

Moving Up the Ladder: Strategies for Economic Independence Among New Jersey's Working Poor

A Report Based on a Statewide Conference,
Working Hard But Staying Poor,
Co-Sponsored by the
John J. Heldrich Center for Workforce Development,
Bloustein School of Planning and Public Policy
and
Center for Women and Work,
School of Management and Labor Relations

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I. Executive Summary

The March 20th conference on the working poor produced a clear consensus among the 130 attendees: universal support for magnifying public and policy attention on improving how public funds and programs are managed and deployed to assist the working poor. In both presentations and deliberations, the working poor were identified as a primary point of intersection for New Jersey's core safety net and 'to work' government programs and initiatives, including Work First New Jersey/Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF), the state's cash assistance welfare system; the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) and its One-Stop service delivery system of job agencies; Unemployment Insurance; literacy, school-to-work, and adult and occupational education services.

Lessons learned in the new economy labor market formed the basis for the recommendations and action items suggested by participants. They shared a key observation: securing a first job or even a decent job after unemployment or welfare is no longer sufficient to ensure economic independence. Self-managed career paths are emerging as the dominant successful approach to long-term employment in the primary labor market. To succeed, individuals must take responsibility for their own training, skills, and prospects, but they also must have access to a robust and individually accessible mix of services that include training opportunities, relevant career information, and refocused public support for working families. David Butler, Vice President for Work, Community, and Economic Security of Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation, summarized this point when he identified the change from case management to career coaching as the key catalyst in system transformation. Bill Waldman, Visiting Professor and Executive in Residence at the Rutgers School of Social Work, echoed this cultural sea change as the foundation for real system building. Richard Hobbie, Unemployment Insurance Director at the National Association of State Workforce Agencies, provided insight on how the recent REED Act distribution to State Unemployment Insurance trust funds can provide a catalyst and resources for both a system and service synthesis for the working poor during periods of unemployment.

Another issue addressed was the current federal reauthorization processes for TANF and WIA. Despite the similar 'to work' goals of both laws, neither piece of legislation went so far as to mandate coordination or cooperation between the new welfare and workforce systems. Participants agreed strongly, that in order to effect the structural and cultural changes in the state and local workforce development systems necessary to meet the career needs of the working poor, a broad-based federal waiver provision should be included in both TANF and WIA legislation. The federal administration's TANF reauthorization proposal includes a plan to further ease state and local efforts to integrate service delivery across a broad range of federal programs by applying for federal waivers from current rules. The Bush Administration is proposing a new integration waiver that would aim to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of various federally funded, state/local administered programs. Conference participants recommended that Governor McGreevey and his cabinet advocate broad state-based integration waivers for both

TANF and WIA reauthorization as a precondition for restructuring the delivery of government services for the working poor.

There was strong consensus among participants that to effect the changes enabled by waivers a new state/local compact for collaboration must be forged and that the Governor and his cabinet officers must lead this alliance with local elected officials. Predicated on the above preconditions, an action agenda for change emerged from the afternoon deliberations.

Recommended Strategies for Change

Participants asserted that increasing public attention to the needs of low-wage working families, and strengthening the public agencies that provide services and support to them, is key to both improving the well-being of these families and fostering broad-based economic development in the State of New Jersey. Drawing on this consensus, five areas for executive action emerged from the proceedings:

1. Make needed investments to build a unified, better-integrated public system of workforce and social services geared to the customer.
2. Expand, streamline, and simplify support services for low-wage workers and lower bureaucratic barriers for eligible workers and families.
3. Invest in literacy and nurture and form partnerships with schools and universities.
4. Seek and promote across government agencies a stronger policy emphasis on opening pathways to employment and improving linkages to support services for working families such as training, child care, health care, and transportation.
5. Promote private sector participation and investment in workforce services and supports for work; respond more aggressively to employers' human resource needs.

A final consensus recommendation was to begin this process immediately and provide an open forum for all interested parties to participate in the discussion and debate.

II. Conference Background

On March 20, 2002, the John J. Heldrich Center for Workforce Development and the Center for Women and Work at Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey organized a conference focused on the broad policy issues concerned with assisting the working poor in New Jersey. The conference, entitled **“Working Hard But Staying Poor: Addressing Barriers to Economic Independence”** was designed with the goal of assisting and advising the new administration and legislators in New Jersey in developing policies to alleviate barriers for New Jersey’s working poor.

The conference was convened to examine what barriers continue to exist for this population, as well as to explore the role that the reauthorization of the Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF), the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) and unemployment insurance reform might play in better assisting this working population. In addition, the conference examined:

- (1) intergovernmental management issues and how they affect the provision of support services to New Jersey’s working poor;
- (2) the methods and practices for welfare and workforce program integration vis-à-vis implementation and service delivery;
- (3) priority topics for future research to inform policy and practice.

To promote informed discussion at the conference, invitations were sent to key policy makers and practitioners involved in developing and delivering ‘to work’ systems in New Jersey, along with research organizations, federal agencies, and foundations. Appendix D lists the names and affiliations of conference participants. Public agency representatives included those with policy makers and program managers in such areas as welfare, workforce development, and education. Presenters in the morning were asked to discuss the present situation facing the working poor, and to outline for the audience the policy, organizational, and management challenges and opportunities facing New Jersey.

Appendix A contains the conference goal and agenda. Following the morning presentations, participants were separated into workshop groups by region. Using facilitators, members were asked to discuss the continuous barriers and challenges facing the working poor, the effectiveness of the service delivery systems and resources that provide assistance, and issues pertaining to intergovernmental management, as well as to provide recommendations for further improvement and assistance. A fourth workshop was established to discuss research topics pertaining to the working poor that would be important to pursue. Appendices B and C outline in detail the issues identified by the conference participants in all four workshops, as well as a summary of the panel presentations.

III. Summary of Proceedings

In the past five years, New Jersey has put in place significant public policies and programs intended to prepare people for work, help them work better, and assist them in achieving economic independence. Yet despite the sweeping changes brought about by welfare, workforce and educational reform in the State, the working poor continue to face significant barriers to stable employment and poverty relief. And, state and local entities continue to face challenges in assisting the working poor to achieve job retention, advancement, and economic independence.

Despite the recent unprecedented national economic expansion, not all New Jerseyans have prospered. Since the last recession in 1991, the real wages of high-income workers have increased, while the wages of lower-income workers have stagnated and sometimes even declined. Only during these past years has the economy yielded modest wage growth for low and moderate income workers. Nonetheless, a national survey of the working poor completed by the Heldrich Center and the Center for Survey Research and Analysis at the University of Connecticut in 1999, found that over half (55%) of this population report difficulty paying all their family bills. This same survey found that most (82%) of the working poor say that obtaining more education is important if they are to obtain the job they want.¹

Since 1997, when New Jersey implemented its new welfare initiative, Work First New Jersey, overall trends show that while employed welfare clients' income has increased steadily and poverty has decreased steadily (particularly for employed clients), job turnover among those working is considerable and many clients still face challenges to sustaining employment.²

Overall, conference panelists held that during the past decade researchers have performed significant work and gained substantial practical knowledge that can inform existing program operations, as well as the debate over TANF reauthorization. While TANF caseloads declined during the mid and late 1990s, wages have remained low and employment unstable in the low-skills, low-wage labor market. Workers who find steady employment enjoy some earnings growth, but most move from one low-paying job to the next. In many instances, personal characteristics and job factors impede stable employment and advances. Advancement typically follows one of two tracks: education and training or a solid work history. Panelists mentioned that progress in helping recipients in either track raises specific challenges and requires targeted strategies.

¹ John J. Heldrich Center for Workforce Development, *Work Trends: Americans' Attitudes About Work, Employers and Government. Working Hard But Staying Poor: A National Survey of the Working Poor and Unemployed* (New Brunswick, NJ: 1999), <http://www.heldrich.rutgers.edu/worktrends.asp>.

² Rangarajan, Anu and Johnson, Amy. *Work First New Jersey Evaluation: Current and Former WFNJ Clients: How Are They and Their Children Faring 40 Months Later?*, Mathematica Policy Research, Inc. (January 17, 2002).

Panelists also mentioned that while a significant number of citizens have been helped through state and local strategies developed as a result of the TANF and WIA laws, additional efforts and investments need to be made to help working people get out of poverty. Presenters emphasized the opportunity presented by the upcoming TANF and WIA reauthorizations for policymakers, community, and business leaders to weigh in with federal and state lawmakers during the next stage of welfare, workforce, and unemployment insurance reform. In many cases, this should include development of strategic recommendations for service change and enhancement, informed by a clear vision of how to make work pay in New Jersey's evolving economy.

Conference participants identified and discussed at length *seven significant barriers* that prevent low wage working individuals from achieving greater economic independence: education and literacy, transportation, child care, health care and health-related problems, housing, immigration status and personal life skill factors. While participants cited the progress that has been made toward alleviating these barriers—through initiation of special subsidy programs, dedicated ‘to work’ strategies, tax relief programs, enhanced child support efforts and better collaboration at the local level—they all agreed that much more needs to be done. Many participants noted that too often, assistance is only available by entering and exiting through the welfare system, and that New Jersey citizens who seek help outside of welfare are ineligible for many support services.

In addition, participants commented on the degree to which the current welfare, workforce, education, and other service delivery systems help or hinder low-wage workers to find and keep stable employment and advance in the labor market. Many participants cited numerous difficulties with the lack of a unified strategic vision for serving the working poor in New Jersey. They also maintained that differing regulatory requirements, funding restrictions, and organizational culture issues were clearly barriers to better and more efficient service. There was widespread agreement that closer ties to employers needs to be developed. Also, a partnership with the K-12 and adult education system was long overdue and necessary to tackle job retention and advancement challenges.

All in all, the conference generated a discussion of several significant policy issues and key strategies needed to improve New Jersey's system of assisting the working poor and facilitating better service delivery and performance.

IV. Summary of Significant Policy Issues and Key Strategies for Change

Presenters and participants at the conference maintained that new, refocused public support for working families is paramount. Most agreed that high wage earners enjoy tax-subsidized employee benefits, and they can meet their families' needs by purchasing enhanced medical services, quality child care, transportation, and advanced education and training on the private market. Working families who earn modest or poverty-level wages, they contended, face tougher choices when seeking to meet their families' basic needs. If employers do not provide health insurance, time flexibility, or training, workers must either go without, or depend upon public social programs. Participants asserted that improving the public agencies that provide services and support to low-wage workers and families, both improves the welfare of these families and strengthens the broad-based economic development and vitality of the State. Building on this consensus, five themes for further reform emerged from the proceedings:

1. Make needed investments to build a unified, better-integrated public system of workforce and social services geared to the customer.

Unify systems to serve universal customers: The current welfare-to-work and workforce system is a patchwork of programs and offices serving a myriad of income-eligible, program-eligible or for-special-populations-only using pieced-together federal, state and local funds. A more unified system needs to be crafted to ensure that jobseekers and employer customers are able to access the services they need, when they need it, without the confusion and burden of working with multiple agencies, without having to miss work because of inaccessible hours or location, or without having to fit into a narrow population definition. Eligibility guidelines should be clear, applications should be easy to complete, and access to services centrally-located.

Changing the culture: retrain and retool workforce service managers and front line workers: Achieving a better workforce services system in New Jersey requires recognition that systemic change is needed, as well as a commitment that improvements need to be made at both the state and local levels. Creation of a unified, customer-centric system necessitates a break with past practices and an investment in training and education for workforce service policy makers, administrators, program managers and front line workers alike. Efforts should include, but not be limited to, enhanced training for managers in customer service and methods to achieve maximum performance outcomes, as well as investments in education that help transform front-line workers into stronger career counselors and job developers.

Integrate funding streams as well as systems: The flexibility provided by the TANF block grant allowed New Jersey to put in place model 'to work' efforts based on the specific needs of low-income adults moving from welfare-to-work. WIA and Wagner-Peyser funding applies to a more universal population than

TANF but falls short of what is needed, to support a unified and more comprehensive ‘work’ support system. Improving the delivery of services must include investing in the modernization and integration of welfare and workforce information systems, as well as further integration of welfare and workforce funding streams so that funding sources are invisible and irrelevant to customers of the service.

Simplify and Align Rules and Regulations: The profusion of rules, regulations and overall growth of separate and distinct programs and supports with different names, eligibility and funding requirements has become a complex nightmare for customers and front-line workers alike. The complexity of federal and state program rules and requirements (e.g., TANF, WIA, Wagner-Peyser, Unemployment Insurance/Employment Services, food stamps, child support, child care) has created a substantial burden on frontline workers and other ancillary service providers and hindered efficient service delivery. The vision for a new unified system should include a concerted effort to consolidate and simplify supports, services and delivery systems while making services easier to use and access.

2. Expand, streamline, and simplify support services for low-wage workers and lower bureaucratic barriers for eligible workers and families.

Change the gateway of supports from welfare to the workforce system: For many years, welfare (cash and other assistance for single parents with low incomes) was the gateway to providing supports to working families. While there has been an investment in offering and providing post-TANF services (e.g., child care, health care coverage, transportation, housing, etc.), individuals who have never been on welfare, have no children and/or are not displaced or unemployed have been simply left out. The paradigm requires a change -- to make work the gateway to services -- not welfare eligibility.

Invest in a new portfolio of easy-to-access work supports: Alleviating the significant barriers that prevent low-wage working individuals from achieving economic independence requires an investment in those supports and services that are needed most by working families to maintain employment and get better jobs. As stated above, this investment should go hand-in-hand with a commitment to consolidate and simplify the current milieu of stand alone programs and initiatives.

3. Invest in literacy and nurture and form partnerships with schools and universities.

Bring state and local K-12 and adult educators to the table: Low basic skills and illiteracy are common among low wage workers and pose a formidable challenge to helping them achieve steady work and move up to better jobs. Yet, strong interest and continuous leadership from state education officials and local

educators has been missing in the policy dialogue and development in New Jersey. The success of breaking the cycle of poverty for low-wage workers depends on closer ties, stronger partnerships, and better integration with the education community.

Expand Linkages between School and Work: Preparation to meet the demands of the workplace, coupled with commitment and access to lifelong learning are essential attributes for low-wage workers who need to get jobs, keep jobs, find better jobs, and advance in their careers. The education system has a crucial role to play in preparing students for the world of work, as well as helping employers meet their workforce needs. Stronger and more dedicated efforts need to be made to facilitate school-to-work and work-to-school transitions in New Jersey, including the development of greater partnerships between the business community and educators to ensure that learners are able to connect their experiences at work with those in the classroom.

Improve Literacy and English as a Second Language Efforts: For many poor working adults and their children, developing greater literacy skills and speaking English is a ticket to more stable employment and better jobs. Targeted strategies need to be made and action taken to enhance and expand the existing delivery system and vastly improve the state's literacy rate.

- 4. Seek and promote across government agencies a stronger policy emphasis on work—that includes opening paths to employment and improving linkages to support services for working families such as child care, transportation, health care, and training.**

State Leadership and Executive Sponsorship: A bold vision as well as a unified and aggressive statewide strategy on work supports, mandated from the Governor, and consistently reinforced through dedicated executive sponsorship, is paramount for New Jersey to help working families achieve economic independence.

- 5. Promote private sector participation and investment in workforce services and supports for work; respond more aggressively to employers' human resource needs.**

Public-Private Partnership: A successful workforce development system depends on accurate and up-to-date information about jobs in demand in the labor market, and a labor force prepared with skills needed for these jobs. Employer involvement and continuous interaction is crucial to developing a workforce system that works. Stronger efforts, at both the state and local level, need to be made to facilitate closer ties, develop more effective participation, and foster better relationships between New Jersey's business community and its workforce system.

Support and Invest in Research and Technical Assistance: Continuous feedback and research that lets program operators, lawmakers and policy makers know what is going on is vital to insure true accountability to customers and taxpayers. An investment in research and evaluation focused on the working poor is important to help local managers improve outcomes and be more effective. The information learned from the research can be used to make program and system changes, and provide targeted technical assistance where it is most needed.

Appendix A Conference Goal and Agenda

Conference Goal: To inform key members of the new administration and legislators of the current situation facing New Jersey's working poor and the options available for state intervention.

March 20, 2002 -- Agenda

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|--------------|----------------------------|--|
| 10:00 am | <i>Introduction</i> | |
| | Carl Van Horn | Director and Professor, John J. Heldrich Center for Workforce Development |
| | Barbara Lee | Director, Center for Women and Work
Dean, School of Management and Labor Relations |
| 10:15 am | <i>Panel</i> | |
| | David Butler | Vice President, Work, Community, and Economic Security, Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation |
| | Richard Hobbie | Unemployment Insurance Director, National Association of State Workforce Agencies |
| | William Waldman | Visiting Professor, Graduate School of Social Work at Rutgers University; Former Commissioner, NJ Department of Human Services and Former Executive Director, American Public Human Services Association |
| 12:00 pm | <i>Lunch Break</i> | |
| 1:00–3:00 pm | <i>Afternoon Workshops</i> | |
| | I. | <i>Intergovernmental and Interagency Issues in Customer Service Integration and Delivery</i> |
| | | Issues include: Core and Intensive WIA and WtW services, Post Employment TANF services, Dislocated Worker services, Literacy, Childcare, Transportation, and Resource Coordination. |
| | A. | Workshop One: Northern New Jersey (Union, Morris, Essex, Hudson, Bergen, Passaic) |
| | B. | Workshop Two: Central New Jersey (Hunterdon, Somerset, Middlesex, Mercer, Monmouth, Sussex, Warren) |
| | C. | Workshop Three: Southern New Jersey (Ocean, Burlington, Camden, Gloucester, Salem, Cumberland, Atlantic, Cape May) |

- II. *Research on Assisting Welfare Recipients and the Working Poor*
Presenters: Cordelia Reimers and Howard Chernick
Department of Economics, Hunter College of the City
University of New York
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Appendix B Summary of Panel Presentations

Presentation 1:

David Butler - Vice President, Work, Community, and Economic Security, Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation

David Butler's presentation, entitled, *Steady Work and Better Jobs: What We Know, What We are Learning*, was based upon the findings from a 3 year follow-up survey of 4,000 women with children from high poverty urban neighborhoods on welfare or Food Stamps in 1995. 75% of these women worked at some point in the 3-year period with wages averaging \$7.00/hr. 71% had earnings below the federal poverty line, 95% below 85% of poverty. Most workers did not use public safety net programs: 86% received no childcare subsidy and 22% were eligible for food stamps but did not receive benefits. The key findings presented at the conference include:

- Although there is increased labor force participation between TANF and former TANF recipients, unstable employment and low wages contribute to persistent poverty. Thus, not only finding a job, but also retaining a job and advancing on the job are important to assist this population.
- Current research has taught us that post-employment programs relying on case management have not been effective, while some pre-employment programs have increased employment retention. Most effective pre-employment programs had strong work focus and a mix of activities.
- Financial incentives (earnings disregards, wage supplements) have also increased employment. Income gains have been driven by financial incentives and more hours of work, not by wage growth or better jobs.
- Although there is a clear economic payoff from post-secondary education, lower enrollment and high attrition among non-traditional students, especially among poor working or single parents, have prevented this population from accessing these benefits.

Solutions:

1. Increase education and training

Challenges and Strategies to Increase Participation in education and training

- Increase access and enrollment.
 - Aggressive outreach and marketing
 - Financial aid incentives
 - Short-term certification programs
 - Flexible scheduling and work hours

- On-site child care
- Improve retention in school.
 - Student support networks
 - Upgrade quality and status of non-credit
 - Lifelong learning and career ladder opportunities

Challenges and Strategies in Delivering Education and Training

- Strengthen partnership and collaboration.
 - Involve employers
 - Co-locate staff and services on campus
 - Offer courses in the community
 - Develop common performance standards (attendance, completion, employment)

2. Advancement Through Work

- Advancement through solid work history; identifying career paths; skill acquisition on the job.
- Focus of most TANF programs.

Challenges and Strategies

- Outreach to low-wage workers (voluntary).
- Links to:
 - Workforce
 - Employers willing to create career ladders
 - E&T providers willing to adapt to workers
 - Agencies addressing personal/family barriers
- Job search assistance tailored to working parents.
- Ongoing work supports
 - Career counseling; Peer support; Barrier Removal: child care, housing, transportation; Conflict resolution
- Transformation of staff to career counselors and job developers, lower caseloads, understanding the labor market.

Presentation 2:

Richard Hobbie - Unemployment Insurance Director, National Association of State Workforce Agencies

Richard Hobbie's presentation focused on the role of unemployment insurance reform in assisting the working poor. After discussing the state of New Jersey's unemployment insurance system in comparison to the U.S. as a whole, Hobbie addressed the President's New Balance Proposal, the key elements of the President's proposal for reauthorization of TANF, and option for helping New Jersey's working poor through unemployment insurance. The key points include:

1. President's New Balance Proposal – Unemployment Insurance and Employment Service Reform

- Short term - \$9.2 billion Reed Act distribution and 13 week temporary extension of benefits in states
- Benefits will be extended by lowering the insured unemployment rate trigger and by using state eligibility requirements instead of burdensome federal requirements.
- Tax reform – repeal temporary Federal Unemployment Tax and reduce permanent federal unemployment tax
- Increase state flexibility and gradual phase-out of federal funding of ES and UI administration
- States would have two years to enact reform and transition assistance from Reed Act distribution

2. Key Elements of the President's Proposal For Reauthorization of TANF

- Increase participation rate requirements and minimum hours of participation – 70 percent in fiscal year 2007 must participate in constructive activities for 40 hours a week
- Increase work requirements – must average 24 hours per week
- Improve Calculation of Participation – only families that meet both 24 hour work requirement and 40 hour participation requirement
- Phase out caseload reduction credit
- Authorize new state program integration waivers

3. Options for Helping New Jersey's Working Poor

- Extend unemployment insurance benefits to those who want to seek part-time work
- Use Reed Act funds to expand core services in One-Stops
- Divert some unemployment taxes to other workforce development activities, such as training
- Support President's proposal to reform Extended Benefits Program and to repeal the temporary Federal Unemployment tax
- If the increased TANF participation rates cannot be met without additional funding, oppose the President's proposal or demand sufficient funding
- Design integration projects to make Wagner-Peyser, WIA, TANF, Food Stamps, housing, and education programs work more effectively in New Jersey.

Presentation 3:

William Waldman - Visiting Professor, Graduate School of Social Work; Former Commissioner, NJ Department of Human Services; Former Executive Director, American Public Human Services Organization

Mr. Waldman outlined for the audience his 'top ten list' of key policy items that are important to discussions on serving and supporting the working poor:

1. Current welfare reform policies contain a very strong labor market attachment approach. This strategy has been rewarded by the recently strong US economy. With five years of 'work first' welfare experience to draw on, does this approach now need to be recalibrated? New issues that require some focus include labor market up-skilling, enhancing lifelong learning efforts, and strengthening school-to-work initiatives.
2. The next iteration of welfare reform may require seriously addressing the issue of 'making work pay'. Efforts to help low wage, post TANF workers requires that states now look to broaden the depth, scope and creativity of supports to working families. In addition, too often the welfare system has been the gateway to services. This paradigm needs to be changed -- to make work (not the welfare system) the gateway to services for the working population.
3. It is important that public services be provided in a uniform manner through mainstream institutions. Clearly, years of social policy research demonstrates that poor clients get poor services in poor institutions. Stand-alone programs, those not tied to mainstream American institutions and values, are destined to be stigmatized.
4. Child support is a very important component to the economic support of working families. A paradigm shift should be made and policy changed so that child support can be 'passed through' to the families that need it. Families must be allowed to benefit directly when child support is paid.
5. Embrace technology. Think of the consequences of the digital divide. Policy makers must make concerted efforts to make mainstream technology available to all people of all income levels.
6. Diversion initiatives - those programs designed to keep people out of the welfare system - should be broadened and expanded. Expansion of these efforts, however, should not be designed to keep people away from receiving the important services they need to support themselves and their children.
7. More attention and focus needs to be given to serving and supporting the hard to serve/hard to employ population. Consideration should be given to amending

federal programs such as SSI, and reforming programs such as Unemployment Insurance (UI), to help low wage, part time, and transient workers.

8. Public and non-profit administrators with superior management skills are critical to govern today's publicly funded programs. The new world requires different and more aggressive kinds of management skills for managers and front line workers in public and non-profit agencies.
 9. Collaboration is needed now more than ever. Clearly, there is an overwhelming need to build a corporate culture of collaboration. This culture has to be communicated and mandated from the top, be constantly and consistently reinforced, and become part of each manager's job performance criteria.
 10. Research. Overall, the social policy research conducted over the past years has been wonderful. Greater emphasis should be placed on administrative or implementation research in order to generate more timely feedback to policymakers as they implement new strategies in an era of devolution. The political and budget cycle realities of government often cause leaders to employ a short time perspective, and the expeditious availability of feedback on the impacts of new policy initiatives is essential to both make necessary mid-course adjustments and achieve success in the implementation of major program reform.
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Appendix C Table of Issues Identified by Conference Participants

Table 1 - Regional Workshop Issues

Barriers to Achieving Economic Independence Identified	Issue
Education and Literacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lack of basic literacy and basic skills among low wage workers. High school diploma, GED and technical/computer skills lacking in many with low pay and unstable jobs. - Lifelong learning and training is necessary for workers to increase their basic and technical/career skills. Workers have difficulty combining full time work and going back to school. Employers may not offer training during working hours for fear of losing the employee. Employer supported and based training is important.
Transportation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Travel distance between services is too great - Lack of transportation options for low income workers - Spatial mismatch between where working poor live and where the jobs are located - State assistance limited to only those who received TANF or to special populations (i.e., elderly, disabled) - need for greater assistance for the broader low income working population
Child Care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - State subsidies are too low and co-pay too high for TANF recipients - Need for expansion of infant care - Gateway for child care subsidy is predominantly the welfare system- this needs to be changed
Health Issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Need to expand subsidized health care coverage for low wage workers and their children, if not available through employer - Need to increase access to affordable mental health services and supports for working poor - Need to focus greater attention on assisting the physical, mental and learning disabled to get to work and eliminate their special barriers to getting and retaining employment - Need to increase access to affordable substance abuse services and supports
Housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Continued lack of affordable housing for low wage workers

Immigration Status	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Immigrants (legal and illegal) face multiple barriers either because of their ineligibility for government support services, or resistance/fear to seeking assistance - Language (lack of English) is a barrier to stable employment and job advancement
Personal Life Factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Need for coping skills, job coaches and supports for certain low wage workers on the job - Need to expand life skills/soft skills training into ongoing educational/career path training - Expansion of financial planning services and Individual Development Accounts (IDAs) are needed.

Barriers to Effective Service Delivery Identified	Issue
Welfare and Workforce Coordination and Integration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Gateway problem. Many support services currently available to the working poor to alleviate barriers are available to only those who were on welfare. Workers who have never been on welfare cannot access the full range of support services. There is no single unified strategic vision to assist workers regardless of their entry into the system. - Need for programmatic alignments. Welfare system and workforce system have conflicting or counter-productive restrictions, eligibility requirements and performance expectations. - Need for information system alignments and integration. - Siloed funding has become too complex and restrictive, causing program operators to piece together funding. - Improved, but continued lack of information sharing and cooperation among social services and workforce agencies. - Overall system simplification is needed. Both systems have become too complicated, over regulated and difficult for both program operations and customers to understand and navigate.
Workforce Development System (WIBS, One Stops, Employment Services)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Labor market demand knowledge (from employers and business) needs to be strengthened. Front line staff need to be transformed into job counselors and job developers - they need to understand the labor market - Assessment and applicant screenings performed at One-Stops are inadequate - workers need to be able to detect learning and other disabilities and better screen clients before sending them to employers

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - NJPIN is duplicative of current private on-line services (HotJobs.com, Monster.com) - Many One-Stops need to establish better connections with larger employers - where there are greater employee benefits - Many One-Stops are located in inaccessible places and only maintain 9-5 schedules. The system is not customer focused to meet the needs of people working. - One-Stops are too different from county to county and not well coordinated. The system is not 'seamless' to the customer. - Few people know about the One-Stop system. One-Stops must market their services and change the way they do business to meet the needs of the working population. - One Stops need to better coordinate with local non-profit agencies and employers.
Welfare System	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Inadequate services for non-TANF welfare recipients (General Assistance, Food Stamps) - Child support is very important to working families. Families need to benefit when child support is paid.
Education System	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Adult and K-12 Education system partnerships need to be seriously strengthened. Education has clearly been missing from the dialogue and policy making. - The K-12 system needs to strengthen its vocational/school-to-work efforts
Business Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Government agencies need to increase their dialogue with the private sector and do it more frequently. The private sector needs to be involved in providing labor market knowledge, so that people are educated, trained, and screened for the right job/career and the right employer. - Critical need for business investment in employer-based training and other services that would support a public goal of supporting and promoting steady work.
Community Based and Faith Based Organizations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Need to leverage faith-based and CBOs. The working poor are comfortable with these organizations, yet many of these organizations do not have the capacity to provide extensive services.

Table 2 - Research Workshop Issues

Area of Research	Issue
Welfare	Determination of the causes of different outcomes for various demographic groups (Hispanic, African American for example).

Welfare	Examination of the drop in (post-TANF client) Food Stamp Cases
Welfare	Examination of the application process for ancillary services and work supports (post TANF clients)
Welfare Workforce Development (Service Delivery)	Information systems integration between welfare and workforce systems - strategies for coordination
Welfare Workforce Development (Program Management)	WIA and TANF Program Integration - strategies for coordination
Welfare Education	Literacy and welfare recipients and the welfare poor - best practices to increase the literacy level
Education	Distance Learning - is it a viable option for the working poor

Appendix D Conference Participants

First Name	Last Name	Organization
Jacqueline	Adams	Rutgers Graduate School of Social Work
Gary	Altman	WIB Passaic County
Roland	Anglin	New Jersey Public Policy Research Institute
Eileen	Appelbaum	Center for Women and Work, Rutgers University
Ayirebi	Asante	Newark One-Stop System
Denise	Balik	Heldrich Center for Workforce Development
Denise	Baserman	CCBSS
Brenda	Beacham	Hunterdon Probation Division
Kathryn	Blackshear	Camden Housing Authority
Steven J.	Bruner	Atlantic Cape May Workforce Investment Board
David	Butler	Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation
Paul	Calocino	Bergen County Workforce Investment Board
Peggy	Carrigg	Jersey City One Stop Career Center
Raymond	Castro	NJ Department of Human Services
Howard	Chernick	Department of Economics, Hunter College at CUNY
Dianne	Ciesla	State Department of Community Affairs, Division on Women
Jennifer	Cleary	Heldrich Center for Workforce Development
Deborah	Collins Cardwell	Hudson County School of Technology Career Dev. Center
Alfonsena	Commune	Office of Information Technology
Patricia	Cooper	New Community Workforce Development Center
Virginia	Cornue, Ph.D	Department of Anthropology, Rutgers University
Judy	Delorenzo	Heldrich Center for Workforce Development
Marcella	DeRosa	Ocean County Human Services

Irene	Dess	Somerset County Board of Social Services
Donita	Devance-Manzini	Center for Urban Policy Research / Middlesex County Human Services Advisory Council
George	Echevarri	One-Stop Career Center, Greater Raritan WIB
Shawn	Escoffery	New Community Workforce Development Center
Mary	Fasola	CCBSS
Stephen	Ferrara	OC DHS
Aaron	Fichtner	Heldrich Center for Workforce Development
Brian	Fitzgibbons	NJ Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services
Toby R.	Frontera	NJ DOL - E.S, Bergen One Stop System
Mary	Gatta	Center for Women and Work
J. Forrest	Gilmore	Atlantic County Department of Family and Community Dev.
Heidi	Gold	Legal Services of New Jersey
Jacy	Goode	Essex County WIB
Sarah	Greenblatt	Home News Tribune
Anna	Groves	MOET WIA
Richard	Groves	SMC
Maria E.	Guerriero	Greater Raritan WIB
Robin	Gwathney	Heldrich Center for Workforce Development
Joshua	Haimson	Mathematica Policy Research
JoAnn	Hammill	NJ Department of Labor
Gwendolyn	Harris	NJ Department of Human Services
Sharon	Hartman	NJ Department of Labor
Leela	Hebbar	Heldrich Center for Workforce Development
David C.	Heins	NJDHS - Div. Of Family Development
John	Heldrich	Heldrich Center for Workforce Development
Dr. Thomas A.	Henry	NJ State Department of Education
Robert	Higgins	Bergen Workforce Center
Deborah	Hinds	UC Div. Of Workforce Dev. Operation

Richard	Hobbie	National Association of State Workofrce Agencies
Lynn Ann	Hoffman	Somerset County Board of Social Services
Thomas G.	Jennings	NJ Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services
Leonard T.	Johnson	Horizon/Mercy
Elba	Johnston	CCBSS
Edith	Jones	CCBSS
Stephen	Kalucki	Alternatives, Inc.
Seth	Kaper-Dole	Reformed Church of Highland Park
Adrienne	Keaton	Middlesex County Employment & Training
Gretchen	Keer	The Center for Women and Work
Al	Kirk	NJ Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services
Kathy	Krepcio	Heldrich Center for Workforce Development
Lyn	Krisa	Morris/Sussex/Warren Employment and Training Services
E. Joseph	Kunzmann	Somerset County Board of Social Services
Violet	LaGrotteria	Ocean County Board of Social Services
Debra	Lancaster	Rutgers OTEC
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Barbara	Lee	Center for Women and Work, School of Management and Labor Relations
Natalie	Londensky	NJ Department of Labor
Theresa	McAleavy	The Bergen Record
Irene M.	McCarthy	Office of Legislative Services
Brigitte	McClendon	Care Plus NJ Inc.
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Marilynn	Medican	The Jointure
Carol	Miramontes	Somerset County Board of Social Services
Elaine	Muller	Women's Center at County College of Morris
Mark M.	Murphy	The Fund for New Jersey
Patricia	Nagbe	Somerset Community Action Program

Wendy	Nixon	The Center for Women and Work
Sister Peggy	Nolte	St. Mary's Hospital
Susan	Nottingham	Bergen County Department of Human Services
Judith	Ortiz-Velazquez	US Department of Labor/ETA
Jack	Patten	Morris/Sussex/Warren Workforce Investment Board
Henry	Plotkin	State Employment & Training Commission (SETC)
Marianne	Polinski	Somerset County Board of Social Services
Daniel	Pollock	Governor's Office
Natalie	Provenzale	NJ DHS - Division of Family Services
Reed	Purcella	NJ Division of Vocational Rehabilitation
Margaret	Reddick	The Housing Authority of the City of Camden
Ingrid W.	Reed	Eagleton Institute of Politics
Patricia	Reed	Department of Labor One Stop Career Center
Tracy	Regan	Trenton Times
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Marsha	Salvatore	Bergen Workforce Center

Laurie	Santos	Heldrich Center for Workforce Development
Claire	Scarano	Teaneck Women Train & Work
Andrea	Schaffel	Bergen County Workforce Investment Board
Herb	Schaffner	Heldrich Center for Workforce Development
Patricia	Schutlz	CCBSS
Patricia	Scillia	Career & Life Counseling Center
Lisa	Serenelli	Mercer County WIB
Vivien	Shapiro	NJ DOL, Labor Planning & Analysis
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Kirk	Shrum	US DOL / ETA, Region I-NY
Jamie	Sims	Waters & Sims Employment Services
Gwen	Spann	DCA - Division on Women
Lori	Stanislaus	US DOL / ETA, Region I-NY
John	Stephenson	SCHSHC
Allen David	Stien	NJ 101.5
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Edward	Tetelman	Department of Human Services
Bill	Tracy	Heldrich Center for Workforce Development
Mary	Trigg	The Center for Women and Work
Deborah	Trionfo	Center for People in Transition
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Michelle	VanNoy	Mathematica Policy Research, Inc.
Margaret	Varma	Rutgers University
William	Waldman	School of Social Work, Rutgers University
Suellen	Waters	Waters & Sims Employment Services