff voiced a concern about the lack of fairness in these situations.

Supplemental Child Care (which applied to both experimental and control cases) was a most complex change to implement, and in at least two counties required special training for workers. Implementation was made more difficult because information from the state came in pieces, was changed over time, and generated many questions. Computer programming was
difficult to complete in a timely fashion. Eligibility workers in one county found the program difficult because they must calculate two budgets, navigate complex rate schedules, and acquire several signatures. Clients were noticed about the changes and those who were working could begin receiving payments as early as January 1994. Although respondents in all of the counties agreed that the program could be beneficial to clients, a concern was raised that clients might avoid the program because of reporting requirements designed to identify welfare or tax fraud on the part of the child care providers.

Like the grant reduction, and $30 and 1/3 extension, the work support features (restricted accounts and resource limits) were implemented in April 1994 as routine changes. These did not require special training. In the same instructions, counties notified workers of the new CWPDP waiver changes and the new name for the project. The Assistance Payment Demonstration Project became the Work Pays Demonstration Project.

The California Alternative Assistance Program (CAAP) was implemented in May 1994 in at least one county, but no clients had applied for benefits in the first two months. Two counties delayed on implementation for at least three months because they did not have adequate information from the state. One went ahead with a complex reprogramming of their data system in preparation for CAAP implementation.

Generally, county representatives believe that clients would not see any benefit to choosing the CAAP program. The paperwork requirements for CAAP eligibility and continuation are the same as those for AFDC eligibility and continuation. In addition, those in charge of implementing these programs did not characterize CAAP as a helpful package to aid the transition of clients off of public assistance. However, a member of the GAIN staff in one
county, who acts as a resource to all AFDC clients who are interested in going to work, was extremely positive about the entire new set of programs.

**Cal-Learn**

Implementing Cal-Learn was and is by far the most demanding task of all the SB 35 welfare reform changes for all the counties, requiring extensive planning, organizing, and networking. For this reason, the bulk of the 1993-94 process evaluation research effort was focused on documenting the planning process prior to the implementation of Cal-Learn in the four research counties. Data collection involved extensive interviewing with a wide range of individuals and organizations involved in Cal-Learn, as well as site-visits to many other programs serving teen parents. Existing services and organizational networks were carefully studied to provide a baseline for research conducted after implementation begins. A summary of these findings as well a diagram describing organizational networks existing and formed during Cal-Learn planning can be found in the report entitled "Cal-Learn Demonstration Project: Overview of Pre-Existing Programs for Pregnant and Parenting Teens."

**Statewide Automated Welfare System (SAWS)**

The county of San Joaquin started in July of 1994 to train their eligibility workers to use the SAWS system in their intake process. The plan was to use the State Wide Automated Welfare System exclusively for all new intakes by December of 1994, and to phase out manual ones.

As of October 5, 1994, San Joaquin was still training eligibility workers in how to use
the new computer system. UC Davis was placed in charge of SAWS user training, and training sessions took place in San Joaquin County's welfare office in Stockton. Eligibility workers were sent to one week training sessions; they received a plastic cup with the SAWS logo imprinted on it upon completion, and started to use SAWS to process intakes immediately afterwards. Each intake area contains about six computers. A training supervisor is available to answer questions during the intakes should problems with the system arise. Workers share computers.

According to one of the training supervisors who provided system support to EWs after they completed their initial SAWS training, it took about one and one half hours to complete a single intake at this time, with most of the workers picking up speed as they used the system more. During observations of SAWS intakes, the average time of completion for one intake seemed to be closer to two and one half hours. Manual intakes used to take an average of 45 minutes each. The training supervisor also stated that in her opinion the advantage of SAWS would not be at the level of the eligibility worker; but rather, during the processing of cases.

During SAWS intakes, a new phenomenon was observed in eligibility worker and client interaction, which varied slightly among EWs. Since there did not seem to be any regulation governing interaction with clients, some EWs showed clients the data collection screens during the intake and explained what they were typing and what the form on the monitor at any given time referred to, while others did not. At times a form appeared on screen which required an entry of 'not applicable' to a particular client, such as a GAIN form when the client was not required to attend GAIN. At this point there was a decision to be made regarding whether to tell the client about the program and explain that he or she was
exempt, or to just simply type in the code which would tell the system to move on to the next form.

If EWs do not discuss such programs or their exemptions, then clients may not find out that there is a GAIN program at all. In light of our concern that work incentives are not being communicated to clients, the implementation of the SAWS system could prove to be an additional obstacle to the communication process. Eliminating paperwork means that clients may never see the forms they would have had to fill out prior to the change in procedure.

With regard to eligibility workers, the implementation of the SAWS system poses an additional burden to the regular work load. SAWS computer programming was done by personnel with limited English language capabilities, which made communication with other computer staff difficult. We were told that the codes needed to complete an intake were not uniform. Because of this, each EW had to figure out which codes a particular screen would accept during the intake. Depending on the creativity of the EW, this could take varying amounts of time, and also delayed completing the intake considerably.

Another problem observed was that at times the system seemed to exhibit quirks and change answers which were entered as 'yes' to 'no'. In all observed cases, the EWs commented on the fact that often a document needed to complete an application did not appear on the screen. If the EW was not mindful of either or both of these scenarios, the application would be either incomplete or simply incorrect.

The SAWS system seemed to have more problems handling more complex cases. In one observation a single father applied for aid for himself and his pregnant teen-aged daughter. The EW assigned to conduct the intake spent about 30 minutes trying to get the needed form to
appear on the screen, because the system did not recognize more than one absent parent in the same case. All of the eligibility workers observed needed considerable assistance during their intakes, and their work routines were interrupted by having to find a computer support person to get help. The additional time spent on resolving problems and learning the automated system left even less time to interact with clients.

In some instances the system itself had to be accessed by computer programmers to iron out faulty codes or to eject cases which were stuck in progress out of the system. A weekly average of about fifteen problem cases were collected in the intake areas and brought upstairs to the SAWS - Help people, who dealt exclusively with problems in the system.
Cal-Learn, a major welfare reform initiative targeting pregnant and parenting adolescents, was passed by the California legislature in the summer of 1993 as part of SB 35. In the effort to reduce the long-term welfare dependency of teen parents, Cal-Learn seeks to encourage and assist this vulnerable group complete high school. The new program provides teen parents with supportive services such as child care and case management, as well as creating financial incentives to encourage teens to continue their educations.

In the year following passage of SB 35, the state agencies responsible for Cal-Learn laid most of the groundwork for the new program's implementation. For instance, the state quickly obtained the waivers from the federal government necessary to implement Cal-Learn. In addition, the State Department of Social Services drafted the new Cal-Learn regulations in consultation with the State Department of Health Services and County Welfare Departments. State staff also provided training programs across the state to educate county officials about their new responsibilities under Cal-Learn.

Cal-Learn poses significant implementation challenges at the local level. As legislated, Cal-Learn's program design is both complex and ambitious. Building on existing programs, Cal-Learn requires extensive inter-agency cooperation between County Welfare Departments, Adolescent Family Life Programs (AFLPs), and local public schools. While the County Welfare Departments are responsible for the overall administration of the program, the AFLPs...
have primary responsibility for providing case management to the teen parents, and the public schools have the responsibility of providing the education and skills necessary to escape welfare dependency. In addition to this complex design, the Cal-Learn legislation requires considerable expansion of existing services under an ambitious time-frame. Unlike previous programs for pregnant and parenting teens, Cal-Learn makes participation mandatory rather than voluntary, which will require extensive expansion of services. SB 35 mandates that the counties enroll all eligible participants by September, 1995. If program estimates turn out to be accurate, Cal-Learn will entail an approximately three-fold expansion of services in a single year.

As with all other federal demonstration projects, Cal-Learn will require a comprehensive evaluation to assess the program's impact in California and its replicability in other parts of the country. The Cal-Learn waiver requires the State to conduct both outcome and process evaluations in Alameda, Los Angeles, San Bernardino, and San Joaquin counties, which were chosen to be representative of different regions of the state.

As a preliminary step towards assessing the implementation of Cal-Learn at the local level, this report examines both the pre-existing programs for teen parents and the planning processes initiated for Cal-Learn. This information will serve as a baseline to assess program implementation in the process evaluation, as well as highlight the different issues and obstacles which local agencies face as the project gets under way. The first section of the report summarizes the differences that exist between three major pre-existing teen parent programs: the GAIN Teen Parent Program, the Adolescent Family Life Program, and school-based teen parent programs. These programmatic differences highlight many of the issues involved in
establishing successful interagency coordination. The second half of the report addresses variation between the four research counties: Alameda, Los Angeles, San Bernardino, and San Joaquin. These local differences will affect both the scale and complexity of the Cal-Learn program in each county.

For this preliminary phase of the process evaluation UC DATA researchers conducted more than 55 open-ended interviews of both state and county staff members involved in teen parent programs during the summer of 1994. In each county, researchers interviewed staff from GAIN, AFDC, the AFLP providers, and the County Offices of Education. In addition, researchers interviewed staff from several school-based programs for teen parents and child care agencies.

**Existing Teen Parent Services**

**GAIN Teen Parent Program**

While the welfare system serves a significant proportion of the teen parent population through categorical entitlement programs, the GAIN Teen Parent Program is the only welfare program targeted specifically for pregnant and parenting teens. This teen parent program is relatively small and is administered through the larger adult GAIN program. The primary goal of GAIN is to help welfare recipients find employment and leave AFDC by providing access to child care, education, and job training services. The GAIN Teen Parent Program is specifically geared towards helping teen welfare recipients graduate from high school by providing access to child care and transportation.

In each county welfare department, GAIN operates as a distinct division separate from
AFDC and the other entitlement programs. As with other welfare programs, management of the GAIN program is centered on standardized administration of benefits and fraud prevention. Detailed statutes and regulations leave relatively little room for discretion at the local level. Most of the program's services, such as education programs, job training, and child care, are provided by outside contractors.

In terms of inter-agency coordination, GAIN has working relationships with the AFDC program and its network of service providers. GAIN receives almost all of its referrals from AFDC through a formal (and often computerized) system. GAIN's sub-contractors include a wide variety of service providers, including public schools, child care providers, and job training programs, among others. Most of these contractual relationships center on administering benefits. For example, the GAIN workers in one research county work closely with school attendance officers in order to verify that child care payments were justifiable.

In order to be eligible for the GAIN Teen Parent program teens must be between 16 and 18 years old and have not graduated from high school. Certain categories of AFDC recipients, including teens who have not graduated from high school, are considered "mandatory" participants in GAIN. Due to budgetary constraints on the GAIN program, however, most GAIN Teen participants are actually volunteers from this "mandatory" group. Their primary reason for participating in the program is to obtain the support services they need to return to school.

After an initial orientation session, GAIN job counselors meet individually with each participant to develop a service plan. The service plan serves as a legally binding contract which defines the amount and kind of support services that GAIN will provide and the
responsibilities incumbent on the client. Failure to comply with the contract results in sanctioning of the participant's portion of the family's AFDC grant. Typically, "support services" provided to teens consists of a specific number of paid child care hours per week, as determined by the teen's school schedule. Child care is not provided over school vacation periods. The plan may also include, if needed, a bus pass. The GAIN job counselor draws up the contract and authorizes payment for all support services, but does not actually set up the child care. Parents choose their own child care arrangements, often with the assistance of Child Care Resource and Referral agencies.

GAIN teen parent job counselors often have lower caseloads than adult counselors in order to provide more intensive personalized case management services to teens. It appears that in most cases, job counselors refer GAIN teens to adult education and continuation school programs, rather than regular comprehensive high school programs. It also seems that a considerable amount of GAIN job counselors' time is taken up with administering and monitoring benefits. Face to face contact between clients and GAIN job counselors may actually occur infrequently following the initial meeting on the individual service plan, and most often in response to program sanctions.

After Cal-Learn is implemented, participants in the GAIN Teen Parent program will be transferred and the old program will formally end. However, county GAIN staff will have new responsibilities for Cal-Learn, including such tasks as program planning, contracting, monitoring provision of benefits and administering financial incentives and sanctions. As a result, the GAIN divisions will have to work much more closely with AFDC, as well as establish new relationships with the other agencies involved in Cal-Learn.
Adolescent Family Life Program

The Adolescent Family Life Program (AFLP) is the State Department of Health Services's primary program for pregnant and parenting teens. While the primary mission of the AFL program is to improve the health of teen parents and their children, the program also seeks to address their social, educational, and psychological needs through comprehensive case management. While the state requires that AFLP providers meet strict case management standards, the administration of the program is extremely decentralized and flexible. The Maternal and Child Health Division of the State Department of Health Services contracts the program out to a wide variety of agencies, including community-based non-profits, local hospitals, and County Public Health Departments. In turn, these local providers maintain extensive networks with other local service providers, including the public schools, community health clinics, child care providers, and social service agencies, among many others.

AFLP case management includes assessment, planning, coordinating, advocating, monitoring, and counseling of clients primarily around the health care needs of participants and their babies. Case managers are under strict documentation requirements for recording and updating client information. Reports must be filed every three months to the Maternal Child Health Division of CDHS. These reports provide detailed statistical information on client demographics, birth outcomes, health and immunization status and service needs. Health care needs are considered in the broad sense, and often include such aspects as having adequate food, clothing, shelter and safety.

Participation in the AFL program is entirely voluntary, and most providers are unable to meet the demand for their services due to limited funding. Even with these limits, the AFL
programs in the research counties are generally four times the size of the GAIN Teen Parent program. Any pregnant or parenting teen between the ages of 12 and 18 years is eligible for AFLP, regardless of income. While most participants are teen mothers, teen fathers are also eligible for services. Most AFLP participants are referred to the program by their friends, schools, or local clinics. None of the AFLPs in the four research counties have been able to serve the entire county. San Joaquin’s AFLP, for example, is able to serve only the city of Stockton.

As mandated in SB 35, the AFL providers will serve as the lynch-pin of the service delivery system for Cal-Learn participants. The case managers will be required to arrange comprehensive services for all the teens who participate (i.e., attend Cal-Learn orientations) and monitor their performance in school. The case managers will be expected to collect and turn over the grades of each participant to their GAIN counterparts. Much of the responsibility for interagency coordination in Cal-Learn will fall on the shoulders of the case managers.

School-based Pregnant and Parenting Teen Programs

While the public school systems were not explicitly included in Cal-Learn’s program design, they will play a critical role. Most importantly, they are required to expand their existing educational programs to accommodate Cal-Learn participants who return to school. Concomitant with this expansion, the schools will be required to assess and place each returning student in an appropriate program. This expansion is a concern for school district officials, since special programs for pregnant and parenting teens are generally relatively
expensive to operate. School officials also expressed confusion about the availability of Cal-Learn funds to pay for expansion of on-site child care facilities. Another area of concern and confusion among school officials is whether Cal-Learn will place additional administrative burdens on the schools, or infringe on students' academic class-time.

Teen parents who attend public schools in California are enrolled in a wide variety of educational programs, including mainstream comprehensive high schools, alternative continuation schools, adult education programs, community schools, independent study, and specialized programs for pregnant and parenting teens. Even among these specialized programs there is considerable local variation in the educational program and supportive services provided. While public schools frequently combine a variety of funding sources to establish unique programs, two primary sources of state and county funding help shape them: the Pregnant Minor Program (PMP), and the School Age Parenting and Infant Development program (SAPID).

PMP funding is channeled by the California Department of Education (CDE) through the County Offices of Education (COE). At this point, only 14 county offices of education in the state of California receive PMP funding. Of the four research counties, Alameda, Los Angeles, and San Bernardino counties receive outside PMP funding. This funding provides a higher per pupil average daily attendance (ADA) reimbursement rate for alternative educational programs for pregnant teens under the age of 18. PM programs must offer self-contained classrooms providing at least 4 hours of daily instruction in academics, health and nutrition. Some PM programs also have on-site child care. Students in PM programs are allowed to remain in the program for one semester following the birth of their child, although
in some cases extensions are granted.

SAPID is a major source of funding for programs that are essentially day care programs for parenting students. SAPID programs are located at, or very close to the local high schools. Students drop their children off at the program in the morning, attend class, and then pick up their child after school. Students using SAPID services often attend alternative educational programs such as continuation school rather than the regular comprehensive school programs. By regulation, SAPID programs must provide classes in the area of parent education, health and nutrition, as well as supervised, practical, "hands on" child care instruction. All classes and practical training experiences are open to the entire student body of the school, not just to teen parents.

Summary

Cal-Learn builds on these existing teen parent programs, attempting to develop a comprehensive approach to the problem of teen pregnancy. By combining financial incentives, supportive services, and case management, Cal-Learn's designers hope to address the full range of teen parents' economic, health, and educational needs and provide an avenue of escape from long-term poverty. While implementing such a comprehensive program through existing institutions may prevent further duplication of services, it also creates significant implementation challenges. Historically, the welfare, public health, and educational systems have been extremely autonomous, with quite different missions, organizational cultures, and modes of operation. Cal-Learn will require extensive, ongoing coordination between these systems in order to function effectively. Establishing and sustaining this level of coordination
will demand considerable administrative effort on the part of all the organizations involved in the program.

County Planning and Implementation Issues

In addition to these substantial differences between programs, implementation of Cal-Learn will be shaped by a variety of local factors, such as the diversity of the population, the organization of the service delivery system, the availability of supportive services, and the local planning processes. This section of the report sketches out some of the basic differences between the four research counties with an eye towards how these elements will affect implementation.

Alameda County

Alameda County contains both densely populated inner-city, urban areas and large suburban and rural sections. Its population of approximately 1.2 million is concentrated in the north and western portions of the county, and is notable for its great ethnic diversity. The largest city, Oakland, according to 1990 census figures, is composed of at least eighty-two different language or ethnic groups. The two AFLP provider agencies in Alameda county are operated by independent non-profit agencies, each with its own distinctive character. One agency, East Bay Perinatal Council, serves a mostly African-American, urban population in and around Oakland, while the other agency, Tiburcio Vasquez Health Center, serves a largely Latino population base in the southern portion of the county. Both AFLPs utilize only masters level social workers as case managers and place a premium on culturally sensitive practice.
Alameda County also contains the City of Berkeley, with its own Health Department, which provides relatively rich services for pregnant and parenting teens residing in Berkeley.

Implementation of Cal-learn will require an expansion of AFLP services into areas previously uncovered by AFLP providers, including Berkeley and far eastern and south county areas. Changes resulting from rapid program expansion and mandatory program participation have raised some questions about how Cal-learn might alter the nature of existing programs and services.

Similar to the other counties, there are a variety of different educational programs targeted to pregnant and parenting students in Alameda County. The administration of these programs is fragmented among the 18 independent school districts and the Alameda County Office of Education. Special school programs feel generally unprepared and somewhat apprehensive about any sudden deluge of new enrollments that may result from Cal-learn.

The GAIN program, in contrast to the schools, is a highly centralized organization, with all functions situated in one welfare office located in Oakland. Centralization has made it somewhat easier to transform the existing GAIN Teen Parent program into the new Cal-learn program. The major issues during the planning and transition period concerned re-defining intra-agency staff duties, changing the computer management information systems and developing new inter-agency agreements with the two AFLP provider agencies. Three child care resource and referral (R&R) agencies had previously played a major contractual role in the operation of the GAIN Teen Parent program in Alameda. Their previous role in the GAIN Teen Parent program was eliminated under Cal-learn regulations, which assigned administration of support functions to GAIN or the AFLPs.
Los Angeles County

Los Angeles County is by far the largest of the four research counties in terms of population, with almost nine million residents in 1990. It is also very ethnically and racially diverse: 37 percent of the population is Hispanic, 10 percent African-American, and another 10 percent Asian or Pacific Islander. Befitting the scale of the county, the three main types of teen parent programs are all decentralized with multiple sites across the county. For example, the GAIN program as a whole operates out of six regional offices, two of which have active Teen Parent programs. Five different non-profit agencies provide AFLP services in different areas of the county. In addition, Los Angeles County contains 82 different school districts which offer 56 different programs specifically for pregnant and parenting teens. Los Angeles Unified School District, which alone enrolls over one-half of all students in the county, provides 15 different specialized teen parent programs. Both the scale of Los Angeles County and the number of independent agencies which will be involved in Cal-Learn present a unique implementation challenge.

Another distinguishing feature of Los Angeles County is that it is the most urban of the four research counties. The number and variety of non-profit agencies which participate in the AFL program reflects this social environment. Four of the five existing AFLP providers are community-based non-profits which provide a broad range of health and social services to youth. The fifth AFLP provider is attached to a local hospital active in providing comprehensive health services to its surrounding community. Furthermore, each of the AFLP's in Los Angeles County has extensive service networks with other service providers, in addition to actively participating in a county-wide AFLP association. The Los Angeles County
AFLPs also place a high priority on hiring case managers which reflect the ethnic, linguistic, and racial makeup of their clients. Most of their case managers are bilingual and have college-level educations. They carry average caseloads of 35 cases each and generally meet or exceed the state's AFLP case management standards.

The GAIN staff responsible for implementing Cal-Learn in Los Angeles County established a formal inter-agency planning process, similar to the process they originally used to implement GAIN. The planning group included senior GAIN managers, representatives from each of the AFLPs, the County Office of Education, and Los Angeles Unified School District. This group met monthly since the fall of 1993 to draft the Cal-Learn county plan and negotiate the case management contracts. The major issue which the agencies had to resolve during this period was formally defining the service areas that each agency would expand to cover. These service areas not only determined the expansion each agency would have to undergo, they also delineated the schools and school districts with which each provider would work. Furthermore, since none of the providers wanted to extend their service areas to the remote northern region of the county, the planning group also recruited Antelope Valley Community College to serve as a sixth Cal-Learn provider.

San Bernadino County

San Bernadino County is a vast, largely rural county with a rapidly growing population of about 1.5 million that is largely concentrated in the southwestern portion of the county. Racially and ethnically, according to 1990 census figures, the county is primarily White (61 percent) and Hispanic (27 percent), with fewer Blacks and Asians (8 and 4 percent
respectively. Both the GAIN and AFLP programs operate out of multiple sites. Despite this, transportation is often a challenge for program participants due to the size of the county.

In contrast to the AFLPs in Alameda and Los Angeles counties, San Bernadino has a government operated AFLP program, run by the County Health Department. Employees are hired through civil service procedures, and the program primarily focuses on health concerns and employs more public health nurses (7 RNs and 3 health service assistants) than social workers (3 MSWs). San Bernadino also has one of the highest teen pregnancy rates in the state. Unlike some other AFLP programs which conduct outreach activities to bring in additional client participants, San Bernadino's AFLP program had to turn away four out of five program referrals during Fiscal Year 1994 year due to funding limitations.

The San Bernadino GAIN program differed from some of the other research counties in that it had a very strong relationship with the county's AFLP program even before the Cal-learn mandate. GAIN and AFLP were in negotiations for an MOU to sub-contract the GAIN teen parent program when the Cal-learn legislation passed, giving it a considerable head-start over other counties on implementation. As a result, San Bernadino began to phase out its GAIN-teen program earlier than the other counties, realizing that under Cal-Learn it would be sub-contracting these cases to the AFLP. All eight district GAIN offices began to intermingle teen cases with adult caseloads about six months prior to implementation of Cal-learn. A single new staff person, who had no prior involvement with GAIN's rules and regulations, was subsequently hired and trained specifically for Cal-learn.

Unlike other counties, San Bernadino's county Office of Education has initiated contacts with local unified school districts in an attempt to consolidate the administration of
disparate school programs for pregnant and parenting teens operating within the 22 unified-school districts of the county. Financial reimbursement is a driving force in this regard, with enhanced ADA revenues attached only to county administered Pregnant Minor programs.

San Joaquin County

Of the four research counties, San Joaquin is the smallest in population and geographic size. Its population came to just under one-half million in 1990, of whom 59 percent were white, 23 Hispanic, 12 percent Asian or Pacific Islander, and 5 percent African-American. San Joaquin is a rural community and has a relatively large Southeast Asian refugee population for a county its size.

San Joaquin County's GAIN program is in "cost reduction," which means that its services are targeted to certain high priority populations, such as refugees. The GAIN office is located in the Human Services Agency building in downtown Stockton, along with the AFDC program. Because of San Joaquin's refugee population, the GAIN Teen Parent Program has one bilingual Cambodian speaking case manager. However, very few refugee clients are monolingual. The GAIN Teen Parent Program employs two case managers to cover its total of about 90 teen participants. Staff from the GAIN program did the majority of the planning for Cal-Learn.

San Joaquin has been in the process of training their AFDC staff on the State-wide Automated Welfare System (SAWS). Much of the information that was necessary for GAIN was processed by the county's own OASIS program and the county hoped to keep both running until staff were adequately trained on SAWS. Unfortunately, OASIS had to be
discontinued before staff training on SAWS was completed, requiring that many tasks, such as identifying nested cases, be performed manually.

Similar to San Bernadino County, the Adolescent Family Life Program is based in the county's Department of Public Health Services. The AFLP currently employs a part-time director and three case managers, who have a total caseload of 135 adolescents. The program employs public health nurses as case managers. Most of the clients in the AFLP speak English and those that do not are provided a translator within the nursing department of Public Health Services. None of the case managers speak Southeast Asian languages.

San Joaquin has three school districts with SAPID and PM programs. These programs are located within the high schools and vocational programs. Program staff participate in a county-wide Teen Parent Advisory Committee that works with several adolescent programs, health agencies, and schools on teenage issues. These programs receive most of their referrals from teachers and nurses. Before Cal-Learn, there was little contact between the school-based teen parent programs and the GAIN division.

Conclusion

Implementing Cal-Learn will require that the welfare, public health, and education systems, which historically have been very autonomous, develop and sustain unusually strong working relationships. Given the scale of the expansion that is anticipated, the costs associated with start-up, and the quick deadline mandated by SB 35, implementation will be extremely challenging at the local level. Furthermore, because the four research counties face significantly different local conditions, each county will ultimately shape its own distinct Cal-
Learn program. Given this variation, the evaluation research will have to address a wide range of environmental and organizational factors to accurately assess the impact of Cal-Learn.
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Alameda

3 AFDC local offices

AFDC Central

GAIN Central

Tiburcio Vasquez

East Bay Perinatal

18 School Districts
San Bernadino

12 AFDC local offices

GAIN Central

AFLP

School Districts
COMMUNICATION OF WORK INCENTIVES

PHASE I AND PHASE II

1993: APDP Policy Changes

The benefit reductions and rule changes enacted under the Assistance Payments Demonstration Project were fairly straightforward regulation changes which were rapidly implemented by computer systems and staff at the county level. However, it is important to remember that the purpose of these changes was to create new incentives for work on the part of welfare recipients. Most would agree that implementing "incentives" requires more than application of new regulations, it also requires that those whose behavior is being targeted are aware that those incentives exist. For this reason, it was concluded that implementation of APDP policies had to involve communication to clients about the new work incentive features.

The APDP policy changes, a benefit reduction and lifting of the hundred hour rule, represent a trend in both national and state welfare reform efforts toward reducing the rewards for welfare receipt and increasing the rewards from paid work. In California, the APDP changes were the first in a series of incremental policies aimed at increasing self-sufficiency among welfare recipients. Taken together these policies exhibit new expectations for clients of the welfare system. For these policies to have their intended effects, they depend on local agents to convey new expectations to clients, to communicate information about changes in the work/welfare incentive structure, and to counsel clients through an increasingly complex system of income, training, and support services.
The primary contact welfare recipients have with the welfare system is through their eligibility worker, and it is through that contact that we would expect communication of expectations and incentives to take place. For this reason, the process study teams engaged in in-depth interviews with eligibility workers and their supervisors and observed numerous worker-client interactions for evidence that behavioral expectations with regard to work and information about work incentives and transitional assistance were being communicated to clients.

Methodology

This research was conducted in district offices of the four research counties. Interviews were conducted with both intake and continuing workers, and continuing workers had both APDP control and regular caseloads. A similar variety of supervisors were also interviewed. Researchers used a structured interview schedule, so the same questions were asked in each case. Observations were primarily of intake interviews, with a smaller percentage of redetermination interviews. Worker/client conversations with regard to work were recorded and the interviews were coded for the mentioning of certain work incentive and transitional assistance programs. (See Table III for the number of interviews per county)

The structured interviews and observations were supplemented by interviews with administrative staff responsible for implementing APDP changes and for organizing line staff responsibilities and functions, as well as by collection and analysis of county and state documents regarding the APDP reforms.
Findings on Worker to Client Communication:

During the thirty-nine eligibility interviews observed, discussion of work incentives was extremely rare. The specific APDP work incentive, "fill-the-gap budgeting," was never mentioned by the workers observed. In only one of the six interviews observed with unemployed parent cases did the worker inform clients that the hundred hour rule did not apply after approval for AFDC. In approximately 15% of the interviews workers offered information about work rules, deductions, or transitional programs. Generally, conversation about work concerned reporting requirements or work history.

When asked about their communication with clients, eligibility workers overwhelming confirmed that they do not initiate discussions of work deductions and work opportunities beyond the standardized recitation of reporting requirements and provision of GAIN information. Twenty-six out of the twenty-nine workers interviewed claimed that they only discuss the impact of work on AFDC benefits if the client asks or starts a new job. When asked what they discuss in client interviews, none of the workers included explaining "fill-the-gap budgeting" or the lifting of the hundred hour rule to clients.

When eleven supervisors were asked what eligibility workers were instructed to tell clients about the APDP changes, no supervisor reported that workers were supposed to explain the work incentive features of the changes. These interviews provided overwhelming evidence that the workers and supervisors were unaware of any new behavioral expectations for clients to be communicated and implemented through the new APDP policies. On the contrary, the individuals interviewed blamed AFDC regulations for encouraging more dependency among clients.
Discussion

These findings with regard to the specific communication of work incentives must be placed in the context of the welfare workers job as a whole, and the demands during client interviews in particular. The observations and interviews conducted helped to draw a comprehensive picture of the everyday work of an eligibility worker. The job of an eligibility worker is highly structured and demanding. Workers are pressured to adhere to numerous, complex and always changing regulations, while meeting the urgent needs of clients and agency demands for speed and accuracy in processing.

Because timely completion of extensive paperwork is the most pressing demand on workers, interactions with clients are highly routinized and organized around the need for information to determine eligibility and benefit levels. Workers are nearly unanimous in reporting that "rights and responsibilities," particularly reporting responsibilities, are the most important information to communicate to clients during interviews. Workers impress upon clients the importance of disclosing any information which may affect their cases. This information is imparted either through a "script" or by systematically reviewing the application page by page. Workers address issues outside the "script" or application, as they judge appropriate, but generally the interview time is taken up by imparting and collecting information critical to eligibility. Issues not affecting current benefits are typically covered only in phone calls and only at the client's initiation.

Because collecting and processing information is the primary legitimate task of the worker, the worker can rarely afford the time to counsel the client or speculate about future scenarios. Workers and supervisors alike confirmed the belief that the workers job description
does not include helping clients with anything other than qualifying them for income assistance. Despite worker concern for reducing welfare dependency, many workers refrain from encouraging clients to become self-sufficient, claiming the inappropriateness or possible accusations of discrimination in doing so. Many believe that counseling with regard to work is the role of GAIN workers.

In addition to lack of authority and time to discuss work incentives, the eligibility workers we interviewed also lacked the information necessary to explain the work incentive features of new policies to clients. Specifically, workers were unaware that the intent of the particular changes was to provide inducements to work.

When asked about the purpose of the benefit reductions, no worker described the work incentive known as "fill-the-gap budgeting." Most indicated that they did not know the reason for the reduction other than budgetary savings. A few offered that the reduction may motivate people to work if they cannot live on the lower grant, but none guessed that the goal was to lower the MAP with respect to the MBSAC. When asked specifically about explaining the "gap" to clients, workers either responded that it was too hard to explain, or that it made no sense, because either the client works and they use the MBSAC or the client does not work and they use the MAP.

Many guessed that lifting the hundred hour rule was intended to allow a father to work at minimum wage job and not lose his grant, but few saw this as a new feature with which to motivate men to work as much as to allow those who already worked some security.

Not only were workers not informed of the policy intent and work incentive features embodied in these regulation changes, they also were not instructed to discuss the purposes of
these changes with clients. Training on new policies provided by eligibility supervisors consists of going over new state regulations and county instructions in staff meetings so that workers understand how to apply the new rules. The county provides training to supervisors which also focuses on the operational implementation of the new policies rather than the legislative intent or underlying purpose.

In the few cases where supervisors gave workers explicit instructions with respect to communicating with clients about the changes, the instructions were either to inform the client of the exact change or to tell the client that the policy came from the state and that the worker had no control over it. Many workers reported that clients asked how they would live after the cuts, but few had any answers to provide, either formal or spontaneous.

The county administration and eligibility supervisors did not pass on the purpose of the APDP policy changes simply because an emphasis on the work incentive approach was not passed on to them. No formal training was provided to counties at which these issues or new behavioral expectations for clients might be discussed. Written instructions to the counties, much like those written by the counties, focused on the operational aspects of implementing the changes and did not include discussions of work incentives, the purposes of the changes, or what should be communicated to clients.

Instead the state chose to send the work incentive message directly to clients in the form of a "mass informing notice" which they required that counties mail to clients. The notice informed clients that "if you go to work, even part-time, or have other income you can keep more money to meet your needs. TO GET MORE INFORMATION Please call toll free:
[the State's 800 number]" In addition, the notice reads "there is no longer a limit on the number of hours a recipient can work and still be eligible for cash aid."

The instructions to the counties about the notice said that it should be used "to give advanced warning to mitigate the impact on the Cash Aid Population... to enable them to both plan ahead and to address their questions to the State. The notice has the State's special toll-free number." The instructions for the grant reduction two months earlier read similarly with the added comment that referring clients to the toll-free number "should reduce your workload associated with inquiries about the rollback." Clearly, the state did not intend for eligibility workers to field questions about the rollback, much less discuss it's work incentive features.

**Conclusion**

To summarize, the legislated purpose of the APDP policies to induce welfare clients to seek employment was not communicated to clients through the county welfare apparatus. Workers were not trained and instructed to explain work incentive features to clients and, in fact, the policy changes were rarely discussed in observed interview with clients. Beyond the fact that workers were not instructed to bring a new message to clients about the transitional benefits available within the AFDC system, there are many reasons that these types of discussions would not arise within the worker-client interaction. The activities of eligibility workers are highly routinized and constrained by regulations as well as by demands for timely and accurate processing of paperwork and claims. This leaves very little time or incentive for workers to initiate discussions regarding the benefits of or resources available for work. In
fact, for eligibility workers to engage in these types of discussion on a regular basis would require a redefinition of the role and purpose of eligibility workers.

1994: The Work Pays Campaign

Last year's findings indicated that the newly instituted work incentives as well as other changes in regulation, were not being communicated to the client through the eligibility workers. One reason for this was that workers were neither trained nor instructed to explain new policies to the client as work incentives. Instead clients were sent informing notices instructing them to address questions to the state through a toll-free number.

In the second phase of welfare reform, after the passage of SB 35 in the summer of 1993, two major changes influenced communication of work incentives. First, new rules were implemented, particularly the 30 & 1/3 extension which affected all welfare recipients which were currently working. Second, the state launched a new campaign to communicate work incentives to eligibility workers, recipients, and the public.

The Work Pays Media Campaign

In the summer of 1993, the Department of Social Services prepared to kick off a major media campaign in the fall. The idea was to completely change the attitude of Californians toward welfare, and to accomplish this within four or five months. The campaign was stratified to target three groups: eligibility workers, the welfare recipient and the media as the opinion-shaping tool of the overall population. To support this change in emphasis the name
of the overall program of welfare reforms in California was changed from the Assistance Payments Demonstration Project (ADPD) to the California Work Pays Demonstration Project.

The Eligibility Worker

Eligibility workers are the primary link between welfare recipients and the AFDC program. As our earlier (1993) findings suggested, EW's did not serve as an effective medium through which program changes were transmitted to clients. The conventional ways of communicating rule changes or adjustments to them, such as sending stuffers out with the monthly reporting forms, also did not prove to be as effective as anticipated. Therefore, a letter from CDSS Director, Eloise Anderson, was sent out to each of the counties. County welfare agencies requested that the letter not be sent directly to the workers, so they were responsible for forwarding the information in it.

This letter outlined three changes in welfare policy designed to increase incentives to work: the removal of the time limit on the $30 and $30.1/3 income disregard, the increase of the gap between MAP and MBSAC, and the new child care supplement. Eligibility staff were informed that they were expected to help deliver the message that "it always pays to work." They were also encouraged to familiarized themselves with the Work Pays brochure because the planned media campaign with its posters, buttons, TV and Radio announcements was sure to spark questions about the program. The eligibility workers also received a button with the "Work Pays" logo to wear for clients and others to see.
The Welfare Recipient

The Public Awareness & Outreach arm of the Department of Social Services contracted with the media department of Sacramento State University to design a brochure for the Work Pays project. The information in the brochure had been compiled by the public outreach staff of DSS with help of the Research Branch. Sacramento State then provided a logo for the Work Pays program and a design for the brochure.

Once the brochure was finished, it was tested on a total of 50 welfare recipients in the San Francisco Bay Area, in Sacramento and in Los Angeles by DSS employees in the Review and Evaluation Bureau. A Quality Control worker would walk into a welfare office in the above-named areas, approach waiting clients, and ask them whether they would like to take a look at a new brochure which was designed to explain changes in welfare. If the client agreed, the brochure was displayed and the client was asked first to read the changes and instructions. Then the client was asked to try to fill out the chart provided for a self-estimate of how much a client would gain if employed while on welfare. The worker would note the problems and the questions each respondent had while figuring out his or her own grant, and ask for comments and suggestions. The results of these tests were incorporated into the design of the brochure, and then thousands were printed once the final draft was approved.

DSS sent brochures to all welfare offices in California, requesting county welfare administrators to please include them in their intake, as well as in their re-determination packages. DSS also asked the administrators to include brochures in the monthly mailing of welfare checks. The responsibility for sending out the brochures was placed on the individual county welfare departments.
By the end of November of 1993, every welfare recipient in California was supposed to have received a Work Pays brochure in the mail, in addition to the usual 'legal description of changes' mailed to clients in order to inform them of the changes taking place, followed by a notice of action which addressed changes in each individual case. In addition to supplying the welfare departments, DSS also sent brochures to food banks, WIC locations, clinics and community centers for wider distribution.

The logo which was developed by Sacramento State University for the Work Pays brochure was also used in the design of posters which were sent to the welfare offices and various other locations. DSS had buttons manufactured, with which counties were to supply eligibility staff. The state's expectation was that each EW would enjoy wearing the button and their clients, during the course of their intake interview or re-determination hearing, would ask about it. This would then spark a conversation about the Work Pays project.

The brochures, posters and buttons combined in the different locations were intended to expose all welfare recipients at some point to the message which DSS was trying to get out: welfare rules have changed and work pays in California. The hope was that clients would become interested in this message and ask someone what the program was about.

For the purpose of providing recipients with a contact to inquire about the program, the state established a new toll-free phone number which was printed on the back of the brochure. 1-800-WRK-PAYS was established in November of 1993 and is still operating. The recipient was encouraged to call this number should any questions arise.

A tape recording answers the number and announces the following message in Spanish and English: "Because of changes in the AFDC program it always pays to work, even part
time or at a minimum wage job, even if you have child care expenses. Please stay on the line if you are on AFDC and would like to speak to someone about the advantages of working or the new child care supplement. If you have other questions, please call the Department of Social Services at 1-800-952-5253. If you are looking for a job, please contact your local employment office."

The media department at Sacramento State University also developed public service announcements for television and radio. Television spots of 20, 15 and 10 seconds used the same logo which was used for the brochure, the posters and buttons. Tapes with the 'infomercial' were sent to all major television stations throughout California. Radio stations were also supplied with, and asked to broadcast, the announcements, which used the same wording and were the same length as the TV spots.

It is unknown whether these announcements were ever broadcast as the public outreach branch of the Department of Social Services does not monitor television or radio coverage. Actual air-time was not purchased by DSS.

The Media

The media was targeted as a tool to supply the general population of Californians with information about the progress made concerning welfare reform. It was assumed that sufficient saturation of newspapers would change assumptions about welfare in California and that the message of work incentives would 'trickle down' to eligibility workers as well as the clients in one additional way.
In July of 1993, the Public Awareness and Outreach arm of DSS began to send out press packages to all major newspapers, as well as to smaller community newspapers which cover non metropolitan areas in California. These packages contained a Proclamation by the Governor concerning welfare changes in California and various statistics and tables outlining AFDC before and after the implementation of the reforms. It also contained various flyers of news clips, the reaction of AFDC recipients, a fact sheet, and a general explanation of what the reforms are attempting to accomplish with regard to those on AFDC, as well as the overall impact of the changes for the state of California.

Department of Social Services Director, Eloise Anderson, held a press conference announcing the reform to the public, which was widely broadcast on the news throughout California.

Governor Wilson proclaimed the month of November, 1993 as "Work Pays" month. He also attended a "Welfare Week" in San Diego, where he met with eligibility workers and answered their questions.

Amy Allbright, former head of Public Awareness and Outreach for DSS, traveled throughout California to meet with editors of various newspapers and inform them of the new welfare reforms. These meetings resulted in editorials as well as general coverage in the realm of governmental news in newspapers all over California.

Evaluation of the Media Campaign

Toward the beginning of 1994, Public Awareness and Outreach (DSS) put together a survey to find out how the Work Pays campaign was received by welfare recipients. The
survey consisted of seven questions, some of them open ended, which addressed whether clients knew about the new welfare rules. The Review and Evaluation Bureau, known as, "Quality Control," (QC) selects a random sample of recipients every month for an in-home interview, and it was asked to take the survey along and incorporate it into the usual interview process. Prior to meeting with the individual clients, a Work Pays brochure was sent out to them along with the notice that they would be interviewed by Quality Control. Interviews were scheduled to take place within 2 months after the original mailing of the brochure.

Responses were obtained from 298 people throughout California. It is unknown how many of the respondents resided in the four research counties. However, the brochure was sent out in Alameda and San Joaquin in December of 1993, and clients were visited as planned in January and February of 1994. In the San Bernardino and Los Angeles areas, brochures went out in January of 1994. Unfortunately, due to the earthquake in Southern California in January, clients were either not visited at all or they were not contacted in the planned period of time. So this survey should be viewed with caution, as the lack of complete data in some areas of the state could lead to a large margin of error.

Survey results showed that 52% of welfare recipients questioned about whether they knew of the new welfare rules, answered that they did not. Forty-eight percent of the respondents claimed not to have received a brochure at all. Of the recipients who said that they did receive it, 72.9% reported that they understood it, and 3.2% even called the toll-free number. Twenty-seven-point-one percent did not understand the brochure, the main reasons being that English was not their primary language (39%) or that the wording was too complex (36.6%).
Upon being asked whether they had seen anything else regarding the Work Pays program in other places, 80.1% of respondents reported that they had not. Fourteen-point-seven (14.7) percent of respondents were employed at the time of the interview. Among the 131 respondents who knew that they could work while on welfare, 48.3% reported that they were planning to look for employment.

From these results it can safely be concluded that even though an intensive effort was made to get the word out that "work pays if you are on AFDC in California," the message was not received by a majority of welfare recipients.

County-level View of Work Pays

As instructed, the research counties sent the "Work Pays" stuffers and brochures to clients in regular mailings during October 1993. However, San Bernardino substituted their own flyer entitled, "Working on Welfare" or "WOW," for the DSS stuffer because they thought the state's stuffer was unclear. The counties also reported that they received buttons, posters, brochures, and the letter from Eloise Anderson to send to their eligibility workers. Counties either sent the Anderson letter directly, with their own memo, or wrote their own letter. Each county made an effort to forward the message, but put its own stamp on how the information was communicated. In one county a specialized training was undertaken for current staff and was repeated for induction classes. Another county made plans to incorporate the information into their intake video.

County administrators voiced several concerns about the brochure. First, it did not mention the gross income test, which may disqualify clients, whether or not they fit the
income profile on the brochure. Second, they objected to the Earned Income Tax Credit being added into monthly income, fearing that most working clients would not be receiving it in monthly payments. Third, they found it confusing to lump the $90 and $30 disregard together into one $120 deduction. However, one GAIN worker thought the brochure was brilliantly conceived and very understandable.

It is difficult to determine how well the "work pays" message reached the recipients. In at least one county administrators believed that clients were aware of the "work pays" campaign. In two counties, reports reached administrators that recipients in CWPDP control cases were asking about "work pays," and complaining that they could not receive the added benefits from working. In another county, eligibility workers who had previously been on aid were reluctant to spread the, "You can work and still collect welfare," message to welfare recipients, while they themselves were struggling to stay off welfare. It appears that GAIN workers found the brochures more useful.

Worker-Client Interactions

As in phase one, the process evaluation team conducted observations of intake and redetermination interviews in the research counties to discover whether the "work pays" message or related issues were discussed with clients. Observers had the opportunity to become acquainted with each location by spending extensive time in every welfare office selected. During the process of becoming familiarized with the observational environments of the various welfare offices, the process evaluation team collected intake packages from each
county and noted whether 'work pays' posters were posted within visibility of the clients, as well as whether workers were wearing 'work pays' buttons.

In two of the research counties, the 'work pays' brochure was included in the intake packages received by the team. In one office, a poster was seen in the interviewing area. A total of two buttons were observed in all four counties. One of them was worn below the waistline by a worker who interacted with clients while standing behind a counter which was higher than her waist. In another county the button in question was attached to a wall in the eligibility worker's cubicle among other buttons advertising various messages. When the observer commented on the attractiveness of the 'work pays' button and asked what it was for, the EW commented: "Oh, that one, the Union sent that to me..."

Evidence of the "it pays to work" message was not any more prevalent in actual client interviews. The work pays slogan was not heard in any of the twenty-seven interviews observed. If there was a message about work incentives it tended to be more of the nature, "if you go to work you can still receive welfare." However, it was much more common to hear, "if you start making too much money to qualify for AFDC, then you can still get Medi-Cal and help with child care." This reference to the Transitional Medi-Cal and Transitional Child Care programs arose during reviews of the Rights and Responsibilities, if workers read them aloud to clients. Similarly, the GAIN program is usually mentioned because of an requirement; however an explanation of the GAIN program at AFDC intake interviews is rare.

A summary of the work-related incentives and benefits mentioned during the observed interviews is contained in Table II. Table I provides the same information for observations made in 1993 before the Work Pays Campaign. Overall, there does appear to be a slight
increase in the discussion of work-related issues between these two periods in the County of San Bernardino. Our observations indicate that San Bernardino may have institutionalized a new procedure in which the rights and responsibilities form is reviewed thoroughly with clients. During this process TMC and TCC are mentioned automatically, which may lead to a discussion of various work-related income deductions, such as the $30 and 1/3 and child care disregards.

However, these results must be viewed in context. Observers had no control over the sample of interviews or workers, which were selected by management and were highly influenced by events of the day. In addition, interviews in San Joaquin were influenced by implementation of a new automated system, SAWS, and were not typical for that county over a longer period of time. It should also be noted that the Work Pays Campaign was launched six to eight months earlier, so its immediate impact was not assessed in this research.
COMMUNICATION TIMELINE 1993

July: DSS began sending Work Pays press packages to newspapers

July 1-15: 1.67% increase in MBSAC effective, affecting July grant

Clients receive Notice of Action if grant affected by MBSAC increase (by June 20 if adverse action)

August: Eloise Anderson, Director of DSS, held a press conference announcing the Work Pays reforms to the public

Aug 1-15: Clients receive informing notice about 2.7% MAP reduction and extension of the 30 and 1/3 income disregard

Aug 20: Clients receive Notice of Action if their September grant will be reduced

September:

Sept 1-15: September grants reflect 2.7% MAP reduction

Sept 1-15: 30 and 1/3 extension effective: affects September earnings

October: Counties receive letters from Eloise Anderson explaining Work Pays reforms, one to forward directly to eligibility workers.

Oct 1-15: Clients receive "It Pays to Work" stuffer;

Oct 20-Oct 31: Clients receive Notice of Action if their November grant will be affected by 30 and 1/3 extension

November: Proclaimed "Work Pays Month" by Governor Wilson

Nov 1-15: Grant possibly affected by 30 and 1/3 extension

Clients receive Supplemental Child Care informing notice

Nov 1: Supplemental Child Care effective: affects child care expenses paid in November, reported in December

Nov 15: Clients receive Supplemental Child Care Program Information

Nov 30: Date by which clients would have received Work Pays brochure
COMMUNICATION TIMELINE 1994

January:
Jan 1: First Supplemental Child Care payments can be issued

April:
Apr 1-15: Clients receive New Property Rules informing notice

May:
May 1: Earliest clients may receive CAAP information at intakes or redeterminations

July:
July 1-15: 1.18% increase in MBSAC effective, affecting July grant

Clients receive Notice of Action if grant affected by MBSAC increase (by June 20 if adverse action)

August:
Aug 19 "Welfare Week" in San Diego, Gov. Wilson attended
### 1993

**TABLE I. AFDC Worker-Client Observations 1993**

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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>San Joaquin</th>
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*routine*
### Table II. AFDC Worker-Client Observations 1994

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*routine
TABLE III. Assistance Payments Demonstration Project: Process Evaluation Interviews 1993

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October 14, 1993

Mr. Gerard J. Lachaussee
Shasta County Department of Social Services
1626 Court Street
Redding, CA 96001-6665

Dear Mr. Lachaussee:

As you may know, the 1993-94 budget includes a series of changes to the AFDC system aimed at increasing the incentive for recipients to work, stay in school and save for the future.

I want to call your attention to three changes in particular which dramatically increase the incentive for AFDC recipients to work. They include:

* removing the time limit on the $30 and 1/3 income disregard;

* increasing the gap between the need standard and the grant level, which allows more income to be disregarded; and,

* covering the costs of child care through the new Supplemental Child Care program, which will reimburse AFDC recipients for the difference between their child care disregard and their actual child care expenses.

These changes create an unprecedented work incentive -- but they will mean nothing if we don't make recipients aware of them.

For this reason, I have asked my staff to conduct a multi-media "Work Pays" campaign to get the word out to AFDC recipients about the financial and personal benefits of working. In the next few weeks, you will be receiving brochures, posters, buttons and letters for your eligibility workers and GAIN case managers which are aimed at helping your staff get the word out that it always pays to work. Instructions for distributing these materials will follow in an upcoming all-county letter.

In the meantime, I want to make you aware of this important project because I believe it has the potential to put hundreds -- even thousands -- of AFDC recipients back to work.

A multi-media campaign won't make the problems AFDC recipients face any less overwhelming, but the information we distribute can help them make intelligent choices for themselves and their families -- choices that can put them on the road to self-sufficiency.
Mr. Gerard J. Lachaussee  
Page Two

Your enthusiasm and support is vital to helping us deliver the "Work Pays" message to your employees and to AFDC recipients.

Please take some time to review the enclosed materials. I appreciate your cooperation and commitment on this project. If you have questions or comments, please call me at 916/657-2598.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

ELOISE ANDERSON  
Director

Enclosures
Dear Social Services/Eligibility staff:

In June, Governor Wilson signed into law a series of reforms to overhaul the AFDC system. They include three changes that dramatically increase the incentive for welfare recipients to work:

* removing the time limit on the $30 and 1/3 income disregard;

* increasing the gap between the need standard and the grant level, which allows more income to be disregarded; and,

* covering the costs of child care through the new Supplemental Child Care program, which will reimburse AFDC recipients for the difference between their child care disregard and their actual child care expenses (up to the 75th percentile of market rate).

All of these changes are complicated, and can make your job more difficult. Fortunately, one aspect of the program has become easier to understand: it always pays to work. Even if a recipient has high child care costs, in virtually every circumstance, she'll be better off working. And by working, she'll be taking the first critical step toward self-sufficiency.

It's an important message, and it's one we hope you will help us deliver. In November, we'll kick off a Work Pays campaign using brochures, stuffers, buttons, posters, and television and radio announcements. You may wish to familiarize yourself with the Work Pays brochure available in your office as recipients may ask you about it in the coming months.

I appreciate your cooperation and commitment toward helping AFDC recipients enter the workforce. You are a vital link to the AFDC population, and we can't hope to reach recipients without your support.

Thank you for your cooperation, and keep up the good work!

Sincerely,

Eloise Anderson
Director

P.S. If you have suggestions about the Work Pays campaign, please send your comments to Work Pays, 744 P Street, M.S. 17-09, Sacramento, California 95814.