Washington's TANF Single Parent Families After Welfare

Executive Summary

In an effort to understand how former TANF clients are faring since leaving TANF cash assistance, the Department of Social and Health Services has conducted telephone surveys of two TANF exit groups. The first survey (N=560) included single-parent households exiting TANF between December 1997 and March 1998. The second survey (N=592) included single-parent households leaving TANF between April and July of 1998. Both surveys send the following messages:

- Most of the TANF single parent families leave welfare due to increased earnings through employment.
- These former TANF clients have an average wage well above the minimum wage.
- More than half of these families consider themselves better off since leaving welfare.
- The remaining TANF caseload has a much longer welfare dependency than those who have left the program, suggesting that greater challenges may be ahead in moving long term welfare recipients off the rolls.

The rest of the executive summary provides side-by-side major findings from both surveys. The heading represents the last month of exit for each group.

	March Exiters	**August Exiters**
• Three most important reasons for leaving welfare:	N=560	N=592
Increased earnings through employment	*58%*	*67%*
Left welfare due to conflict with DSHS requirements	*12%*	*8%*
Increased income through other sources (e.g. child support, social security, SSI etc.)	*10%*	*9%*
Total	**80%**	**84%**
• Employed at the time of survey	68%	71%

	March Exiters	**August Exiters**
• Currently working or worked within the last 12 months	78%	87%
• Characteristics of the current or most recent job within the last 12 months:		
Average number of weeks worked last 12 months	*29 weeks*	*34weeks*
Average number of hours worked	*34 hours/week*	*36 hours/week*
Work primarily non-day schedules	*35%*	*38%*
Work primarily a combination of weekends and weekdays	*51%*	*51%*
Self employed	*11%*	*9%*
	Mean//Median	**Mean//Median**
Hourly wage for workers	$8.42//$7.40	$8.09//$7.22
Total family cash income including child support	$1,442//$1,256	$1,388//$1,204[1]
	Mean//Median	**Mean//Median**
Total family cash income as a percent of Federal Poverty Level for a family of three (1997 FPL)	135%//118%	130%//113%
80% former clients with jobs are employed in the following occupations:		
Admin. support/clerical/general office	17%	16%
Retail and other sales	14%	18%
General labor/construction/equipment operation	14%	14%
Health care (non-professional)	11%	8%
Food and beverage services	9%	10%
Childcare/personal services	9%	7%
Janitors/maids	5%	8%
• Use of DSHS childcare subsidies (Of those who use childcare while working or in training)	36%	38%

[1] For August exiters, child support is the reported actual amount received in the survey month (with an average of $100.08/month) while for March exiters it was expected monthly amount (with an average of $107.71).

	March Exiters		August Exiters	
• Perceived family well-being since leaving welfare				
Better off	*60%*		*54%*	
About the same	*22%*		*25%*	
Worse off	*18%*		*21%*	
	Worse-off	**All Families**	**Worse-off**	**All Families**
• Likely to return to welfare within 6 months	52%	N/A	48%	17%
• Assistance received since leaving TANF				
Medicaid (children)	*57%*		*64%*	
Food stamps	*42%*		*45%*	
Medicaid (adults)	*36%*		*44%*	
Food banks	*22%*		*29%*	
Housing assistance	*17%*		*19%*	
Energy assistance	*11%*		*11%*	
Help from charitable organizations	*11%*		*12%*	
Drug/alcohol treatment	*6%*		*5%*	
Family violence counseling service	*4%*		*4%*	
DSHS emergency assistance	*2%*		*2%*	
Emergency shelter	1%		1%	
Tribal service	*n/a*		*2%*	
• Self-reported insecurity				
No health insurance (adult)	*35%*		*32%*	
No health insurance for at least one child	*20%*		*18%*	
Going without food at least one day at least once	*N/A*		*8%*	
Not having a place to live at least once	*N/A*		*11%*	
Utility was cut off at least once	*N/A*		*11%*	
Evicted from home at least once	*N/A*		*5%*	
	Mean//Median		**Mean//Median**	
• Length on welfare (self-reported)	44 mo.//25 mo.		45 mo.//34 mo.	

Washington's TANF Single Parent Families Post Welfare

Management Reports & Data Analysis
Division of Program Research & Evaluation
Economic Services Administration

CHAPTER 1: OVERVIEW

In November 1997, Washington State began implementing WorkFirst, the state's version of Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) under welfare reform. WorkFirst seeks to reduce welfare dependency and increase self-sufficiency among welfare recipients by requiring them to work or actively engage in job search activities or job related training. In addition, a 60-month lifetime limit for TANF assistance took effect beginning August 1997.

Between July 1997, one month before WorkFirst started, and October 1998, the most recent month for which caseload data are available, the total number of families receiving TANF declined from 88,221 to 66,927, a 24% reduction. Over the same period, the number of single-parent TANF families declined from 78,149 to 58,544, a 25% drop. While caseload decline may be a good indicator of reductions in welfare dependency, it tells us little about client self-sufficiency or client well-being. The following questions must be answered to assess the impact of WorkFirst as well as welfare reform in general:

- What are the most important factors that cause clients to leave welfare?
- What is happening to clients after leaving welfare? Are they working? What kind of jobs do they have? How much do they earn from their work?
- What challenges do families face after leaving welfare? Are families better or worse off since leaving welfare? What resources do they use to provide for their families?

With these questions in mind, Management Reports & Data Analysis (MRDA), under DSHS Economic Services Administration (ESA) started tracking, through client surveys, TANF single parent families who left welfare after the implementation of WorkFirst.

Two exit groups have so far been surveyed. The first group left TANF between December of 1997 and March 1998. The second group left TANF between April and August of 1998. The families in the earlier group left TANF when WorkFirst had barely began while the second group left after WorkFirst was fully implemented. Because the latter group was more likely to have experienced WorkFirst requirements and/or activities, WorkFirst may have a greater impact on this group.

CHAPTER 2: METHODS

The first group was randomly selected from TANF single-parent families which received TANF cash grants at least one month between November 1997 and February of 1998 but did not receive such a grant in March 1998. The second group was randomly selected from TANF single-parent families which received TANF at least three months between April and August of 1998 but did not receive any TANF grant in August 1998. In both surveys, child-only cases were not sampled, and cases back on TANF at the time of the surveys were excluded.

Three retired Quality Assurance (QA) reviewers conducted interviews of March exiters between mid-April and May of 1998. Two additional interviewers (one was a retired JOBS worker and one was a social worker on loan from a local office) joined the team to do the interviews of August exiters. These interviews lasted between mid-October and November 1998. Two additional DSHS staff were brought on to conduct interviews of families with limited English proficiency when the preferred language was Spanish, Vietnamese, or Russian.

All interviewers had extensive knowledge of the state's welfare program as well as valuable skills in locating and interviewing clients. In addition, they attended a two-day training to pre-test the survey and learn a protocol for reaching and keeping track of sampled clients.

For both surveys, MRDA used several strategies to encourage client participation. 1) Prior to the start of telephone calls, MRDA sent letters to all sampled families to inform them about the purpose of the survey and encourage their participation. 2) Whenever necessary, interviewers made multiple attempts to contact each household at various times of the day and various days of the week. 3) The prospective respondents were given a toll free number to contact the research staff about the survey. 4) Assuring and maintaining confidentiality of information about clients.

In conducting the first survey, MRDA discovered that finding many of the former clients represents a major challenge. Over half of the sampled clients did not have a correct address or phone number available in the administrative data. Because the focus of the first survey was to complete a desired number (500) of interviews in a short time, interviewers did not have much time searching for hard-to-find clients. Consequently, the response rate under the most stringent definition was low (31%). However, once reached by phone, most former clients were willing to participate in the survey. Only 3% of the sample refused to participate and the cooperation rate was 86%. The first survey completed 560 interviews.

With the experience from the first survey and additional staff and resources, the second survey pushed for a higher response rate. In particular,

- Sampled clients were invited to provide their contact information on a postage-paid postcard. Returning the postcard or calling the toll-free number to leave their contact information qualified the family for a free drawing of one of five gift certificates for $200 in groceries.
- The Washington Telephone Assistance Program (WTAP) provided current telephone numbers for families in the sample receiving WTAP services. About 20% of the sample were receiving WTAP.
- Forwarding addresses were requested from the post office and follow-up letters were sent to the new addresses.
- Interviewers sent additional follow-up letters to families who could not be reached by phone or did not respond to phone messages.
- The toll-free line was used to make responding more convenient for clients. In addition to asking questions about the study, the clients could also use the toll-free line to schedule interviews or conduct interviews on the spot.
- The minimum number of calling attempts for each sampled client was increased from 5 to 8. Interviewers made as many as 30 attempts to reach certain sampled clients.

As a result of greater effort, persistence, and more resources put into data collection, the second survey achieved a response rate of 52% and a cooperation rate of 93%. A total of 608 interviews were completed, and 592 were used for data analysis (16 of them did not fit the exiter definition). 19 of the interviews were conducted in a language other than English (7 Vietnamese, 6 Spanish, 5 Russian, and 1 Cambodian).

The interviews lasted about 21 minutes on average. Following completion of each telephone interview, paper interview forms were checked for quality and then entered into an electronic database.

Survey data were matched anonymously with three administrative data bases to 1) enable assessment of potential non-response biases and 2) compare characteristics of exiters to those remaining on the caseload. These administrative data bases are:

- The CARD database maintained by the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS);
- The client eligibility history file maintained by the Office of Financial Management (OFM); and
- The UI wage file maintained by Employment Security Department (ESD).

CHAPTER 3: RESULTS

The reader should be advised, in reading the results, that each survey has a margin of error of ± 4% at the 95% confidence level. Therefore, when comparing results from the two surveys, one may not want to consider small differences (e.g. less than 5%) as real differences.

Table 1. Client Demographic Profile

Demographic Characteristics	*March Exiters All Families (N=560)*	*August Exiters All Families (N=592)*
Average years of school completed	12 years	12 years
Less than high school/no GED*	21%	23%
GED only	14%	14%
High school diploma only	20%	17%
Vocational/technical certificate	N/A	6%
Some college but no degree	30%	25%
Two year college degree/certificate	9%	11%
Four year college degree or higher	6%	4%
Male	8%	7%
Female	92%	93%
Never married	37%	38%
Divorced	33%	34%
Married	17%	17%
Separated	12%	10%
Widowed	2%	1%
Living with a spouse-like partner	21%	20%
White	75%	73%
Other (mostly Hispanics)	9%	7%
Black	8%	10%
Native American	5%	6%
Asian/Pacific Islander	3%	5%
Hispanic (all races)	10%	8%

* Include those who did not get high school diploma or GED but reported taking some college courses.

Table 1 continued

Demographic Characteristics	*March Exiters All Families (N=560)*	*August Exiters All Families (N=592)*
Average number of dependent children	1.7 children	1.7 children
Average age of the youngest child	5.6 years	5.3 years
Youngest child less than 1	10%	8%
Youngest child between 1 and 6	50%	56%
Youngest child between 7 and 12	26%	21%
Youngest child 13 and over	9%	9%
With no child under 18	5%	7%
Average age of the head of household	32 years	32 years
Ages 16-19	4%	6%
Ages 20-29	41%	43%
Ages 30-39	38%	34%
Ages 40-49	12%	13%
Ages 50 and over	3%	4%
Non-U.S. citizen	3%	5%
Primary language is not English	4%	6%
Length on welfare (self-reported)	44 months, with a median of 25 months	45 months, with a median of 34 months
Years lived in U.S.A.	30 years, with a median of 29 years	30 years, with a median of 29 years
Years lived in Washington state	19 years, with a median of 20 years	19 years, with a median of 20 years

Section 2: Reason for Leaving Welfare

The majority of families attribute their exit from welfare to increased earnings through employment, with 58% in March Exiters and 67% in August exiters. Another 10% or so attribute the cause to increased income through other sources, including receipt of child support, social security, or SSI (Table 2.1).

Washington State does not terminate TANF cases due to clients' failure to meet WorkFirst requirements. However, a significant portion (12% of March exiters and 8% of August exiters) of the exiters reported that they chose to leave welfare because of WorkFirst requirements, even though only a small portion in August exiters (1%) were actually sanctioned by DSHS due to non-cooperation with WorkFirst requirements. Sanctions could reduce a family's TANF grant by up to 40%.

Table 2.1. Most Important Reason for Leaving Welfare

Reason	March Exiters ***N=560***	**August Exiters** ***N=592***
Increased income through employment	58%	67%
Left welfare due to conflict with program requirements	12%	7%
Left welfare voluntarily because sanction was imposed	N/A	1%
Increased income through other sources (e.g. child support, gifts)	10%	9%
Marriage	6%	3%
Reunification with spouse	4%	1%
Lost custody of child	3%	2%
Youngest child turned 18 years of age	2%	3%
Concerned about using up the 60-month time limit	1%	2%
Other	6%	6%

Section 3: Employment and Earnings

An overwhelming majority of TANF exiters are either currently working (68% of March exiters and 71% of August exiters) or worked within the last 12 months (78% of March exiters and 87% of August exiters).

Sixteen percent (N=97) of August exiters have not worked since leaving welfare. Poor health seems to be the top reason for not working since leaving welfare, followed by inability to find a job, in school, or cannot arrange child care.

Table 3.1. Reason not Working since Leaving Welfare

Reason not working since leaving welfare	*Percent N=97*
Health reasons	28%
Cannot find any job	15%
Cannot arrange childcare	11%
In school	11%
Discouraged at the prospect of finding any job	4%
Cannot find the wanted job	4%
Cannot arrange transportation	4%
Other reasons	24%

The next segment of Section 3 reports the employment characteristics of those who are currently working or worked sometime during the last 12 months.

	March Exiters	**August Exiters**
Wage and benefits	**N=436**	**N=511**
Average//median hourly wage	$8.42//$7.40	$8.09//$7.22
Less than $5 per hour	4%	6%
$5-$6.99 per hour	34%	33%
$7-$8.99 per hour	32%	32%
$9-$10.99 per hour	14%	16%
$11-$12.99 per hour	7%	6%
$13 or more per hour	8%	7%

	March Exiters N=436	August Exiters N=511
With paid sick leave	35%	30%
With paid annual leave	44%	38%
With health care benefit from job	37%	36%
With retirement benefit from job	27%	26%
Having employer provided financial help with childcare	5%	3%
Median//average weeks it took to find the current or most recent job	N/A	2 wk.// 8 wk.
WorkFirst helped get the job	5%	20%
Work schedule and work efforts		
Average number of weeks worked in the last 12 months	29 weeks	34 weeks
Average number of hours worked per week	34 hours/week	36 hours/week
Work primarily a combination of weekends and weekdays	51%	51%
Work primarily non-day schedule	35%	38%
Self employed	11%	9%
Distance to Work and Transportation	**Median//Average**	**Median//Average**
Distance from home to work(one way)	6 miles // 10 miles	8 miles // 11 miles
Family car	71%	71%
Friend's car or car pool	11%	12%
Bus	8%	8%
Walk	6%	5%
Other	5%	4%

Employment and work efforts show an increase among August exiters. However, the wage rate of August exiters is slightly lower than that of March exiters, although occupational distributions are very similar (table 3.1).

Occupation

Table 3.2 details all occupations of those who are either currently working or worked sometime during the last 12 months before the survey. 80% of the welfare exiters are concentrated in 7 occupational categories: administrative support, general labor, sales, non-professional health care, food/beverage services, childcare/personal services, and janitors/maids.

Table 3.2. Occupations of Those Currently Employed or Worked within Last 12 Months

Occupation	*March Exiters % distribution (N=433)*	*August Exiters % distribution (N=511)*
Admin. support/clerical/general office	17%	16%
Retail and other sales	14%	18%
General labor/construction/equipment operation	14%	14%
Health care (non-professional)	11%	8%
Food and beverage services	9%	10%
Childcare/personal services	9%	7%
Janitors/maids	5%	8%
Teacher aids/educational services	5%	5%
Health care (professional)	4%	4%
Professional/technical	4%	4%
Managerial/Administrative	3%	4%
Agricultural worker	1%	2%
Services (other than identified above)	2%	1%

Section 4: Children and Childcare

Both surveys collected data for up to four children in each family. This section provides a profile of these children and how they are cared for while they are out of school and their parents are at work or in training programs.

Profile of All Children

	March Exiters **All Children (N=912)**	**August Exiters** **All Children (N=1002)**
Under 1 year of age	6%	5%
Ages 1 to 6	43%	46%
Ages 7 to 12	36%	33%
Ages 13 and over	16%	16%
Average age	7.2 years	7.0 years
With physical/mental disability	10%	8%
With behavioral problems (of those age 13 and over)	12%	7%

Childcare Arrangements

Next we turn to childcare arrangements, focusing on the youngest child. It should be noted that childcare arrangements among March exiters and August exiters are not exactly comparable, due to changes made in the questionnaire. Specifically, the survey of March exiters had two arrangement categories 1) “parent at home with children” and 2) “children in school while parent is working or in training” that were not in the survey of August exiters.

Efforts were made in data analysis to make the results as comparable as possible by eliminating the above two arrangements in the first survey. However, one category, i.e. combination of school and childcare providers, was kept for the second survey because these families were actually using childcare.

Table 4.1. Childcare Arrangements (Youngest Child)
While the Child Is Not in School and the Working Parent Is Outside the Home

Childcare Arrangements	*March Exiters Distribution (N=308)*	*August Exiters Distribution (N=359)*
Day-care center	16%	21%
Grandparent	16%	20%
Family day care facilities	9%	15%
Other parent/step parent	8%	9%
Baby sitter at home	8%	10%
Other relative	7%	7%
Older siblings	1%	5%
Self care	1%	4%
More than one care provider	4%	2%
With parent at work/Employer on site care	5%	1.2%
Preschool/Headstart/ECAP	1%	2.5%
Some other arrangements	5%	3%
Combination of school & childcare provider*	19%	N/A

*Because the first survey has this category and the second survey does not, the numbers are not exactly comparable. The type of care these families are using could be any of the ones preceding it.

Use of DSHS Childcare Subsidies

Of those families with children under 13 whose parent is at work when the children are not in school, just over a third (36% of March exiters and 38% of August exiters) used DSHS childcare subsidies. When asked why they are not using DSHS childcare subsidies, the majority reported that they did not need DSHS subsidies (57% of March exiters and 46% of August exiters). Between 13% and 15% said they were not using DSHS subsidies because they thought they wouldn't qualify. Between 8% and 11% believed it was too much trouble to apply for DSHS subsidies (Tables 4.2).

However, according to the interviewers, many of those who did use DSHS childcare subsidies emphasized that without these childcare subsidies they would not be able to work or maintain the same level of work effort. None of the respondents reported not using DSHS

childcare subsidies due to transportation problems, child's age, child's physical condition, or because the provider would not accept DSHS reimbursement.

Table 4.2. Reason Not Using DSHS Childcare Subsidies

Reason not using DSHS childcare subsidies	*March Exiters Distribution (N=200)*	*August Exiters Distribution (N=221)*
No need for DSHS childcare subsidies	57%	46%
Didn't think I'd qualified	13%	15%
Too much trouble to apply for DSHS childcare subsidies	8%	11%
DSHS wouldn't pay for the client chosen provider	6%	8%
Not aware of DSHS childcare subsidies	4%	3%
Paperwork was delayed by DSHS	3%	2%
Youngest child is over 12	0.5%	0%
Someone else pays for my childcare	1%	1%
Other unidentified reasons	8%	14%
Could not find a provider who'd accept DSHS reimbursemen	0%	0%
No transportation to provider	0%	0%
Child too sick/disabled to get a provider	0%	0%
Child too young	0%	0.4%

Significant differences exist in childcare arrangements between those using DSHS childcare subsidies and those not using such subsidies (Table 4.3). Specifically, users of DSHS subsidies are much more likely to use day-care centers or family care facilities and less likely to use grand parents or other parent/step parent than those not using DSHS subsidies.

Table 4.3. Comparison of Youngest Childcare Arrangements By Use of DSHS Childcare Subsidies

Childcare Arrangements	*March Exiters*		*August Exiters*	
	With DSHS Subsidies (N=110)	*Without DSHS Subsidies (N=195)*	*With DSHS Subsidies (N=150)*	*Without DSHS Subsidies (N=244)*
Day-care center	34%	7%	42%	7%
Combination of school & child care provider	18%	19%	N/A	N/A
Family day care facilities	13%	6%	19%	12%
Baby sitter at home	9%	7%	13%	8%
Other relative	8%	6%	5%	11%
Grandparent	7%	20%	13%	30%
More than one care provider	4%	3%	1%	3%
Other parent/step parent	1%	13%	0%	14%
Preschool/Headstart/ECAP	1%	1%	4%	2%
In school while parent working	0%	9%	N/A	N/A
School and self care	0%	11%	N/A	N/A
Parent taking child to work or on site care	0%	7%	1.2%	0.4%
Self care	0%	1%	0%	0%
Older siblings	0%	1%	0%	8%
Some other arrangement	4%	4%	0.6%	4%

Chi-square test results: March Exiters: P=.001 August Exiters: P=.001

Table 4.4 lists the reasons for the childcare arrangements of those using DSHS childcare subsidies and those not using DSHS childcare subsidies. The top three reasons for current childcare arrangement for those who do not use DSHS subsidies are: 1) the care they get is free, 2) provider is someone known to the family, and 3) quality of care. The top three reasons for those who use DSHS subsidies are: 1) provider is known to the family, 2) quality of care, and 3) provider accepts DSHS subsidies.

Table 4.4. Reason for Youngest Childcare Arrangements

Reason for care arrangement	*March Exiters*		*August Exiters*	
	With DSHS Subsidies N=107	*Without DSHS Subsidies N=188*	*With DSHS Subsidies N=150*	*Without DSHS Subsidies N=244*
Care is free	2%	40%	0%	26%
Provider is someone the parent knows	39%	31%	37%	27%
Convenient location	20%	9%	14%	8%
Quality of care	15%	10%	21%	26%
Flexible hours	7%	5%	6%	1%
Provider accepts DSHS reimbursement	11%	N/A	17%	0%
Care is affordable	1%	3%	1%	10%
Provider is licensed	1%	0%	1%	0%
Other (unidentified reasons)	4%	2%	3%	3%
Chi-square test results:	March Exiters: P=.001		August Exiters: P=.001	

Childcare Cost

	March Exiters		**August Exiters**	
	With DSHS Subsidies	Without DSHS Subsidies	With DSHS Subsidies	Without DSHS Subsidies
Monthly average out of pocket childcare cost	$46	$251*	$58	$245*
Childcare cost as % of family cash income	3%	15%	4%	15%
Average total monthly family cash income	$1,466	$1,678	$1,387	$1,631

*not including those who get free childcare.

Satisfaction with Childcare Arrangements

Regardless of the use of DSHS childcare subsidies, there is a high level of satisfaction among these families with their childcare arrangements.

	March Exiters		**August Exiters**	
Satisfied with youngest	With Subsidies	Without Subsidies	With Subsidies	Without Subsidies
Child care arrangements	96%	94%	92%	89%

In an effort to understand who are more likely to use DSHS childcare subsidies, we examined a series of family characteristics and find (Table 4.5):

- Those who work non-standard hours are less likely to use DSHS childcare subsidies.
- DSHS childcare subsidy users tend to have a younger youngest-child than non-DSHS childcare subsidy users.
- Families with pre-school children (under age 7) are more likely to use DSHS childcare subsidies than those not having pre-school children.
- Families without any adult other than the respondent are more likely to use DSHS childcare subsidies than those with additional adult(s) in the household.
- Families served by rural CSOs have similar use rate as families served by urban CSOs.
- Having or not having a disabled child does not seem to affect the use of DSHS childcare subsidies.

Table 4.5. Family Characteristics by Use of DSHS Childcare Subsidies

Characteristic	*March Exiters*		*August Exiters*	
	With DSHS Subsidies	**Without DSHS Subsidies**	**With DSHS Subsidies**	**Without DSHS Subsidies**
Working non-standard hours	48%	60%	52%	64%
Having disabled child	16%	11%	10%	16%
Having child under 7	84%	75%	90%	69%
Average age of youngest	3.7 years	4.2 years	3.6 years	4.8 years
With at least one worker other than the head of household	25%	35%	22%	40%
With at least one other adult in family	30%	47%	24%	57%

Shaded areas indicate statistically significant differences within each group at p<=0.05.

Section 5: Family Well-being

We are most concerned about how the families are doing after leaving welfare. This section reports our findings with regard to the following questions:

1. Are Families Better/Worse off since Leaving Welfare?	**March Exiters** **All Families** **(N=555)**	**August Exiters** **All Families** **(N=592)**
Better off	60%	54%
About the same	22%	25%
Worse off	18%	21%

A majority of families who left welfare report that they are better off. However, the proportion of families that feel they are better off is slightly lower among the second exit group.

2. What Resources Do Families Use After Welfare?	**All Families**	**All Families**
Public resources	**(N=560)**	**(N=592)**
Medicaid (children)	57%	64%
Food stamps	42%	45%
Medicaid (adults)	36%	44%
Food banks	22%	29%
Housing assistance	17%	19%
Energy assistance	11%	11%
Help from charitable organizations	11%	12%
Drug/alcohol treatment	6%	5%
Family violence counseling service	4%	4%
DSHS emergency assistance	2%	2%
Emergency shelter	1%	1%
Tribal service	n/a	2%

Other resources	**March Exiters** **All Families**	**August Exiters** **All Families**
With expected child support (of those with children)	38%	55%
Actually receiving child support (of those with children)	N/A	35%
Having at least one worker other than self in the family	34%	36%
Sharing rent/utility with someone outside immediate family	33%	25%
Receiving free room and board	14%	25%
Received personal loans	13%	18%
Having income from dividend, interest, estate etc.	1%	1%

3. Possible Factors Affecting Family Well-being

Employment and total family cash income, including child support, are obvious factors affecting perceived family well-being. About 4 out of 5 in the better off group are currently employed, compared with 2 out of 5 in the worse off group. The median family income of the better off group is between 2 and 2.5 times as high as the worse off group.

	March Exiters			August Exiters		
	Better off (N=335)	**About same** (N=121)	**Worse off** (N=99)	**Better off** (N=314)	**About same** (N=149)	**Worse off** (N=129)
Currently Employed	78%	61%	42%	81%	70%	45%
Total Family Income per Month						
Mean	$1,673	$1,298	$828	$1,699	$1,181	$848
Median	$1,462	$1,128	$726	$1,499	$1,041	$574

Table 5.1 shows that perceived family well-being is related to the reason why a family left TANF. Of those who are better off, the most frequently reported reason is increased earnings due to employment: between 72% to 80% compared with 23% to 39% of the worse off group. Of those who are worse off, an important reason for leaving welfare is their conflict with program requirements (between 15% and 27%), while only 5% of the better off group reported the same reason for leaving welfare. Those who left welfare because they lost custody of their children, or whose youngest child turned age 18, are also much more likely to be in the worse off group.

Table 5.1 Perceived Family Well-being and Reason the Family Left Welfare

Reason leaving welfare	*March Exiters*			*August Exiters*		
	Better off N=335	*About the same N=121*	*Worse off N=99*	*Better off N=314*	*About the same N=149*	*Worse off N=129*
Increased income through employment	72%	50%	23%	80%	62%	39%
Increased income through other sources (e.g. child support, gifts)	10%	10%	10%	7%	13%	7%
Left welfare due to conflict with program requirements	5%	17%	27%	5%	11%	15%
Marriage	5%	6%	8%	2%	2%	4%
Reunification with spouse	3%	4%	3%	2%	0%	2%
Lost custody of child	1%	2%	8%	0%	1%	8%
Youngest child turned 18 years of age	0%	3%	6%	1%	2%	7%
Concerned about using up the time limit	0.3%	3%	2%	1%	3%	4%
Other	3%	5%	11%	3%	7%	13%

Chi-square test results: March Exiters: P=.001 August Exiters: =.001

4. Comparison of Family Characteristics by Perceived Well-being Status

Table 5.3 lists a series of comparisons of family characteristics by perceived well-being status. Some of the more salient patterns include:

- The better off families are more likely to have filed for Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) for 1997 than the worse off families, again indicating the positive relationship between employment and well-being;
- The better off families are more likely to have health coverage for the adults as well as the children;

- The worse off families are more likely to rely on in-kind assistance from family or relatives;
- The worse off families tend to rely more on various forms of public assistance, especially among August exiters;
- The worse off families are more likely to have visited a mental health professional in the last 12 months;
- There are no statistically significant differences in the receipt of Medicaid for children; and
- There are no statistically significant differences in whether the families have additional worker(s) other than the respondent.

Table 5.3. Comparison of Family Characteristics by Perceived Well-being

	March Exiters			*August Exiters*		
Characteristics	***Better of N=335***	***About sam N=121***	***Worse off N=99***	***Better off N=314***	***About sam N=149***	***Worse off N=129***
With Medicaid (children)	57%	58%	58%	62%	68%	66%
Filed for EITC for 1997	53%	43%	28%	45%	37%	30%
Receiving food stamps	40%	46%	44%	38%	55%	51%
With Medicaid (adult)	36%	41%	30%	42%	51%	39%
With at least one worker other than self	33%	41%	30%	40%	29%	34%
With child support orders	40%	48%	18%	57%	56%	48%
With in-kind assistance	11%	12%	26%	19%	32%	34%
Using food banks	17%	20%	42%	18%	32%	52%
With housing assistance	16%	19%	19%	16%	25%	21%
With energy assistance	10%	13%	14%	7%	16%	16%
Using help from charitable organizations	8%	15%	16%	7%	13%	26%
No health coverage (adult)	30%	36%	49%	24%	33%	51%
No health coverage (children)	16%	21%	30%	14%	20%	28%
Saw mental health professional last 12 months	14%	21%	23%	11%	14%	22%

Table 5.3 continued

	March Exiters			August Exiters		
Characteristics	***Better of N=335***	***About sam N=121***	***Worse off N=99***	***Better off N=314***	***About sam N=149***	***Worse off N=129***
Having disabled child(ren)	12%	17%	22%	13%	12%	14%
Physically disabled[2] (adult)	7%	3%	9%	5%	7%	14%
Received drug treatment	5%	6%	7%	2%	6%	12%
Received family violence counseling	3%	4%	5%	3%	2%	8%

Shaded areas indicate statistically significant differences within each group at p <=.05.

Those who are worse off (52% of March exiters and 48% of August exiters) indicate that they are likely to return to welfare within the next 6 months. Of all August exiters, 17% indicate that they are likely to return to welfare within 6 months. The last statistic is not available for March exiters.

Perceived Insecurity

In the second survey, we added a series of questions to assess additional perceived family insecurity that we did not capture in the first survey. The food insecurity questions were adapted from the Census Current Population Survey. If a family reported experiencing a particular food insecurity item, we further asked if that particular experience was for adults only or for both adults and children.

Each of the insecurity incidences these families experienced happened since the time of exit from TANF. Thus the time frame could range from April 1998 (the earliest exit among the second exiter group) to November 1998 (the end of survey).

[2] Physical disability is defined as having severe or greater difficulties with any of the following activities:

- Seeing words or letters in ordinary newsprint (with glasses or contact lenses if one usually wears them);
- Hearing what is normally said in conversation with another person (with hearing aid if one usually wears one);
- Walking or using stairs without human or mechanical assistance;
- Lifting or carrying something as heavy as 10 pounds, such as a bag of groceries;
- Movement of fingers, hands, wrists, elbows, or shoulders.

	All Families (August exiters)	
	Percentage	**Number of Families**
Reported Food Insecurity		
Cutting meal size sometimes or often	33%	195
Adult only	21%	123
Adult & child	12%	72
Skipping meals sometimes or often	16%	98
Adult only	12%	74
Adult & child	4%	24
Going without food for at least one day at least once	8%	46
Adult only	7%	40
Adult & child	1%	6
Families that experienced all of the above food insecurity	***8%***	***46***
Reported Housing Insecurity		
Not having a place to live at least once	11%	64
Stayed with relatives	6%	34
Stayed with friends	3%	16
Stayed in a shelter	1%	7
Other	1%	7
Utility was cut off at least once	11%	64
Evicted from home at least once	5%	28

	All Families (August exiters)	
	Percentage	**Number of Families**
Reported Other Insecurity		
Childcare was terminated by provider at least once	2%	9
Not able to arrange for transportation sometimes or often	18%	109
Child ran away from home at least one overnight	3%	16
Child had to spend time with foster care	1%	6

Section 6: Family Characteristics and Well-being by Current Employment Status

Earlier in the report, we observed that current employment was closely related to family well-being. This section further analyzes the characteristics of those currently employed and not employed, and identifies factors affecting employment status.

- The total median income of the employed group is higher than the total median income of the not employed.

	March Exiters				August Exiters			
	Currently Employed (N=379)		**Not Currently Employed (N=181)**		**Currently Employed (N=421)**		**Not Currently Employed (N=171)**	
	Mean	**Median**	**Mean**	**Median**	**Mean**	**Median**	**Mean**	**Median**
Total family income	$1,610	$1,376	$1,070	$887	$1,600	$1,375	$876	$636

Factors That May Affect Employment

Table 6.1 indicates factors that may affect current employment. Some recurring patterns include:

- Gender, race, receipt of child support, number of children, or disability of children does not seem to affect the house holder's current employment status.

- Less likely to be employed are individuals who are married or living with a spouse-like partner, who have at least one worker other than the householder, who receive in-kind assistance such as room and board, who have income other than earnings, who have physical disability, or who have fewer years of education.

- Living in rural area seems to negatively affect employment for March exiters. However, this association disappears for August exiters. In other words, the second exit survey finds that families in rural areas are just as likely to be employed as families in urban areas.

Table 6.1. Family Characteristics and Current Employment Status

Characteristics	March Exiters		August Exiters	
	Currently Employed N=379	Not Currently Employed N=181	Currently Employed N=421	Not Currently Employed N=171
White	75%	75%	73%	73%
Male	8%	8%	7%	9%
Married or living with a spouse-like partner	28%	49%	31%	40%
Receipt of child support	38%	36%	56%	53%
Having income other than earnings	41%	55%	43%	62%
With in-kind assistance (room & board)	10%	22%	23%	31%
With at least one other worker in the family	29%	45%	32%	45%
Physical disability of adult	3%	14%	4%	15%
With disabled child	14%	16%	12%	12%
Householder visited a mental health professional last yr.	15%	20%	11%	22%
Served by rural CSO	11%	22%	22%	25%
Total average years on welfare	3.4 years	4.4 years	3.7 years	3.7 years
Average age of head of household	31 years	33 years	32 years	32 years
Average age of youngest child	5.5 years	5.8 years	5.6 years	4.6 years
Number of children	1.7 children	1.7 children	1.7 children	1.7 children
Total average years of education	12 years	11 years	12 years	11 years

Shaded areas indicate statistically significant differences within each group at P<=0.05.

In addition, as table 6.2 indicates, the highest educational degree obtained seems to affect current employment. In particular, if one does not have a high school diploma or GED, one is less likely to be employed. At the other end, having a bachelor's degree makes one more likely to fall into the employed group.

Table 6.2. Current Employment Status by Highest Degree Obtained

Highest Degree Obtained	March Exiters		August Exiters	
	Currently Employed N=379	Not Currently Employed N=181	Currently Employed N=421	Not Currently Employed N=171
Less than high school/GED*	17%	26%	18%	34%
GED only	15%	12%	12%	18%
High school only	19%	24%	19%	12%
Some college	31%	29%	26%	23%
Vocational certificate	N/A	N/A	7%	3%
2 years degree	10%	6%	12%	8%
BA or more	8%	3%	6%	2%

* Includes those who did not get high school diploma or GED but reported taking some college courses.

Chi-square test results: March Exiters: P=.01 August Exiters: P=.001

Use of Public Resources by Employment Status

Those who are not currently employed are more likely to be receiving food stamps and using food banks. Of the August exiters, there seems to have been a higher usage of drug/alcohol treatment and family violence counseling among the currently unemployed.

	March Exiters		August Exiters	
	Currently Employed (N=379)	**Not Currently Employed (N=181)**	**Currently Employed (N=421)**	**Not Currently Employed (N=171)**
With child on Medicaid	57%	58%	64%	65%
Receiving food stamps	37%	52%	43%	50%
Receiving Medicaid (adult)	36%	37%	44%	43%
Food Banks	19%	29%	25%	39%
Receiving housing assistance	16%	20%	19%	19%
Receiving energy assistance	10%	14%	10%	14%
Used DSHS emergency assistance	2%	2%	1%	3%
Drug/alcohol treatment	6%	4%	3%	10%
Family violence counseling	4%	3%	2%	7%

*Shaded areas indicate statistically significant differences within groups.

Section 7: Comparison of Selected Characteristics by Urban/Rural CSO

The urban/rural distinction is based on the location of the DSHS office (CSO) providing services to clients as of the last month a client was on TANF[3]. It is possible that some families have moved across the CSO based urban/rural boundaries since they left welfare. It is also possible that some families were served by a rural CSO but worked in an urban area and vise versa.

Due to lack of time and resources, the survey of the first exiter group had a relatively low representation of families served by rural CSOs. The survey of the second exiter group was much more successful in reaching rural families. Because of the small rural sample size for the first survey, one should exercise caution in interpreting its findings regarding urban rural differences and give more weight to findings from the second survey.

Reason Leaving Welfare

There are significant urban vs. rural differences in the reason families leave TANF as shown in table 7.1. In both groups, clients in urban areas are more likely to leave welfare due to increased earnings through employment than clients in rural areas. However, among August exiters, we see a higher proportion of exits due to concerns about using up the 60-month time limits and conflicts with program requirements in rural areas.

Table 7.1. Reason Leaving Welfare by Rural/Urban CSO Location

	March Exiters		*August Exiters*	
Reason leaving welfare	***Rural N=77***	***Urban N=473***	***Rural N=134***	***Urban N=458***
Increased income through employment	48%	60%	57%	69%
Left welfare due to conflict with program requirements	13%	11%	11%	7%
Increased income through other sources (e.g. child support, gifts)	13%	10%	7%	9%
Marriage	5%	6%	3%	2%
Reunification with spouse	9%	3%	1%	1%
Lost custody of child	1%	3%	3%	2%

[3] Data from survey #2 show that there is a 98% consistency between a family's county of residence and the county of CSO location. Less than 1% have a rural residence but are served by an urban CSO or vice versa.

Table 7.1 continued

Reason leaving welfare	*March Exiters*		*August Exiters*	
	Rural N=77	*Urban N=473*	*Rural N=134*	*Urban N=458*
Youngest child turned 18 years of age	1%	2%	4%	2%
Concerned about using up the 60-month time limit	3%	1%	5%	1%
Other	5%	5%	7%	5%

Chi-square test of the exit reason variable within groups: March Exiters: P=.01 August Exiters: P=.02

Work and Earnings

	March Exiters		August Exiters	
	Rural (N=77)	**Urban (N=473)**	**Rural (N=134)**	**Urban (N=458)**
Employed at the time of survey	51%	71%	68%	72%
Currently working or worked some time in last 12 months	68%	80%	86%	86%
	Rural (N=52)	**Urban (N=375)**	**Rural (N=115)**	**Urban (N=396)**
(of those who worked in last 12 month)				
Work primarily non-day schedules	39%	35%	40%	37%
Work weekends or a combination of weekends and weekdays	50%	49%	60%	49%

	Rural		Urban		Rural		Urban	
	Mean	Median	Mean	Median	Mean	Median	Mean	Median
Hours worked per week	33	36	36	40	36	40	36	40
Hourly wage	$8.41	$7.00	$8.46	$7.50	$7.45	$6.80	$8.28	$7.50
Total family income	$1,129	$1,070	$1,494	$1,312	$1,246	$1,100	$1,430	$1,262
Years of Education	12 yrs.	12yrs.	12yrs.	12yrs.	11yrs.	12yrs.	12yrs.	12yrs.
Average age of head of household	32 years		32 years		31 years		32 years	

Shaded areas indicate statistically significant differences within groups.

There are no statistically significant differences in occupational distribution by rural/urban breakdown as shown in table 7.2. However, it must be noted that the second survey done mid-October through November did not capture as many agricultural workers as did the first survey due to the seasonal nature of these occupations.

Table 7.2. Occupation by Rural/Urban Location

	March Exiters		*August Exiters*	
Occupation	***Rural N=52***	***Urban N=37***	***Rural N=115***	***Urban N=396***
Admin. support/clerical/general office	15%	17%	11%	18%
General labor/construction/equipment operation	14%	15%	12%	15%
Retail and other sales	12%	14%	21%	17%
Health care (non-professional)	12%	11%	10%	7%
Food and beverage services	10%	9%	7%	11%
Childcare/personal services	10%	9%	6%	8%
Janitors/maids	4%	7%	8%	7%
Teacher aids/educational services	6%	5%	4%	5%
Health care (professional)	2%	5%	4%	4%
Professional/technical	6%	4%	4%	3%
Managerial/Administrative	6%	3%	4%	3%
Agricultural worker	6%	1%	3%	2%
Other	0%	2%	4%	0%

Chi-square test of the occupation variable within groups: March Exiters: P=.45 August Exiters: P=.25

Family well-being by urban/rural location	**March Exiters**		**August Exiters**	
	Rural	**Urban**	**Rural**	**Urban**
	(N=77)	**(N=473)**	**(N=134)**	**(N=458)**
Better off	47%	62%	52%	55%
About the same	25%	21%	25%	25%
Worse off	26%	17%	23%	20%

Reported Insecurity by Urban/Rural CSO locality

(none of the urban-rural differences in this section reached statistical significance)

	March Exiters		August Exiters	
	Rural	**Urban**	**Rural**	**Urban**
Cutting meal size sometimes or often	n/a	n/a	32%	33%
Skipping meals sometimes or often	n/a	n/a	18%	16%
Going without food all day at least once	n/a	n/a	9%	8%
Not having a place to live at least one night	n/a	n/a	8%	11%
Utility was cut off at least once	n/a	n/a	13%	10%
Home eviction at least once	n/a	n/a	6%	4%
Childcare was terminated by provider at least once	n/a	n/a	2%	2%
Not able to arrange transportation				
For essential family functions	16%	15%	16%	11%
Child ran away from home for at least one night	4%	4%	1%	3%
Child had to spend time in foster care	0%	2%	1%	1%
Family violence	3%	3%	5%	5%
Drug/alcohol dependency	5%	3%	4%	5%
Use of Public Resources				
Receiving Medicaid (adult)	45%	35%	48%	43%
With child/ren on Medicaid	56%	57%	71%	62%
Receiving food stamps	47%	42%	51%	43%
Used food banks	30%	21%	31%	28%
Receiving housing assistance	23%	17%	15%	21%
Receiving energy assistance	9%	12%	13%	10%
Using DSHS childcare subsidies	24%	31%	36%	39%

Shaded areas indicate statistically significant differences within groups.

Basically, workers in the urban area tend to earn slightly higher average wages and have higher total family income. Rural workers also tend to work more non-standard hours than urban workers. However, there is not much difference in the perceived family well-being, experience of insecurity, and reliance on public resources between families served by rural CSOs and those served by urban CSOs.

Section 8: Comparison with A Group of Single Parent Families Who Left Welfare Prior to WorkFirst

ESA conducted a client survey in 1997, a few months prior to the implementation of WorkFirst. That survey (N=3,207) included 523 single parent families who had left welfare at the time of the survey. This section lays out a comparison of selected characteristics of those who exited welfare before WorkFirst and the two groups who exited after WorkFirst implementation (Table 8.1).

Table 8.1. Comparison of Pre/Post WorkFirst Exiters

Characteristics	*Pre-WorkFirst N=523*	*March Exiters N=560*	*August Exiters N=592*
Employed at the time of survey	68%	68%	71%
Average hours worked per week	36 hours	34 hours	36 hours
Average//median hourly wage (nominal $)	$8.23//$6.72	$8.42//$7.40	$8.09//$7.22
Employer provided sick leave	38%	35%	30%
Employer provided health benefits	41%	37%	36%
Work primarily non-day schedule	40%	35%	38%
Average years of school completed	12 years	12 years	12 years
Less than high school/GED*	16%	21%	23%
High school/GED only	33%	34%	31%
Vocational certificate	N/A	N/A	6%
Some college, including 2-yr degree*	47%	39%	36%
Four-year degree or higher	4%	6%	4%
Never married	32%	37%	38%
Divorced	41%	33%	34%
Married/separated	27%	29%	27%
Widowed	0.7%	2%	1%
With physical disability	5%	6%	7%

* The pre-WorkFirst group may have somewhat higher percentage of high school drop-outs and lower percentage of those with some college education than shown. Our experience indicates that some clients report having attended college when in fact they do not have a high school diploma or GED. In the two post-WorkFirst surveys, we specifically asked those who reported having some college whether they completed high school or GED. If not, we grouped them into the no high school/GED category.

Table 8.1 continued

Characteristics	*Pre-WorkFirst N=523*	*March Exiters N=560*	*August Exiters N=592*
Average age of head of household	32 years	32 years	32 years
Average number of children	1.7 children	1.7 children	1.7 children
Average age of the youngest child	5.3 years	5.6 years	5.3 years
Average//median total months on welfare	45//36 months	44//25 months	45//34 months

Comparisons in Table 8.1 reveal that:

- The March exiters are more like the pre-WorkFirst group in terms of current employment rates. The current employment rate is higher for the August exiters, possibly reflecting greater impact of WorkFirst.

- The post-WorkFirst groups are making somewhat higher (between 7% and 10% higher) median wages than the pre-WorkFirst group, unadjusted for inflation.

- The pre- and post-WorkFirst groups report being on welfare for about the same average months by the time of exit. However, the March exiter group has a lower reported median than the pre-WorkFirst group or the August exiter group[4].

- There do not appear to be significant differences in demographic characteristics among these three groups.

[4] According to administrative records (table 10.1 in Chapter 5), the March exit group does have a shorter median length on welfare (one month shorter) compared to the August exit group. This may be an indication that WorkFirst is enabling more longer-term welfare recipients to leave the rolls as the program progresses in time. However, greater challenges lay ahead in terms of moving long-term recipients off welfare. Judging from table 9.1 in Chapter 4 with administrative records comparing exiters vs. those who remain on the caseload, the remaining caseload has a much longer welfare dependency (16-17 months longer at the median) than the two exit groups under study.

CHAPTER 4: COMPARISON OF FAMILY CHARACTERISTICS BY TANF EXIT STATUS

This section is based on administrative data bases (DSHS Caseload Analysis and Reporting Database, OFM Eligibility File, and ES UI Wage File). The still-on-TANF families of the first group are those who had received at least one month of TANF benefits November 1997 through February 1998 and continued to receive TANF in March 1998. The still-on-TANF families of the second group are those who had received at least 3 months of TANF November 1997 through July 1998 and continue to receive TANF in August 1998.

Table 9.1. Comparison of Family Characteristics by TANF Exit Status

Characteristics	**First Group All Exiters N=13,188**	**First Group Still on TANF N=70,032**	**Second Group ALL Exiters N=17,562**	**Second Group Still on TANF N=59,962**
Demographic Indicators				
Female	90%	91%	90%	91%
White	69%	66%	72%	64%
Black	10%	12%	10%	12%
Hispanic	10%	10%	8%	10%
Asian	3%	4%	3%	4%
Native American	4%	5%	4%	5%
Unknown	3%	4%	3%	4%
Never Married	37%	38%	40%	39%
Married	13%	12%	12%	13%
Separated	22%	19%	22%	18%
Divorced	19%	17%	20%	17%
Widowed	1%	1%	0.6%	1%
US Citizens	89%	84%	94%	84%
Average Age of house holder	32 years	33 years	31 years	33 years
Less than 20 years	4%	4%	6%	6%
20-29 years	42%	38%	44%	37%

Table 9.1 continued				
Characteristics	**First Group All Exiters N=13,188**	**First Group Still on TANF N=70,032**	**Second Group ALL Exiters N=17,562**	**Second Group Still on TANF N=59,962**
30-39 years	35%	33%	35%	32%
40-49 years	14%	16%	13%	16%
50 and over	5%	8 %	2%	9%
Average Number of Children on Assistance	1.5 children	1.6 children	1.6 children	1.8 children
Average Age of Youngest Child	6.3 years	6.2 years	6.0 years	5.9 years
Limited in Major Life Activity[5]	6.5%	9.3%	4.0%	9.4%
Served by a Rural Welfare Office	21%	21%	21%	21%
Average//Median Years of Education	10.3//12 years	9.6//12 years	11.6//12 years	9.6//12 years
Economic Indicators				
Average//median quarters employed 1995-1997	5.2//5.0 qtrs.	4.7//4.0 qtrs.	5.1//4.0 qtrs.	4.8//4.0 qtrs.
Average//median total earnings per quarter	$1,742//$1,444	$1,399//$1,046	$1,539//$1,235	$1,404//$1,028
Median hours worked per quarter ('95-'97)	192 hours	149 hours	172 hours	147 hours
Median hourly wage (1995-1997)	$7.00	$6.49	$6.73	$6.45
Employed in 1997 4th quarter	56%	29%	36%	26%
Total wage in 1997 4th quarter	$2,189//$1,909	$1,544//$1,105	$1,578//$1,234	$1,652//$1,172
Hours worked 1997 4th quarter	249//232 hours	181//136 hours	191//154 hours	191//145 hours
Median hourly wage 1997 4th quarter	$7.16	$6.51	$6.68	$6.53

[5] As defined in ACES. See ACES User Manual, page J21-22.

Table 9.1 continued				
Characteristics	**First Group All Exiters N=13,188**	**First Group Still on TANF N=70,032**	**Second Group ALL Exiters N=17,562**	**Second Group Still on TANF N=59,962**
Average//median total TANF months 1988-1997	43//33 months	55//49 months	43//34 months	55//51 months
0 month	2%	3%	6%	7%
1-12 months	26%	15%	22%	13%
13-29 months	19%	15%	19%	14%
30-59 months	21%	22%	21%	21%
60 plus months	32%	43%	32%	44%

Table 9.1 indicates that compared to families that leave welfare, those who remain on TANF tend to have more non-White, non-US citizens, more adults age 50 and over, more adults with limits to major life activities, and lower average years of education. In terms of economic indicators, those who remain on TANF have longer welfare dependency, lower employment rate, shorter work quarters during 1995-1997, and lower earnings. Apparently, those who remain on TANF caseload present greater challenges to the state's WorkFirst program.

CHAPTER 5: SURVEY SAMPLE REPRESENTATIVENESS

This section is also based on three administrative data sources (DSHS Caseload Analysis and Reporting Database, OFM Eligibility File, and ES UI Wage File). Using these data sources enables one to assess how representative the survey respondents are compared to the entire sample frame (i.e. all exiters from which the sample is drawn). It also helps one understand where potential biases may exist. Table 10.1 provides major findings from the analyses.

- Comparing the demographic indicators, the survey respondents seem to have a slightly higher representation of Whites, US citizens, and those with higher average years of education than the non-respondents as well as the sample frame (i.e. all exiters from which the sample was drawn). However, the second exit survey made significant improvements in reducing such biases.

- The survey of the first group had a significantly lower representation of families in rural areas. The survey of the second group corrected this deficiency;

- There do not seem to be great differences in economic indicators such as total months on TANF (AFDC) and work quarters in recent couple of years. However, in terms of average quarterly earnings, exit survey number one had a higher representation of those with somewhat higher earnings and again this bias disappears in exit survey number two.

As noted earlier in the methods section, exit survey #1 did not reach a high response rate due to lack of resources and an emphasis on completing a desired number of interviews in a very short time. There were no interpreters to interview families that could not answer questions in English. Nor were there monetary incentives to encourage client participation or requirements of interviewers to spend extra time and effort to find the hard-to-locate families as were done in survey #2. Thus the observed deficiency in the sample representativeness of survey #1 is not unanticipated. What is worth noting is that most of the key economic indicators in survey #1 only show minor differences in the respondent group vs. the sample frame. For example, the median hourly wage from 1995 to 1997 differs only by 8 cents, the median quarters employed between 1995 and 1997 is the same, and the difference in median quarterly earnings during the same period is no more than 10%.

Table 10.1. Comparison of Surveyed Exiters with All Exiters

Characterstics	**First Group Surveyed Exiters (Respondents) (N=544)**[6]	**First Group ALL Exiters (Sample Frame) (N=13,188)**	**Second Group Surveyed Exiters (Respondents) (N=592)**	**Second Group ALL Exiters (Sample Frame) (N=17,562)**
Demographic Indicators				
Female	92%	90%	92%	90%
White	79%	69%	74%	72%
Black	9%	10%	10%	10%
Hispanic	4%	10%	7%	8%
Asian	3%	3%	3%	3%
Native American	2%	4%	3%	4%
Never Married	38%	36%	38%	40%
Married	12%	13%	13%	12%
Separated	22%	22%	21%	22%
Divorced	22%	19%	23%	20%
Widowed	1%	1%	0.3%	0.6%
Unknown	6%	9%	6%	6%
US Citizens	97%	90%	95%	94%
Average/Median Age of Head of Households	32//31 years	32//31 years	32//30 years	31//30 years
Average Number of Children on Assistance	1.5 children	1.5 children	1.7 children	1.6 children
Average Age of Youngest Child	6 years	6 years	6 years	6 years
Limited in Major Life Activity	6%	6%	4%	4%
Served by a Rural Welfare Office	14%	21%	22%	21%
Average//Median Years of Education	11//12 years	10//12 years	12//12 years	12//12 years

[6] The original survey had 560 respondents. However, only 544 had records in the UI wage file.

Table 10.1 continued				
Characterstics	**First Group Surveyed Exiters (Respondents) (N=544)**[7]	**First Group ALL Exiters (Sample Frame) (N=13,188)**	**Second Group Surveyed Exiters (Respondents) (N=592)**	**Second Group ALL Exiters (Sample Frame) (N=17,562)**
Economic Indicators				
Average//median quarters employed 1995-1997	5.3//5 qtrs.	5.2//5 qtrs.	5.1//5 qtrs.	5.1//4.0 qtrs.
Average//median total earnings per quarter (1995-1997)	$1,906//$1,607	$1,742//$1,444	$1,518//$1,257	$1,539//$1,235
Median hours worked per quarter (1995-1997)	205 hrs.	192 hrs.	174 hrs.	172 hrs.
Median hourly wage (1995-1997)	$7.08	$7.00	$6.74	$6.73
Employed in 1997 4th quarter	54%	56%	40%	36%
Average//median total wage in 1997 4th quarter	$2,284//$2,113	$2,189//$1,909	$1,531//$1,276	$1,578//$1,234
Median hours worked 1997 4th quarter	239 hrs.	232 hrs.	165 hrs.	154 hrs.
Median hourly wage 1997 4th quarter	$7.22	$7.16	$6.69	$6.68
Average//median total TANF months 88-97	43//33 months	43//33 months	45//37 months	43//34 months
0 month	1%	1.5%	7%	6%
1-12 months	25%	26%	17%	22%
13-29 months	21%	20%	20%	19%
30-59 months	21%	21%	24%	21%
60 plus months	32%	32%	32%	32%

[7] The original survey had 560 respondents. However, only 544 had records in the UI wage file.