
CHAPTER VIII: RESULTS FOR THE TWO SMALL COUNTIES

This chapter presents the survey findings for the two small counties in the study. The total number of survey responses were 10 in County G (of whom 9 were still off welfare) and 14 in County H (all of whom were still off welfare). The chapter presents selected data on respondents who were still of welfare at the time of the survey.

A. SURVEY RESULTS FOR COUNTY G

Basic Demographics

- The 9 respondents included 8 black females and 1 white female. Five were 18 to 24 years old, two were 25 to 34, and two were 35 to 39.
- Three had not graduated high school or obtained a GED, four had only graduated high school or received a GED, and two had attended college.
- Four were living with other adults, and three of the four lived with more than one other adult. One lived with a spouse, four with a parent or grandparent, two with another relative, one with an adult child, and one with a sibling .
- One respondent had no children under 18, two had one child, and six had two children. In five of the families, the youngest child was under four years old. In one family, the youngest child was four to five, and in two families, the youngest child was six to twelve years old.
- Two respondents received their first welfare payment in North Carolina before 1990, two received their first payment between 1990 to 1992, one received their first payment between 1993 to 1995, and four received their first payment between 1996 to 1999.

Reasons for Leaving Welfare

- The nine respondents had the following reasons for leaving welfare: found a job or returned to work (5); did not follow rules or could not meet work requirements (1); increased assets or income (1); did not want to be on welfare or use up benefits (1); and changed household situation or make-up (1).

Likelihood of Reapplying for Welfare

- One respondent felt that she was very likely to reapply for welfare in the next six months, one was not sure, and seven felt that they were very unlikely to reapply. The person who stated that she was very likely to reapply gave three reasons why she might reapply: loss or lack of a job; decrease in work hours or wages; and illness or disability.

Employment

- Five of the nine were working for pay and four were not working.
- Of the four who were not working, two had not held any jobs since leaving Work First and two had held one job since leaving. Of the two who had worked since leaving, both reported having quit their jobs — one to go to school and one due to a health problem or disability.
- The four who were not working had the following reasons why they were not working: retired; prefer to stay home with children; in school; and ill or disabled due to a thyroid problem.
- The retired respondent and the respondent in school reported that they were not looking for work.
- Of the five who were currently working, three had held only one job since leaving Work First and two had held two jobs since leaving Work First.
- All of the five employed respondents had just one job at the time of the survey. Two of the five were working with handicapped children, one as a kitchen helper, one as a nurse's aide, and one as a restaurant worker/waiter.
- Three of the five worked 40 hours or more per week, one worked 30 to 39 hours, and one worked less than 20 hours (the restaurant worker). Four of the five worked outside normal business hours during the week (either starting before 6 a.m. or ending after 6 p.m.) and all five usually worked weekends.
- With regard to monthly wages, one earned \$400 or less, one earned \$401 to \$800, and three earned \$801 to \$1200 per month. All earned between \$5.00 and \$6.00 per hour.
- Four of the five had received a raise since they started the job.

- All five worked for employers who offered health insurance, although none of the five participated in the employer's plan. Three of the five said that they did not enroll because they were still on Medicaid or Health Choice, one was not eligible for the employer's plan because she was a part-time employee, and one did not specify a reason for not participating.
- All five were satisfied with their jobs, and four of the five felt that they could advance to a higher position. Three reported that they were likely to stay in the job and two were neutral or had no opinion on the issue.

Child Support and Other Income

- Four of eight respondents who did not have a spouse were receiving child support.
- Four of nine respondents were living with another adult who was working.

Poverty Level

- One of nine respondents had income over the poverty level, based on earnings and child support

Receipt of Other Public Assistance

- Respondents reported that they were currently receiving the following types of public assistance: Medicaid (7); Food Stamps (5); WIC (4); Section 8 voucher (2); Social Security/SSI/SSDI (1); and fuel or utility assistance (1).

Perceived Income Adequacy

- Four of nine respondents felt that their income and benefits did not meet the needs of their family.

Adverse Events

- The following adverse events were reported by the nine respondents before leaving welfare: getting behind in paying the rent or mortgage (3); having times when they had no way to buy food (2); having to move in with a friend (1); needing routine child care but not being able to pay for it (1); and needing medical care for a family member, but not being able to afford it (1).

- The following adverse events were reported by the respondents in the period after leaving welfare: getting behind in paying rent or mortgage (3); needing routine child care but not being able to pay for it (3); having times when they had no way to buy food (2); moving in with a friend (2); moving because they could not pay for housing (1); and going without heat, electricity or water in the home (1).
- None of the respondents reported having to place their children in foster care or with someone else, and none reported having to go to a homeless shelter.

Children's Health Care Coverage

- One of nine respondents stated she had no coverage for her children. Of the other eight, seven had Medicaid or Health Choice and one did not specify the type of coverage.
- One of nine had no regular source of medical care for her children and another indicated that she used the emergency room as the regular source of health care for her child.. Of the other seven, two used a private physician and five used a clinic.

Housing

- Two of nine respondents lived in housing that would be considered crowded under HUD criteria. Four respondents had no problems with the physical structures of their home. Four of the other five had one problem. One respondent had five problems.

School Performance

- Five of nine respondents had a child in school. Two reported a behavior problem in the past school year and before the past school year.

Child Care

- Of the eight respondents who had a child living in the home, six reported using child care. Four of the six used a paid relative or non-relative, one used an unpaid relative or non-relative, and one used a day care center.
- Of the two who were not using child care, neither was working.

- Three of the five respondents who were using paid child care stated that they were receiving help from the county in paying for it. Of the other two, one was waiting for a response to her application for assistance and one reported that she did not want or need help.

Other Services Received Since Leaving Work First

- Two of nine had received transportation assistance, one had received vocational rehabilitation, and one had received substance abuse treatment.

Future Service Needs

- The respondents anticipated needing the following services in the next six months: child care assistance (7); housing assistance (6); child support assistance (6); job training or education (4); job counseling or job search assistance (3); transportation assistance (3); emergency food or clothing (2); and household budgeting (1).

Overall Comparison to Life on Welfare

- Eight of nine felt that they were better off since leaving welfare than when they were on welfare.

B. SURVEY RESULTS FOR COUNTY H

Basic Demographics

- The 14 respondents included one black female, eleven white females, and two white males. Three were aged 18 to 24, one was 25 to 29, two were 30 to 34, four were 35 to 39, and four were 40 or older.
- Six of the 14 had not graduated high school or received a GED, three only graduated high school or received a GED, and five had some college.
- Six of fourteen were living with other adults. Of the six, five lived with a spouse and one lived with a parent or grandparent.
- One had no children, six had one child, and seven had two or more children. In 4 of the families, the youngest child was under 4 years old; in 2 families, the

youngest child was 4 to 5; in 4 families, the youngest child was 6 to 12 years old, and in 3 families, the youngest was over 12.

- One respondent had received their first welfare payment in North Carolina before 1990, four between 1993 to 1995, and 9 between 1996 to 1999.

Reasons for Leaving Welfare

- The 14 respondents had the following reasons for leaving welfare: found a job or returned to work (11); did not follow rules or could not meet work requirements (1); did not want to be on welfare or use up the benefits (1); and benefits expired (1).

Likelihood of Reapplying for Welfare

- One respondent felt that she was very likely to reapply, four were not sure, and nine felt that they were somewhat or very unlikely to reapply. The person who stated she was very likely to reapply gave “loss or lack of a job” as the possible reason for reapplying.

Employment

- Ten of the 14 were working for pay. Of these, two were self-employed. One respondent was about to start a new job, and 3 were not working.
- Of the 4 who were not working or who were starting a new job, all had held at least one job since leaving Work First (2 had held three or more jobs). Of the 4 respondents, 2 had quit their last job (one due to pregnancy problems and one due to perceived discrimination), 1 was laid off, and 1 could not get used to the third shift.
- The four respondents gave the following reasons for not currently working: pregnancy problems; respondent illness or disability (recovering from surgery); work hours were not convenient; and “can’t get a job.”
- The respondent with pregnancy problems reported that she was not looking for work. All of the other three were looking.
- Of the 10 who were currently working, 3 had held one job since leaving Work First and 7 had held two jobs since leaving Work First.

- All 10 had just one job at the time of the survey. Two were currently employed as housekeepers, two as nurse's aides, two as teachers, one as a janitor/maintenance person, one as a manager or assistant manager, one as a customer service representative, and one in food service.
- Seven of the ten were working 40 hours or more per week, two worked 30 to 39 hours, and one worked less than 20 hours (the teacher). One worked outside normal business hours (before 6 a.m. or after 6 p.m.) and three usually worked weekends.
- With regard to monthly wages, one earned \$401 to \$800, seven earned \$801 to \$1200, and two earned \$1,201 to \$1,600 per month. All earned between \$5.00 and \$7.00 per hour.
- One of the ten had received a raise since starting their current job.
- Of the eight respondents who were working for an employer (two were self-employed), six had employers who offered health insurance, but four of the six were not participating in the plan. Two of the four reported that the reason for not participating was that they were still on Medicaid; one had not worked for the employer long enough to participate; and one did not know why they were not participating. The two who were self-employed did not have a health insurance plan.
- All ten were satisfied with their jobs, but six felt that they could not advance to a higher position. Nine reported being likely to stay in their jobs and one was neutral or had no opinion.

Child Support and Other Income

- Only one of the nine respondents who did not have a spouse was receiving child support.
- One of fourteen respondents was living with another adult who was working.

Poverty Level

- Based on the reported earnings of respondents and spouses, as well as child support, four of the 14 respondents were living in families who were above the poverty level for their family size.

Receipt of Other Public Assistance

- Respondents reported that they were currently receiving the following types of public assistance: Medicaid/Health Choice (13); Food Stamps (7); WIC (5); fuel or utility assistance (4); Social Security/SSI/SSDI (2); Section 8 voucher (2); and public housing (1).

Perceived Income Adequacy

- Nine of fourteen respondents felt that their family's income and benefits did not meet the needs of their family.

Adverse Events

- The following adverse events were reported by respondents before leaving welfare: having times when they had no way to buy food (3); getting behind in paying the rent or mortgage (3); moving because they could not pay for housing (2); moving in with a friend (1); placing children in foster care (1); needing routine child care but not being able to pay for it (1); and needing medical care for a family member, but not being able to afford it (1).
- The following adverse events were reported by respondents in the time period since leaving welfare: having times when they had no way to buy food (6); getting behind in paying the rent or mortgage (4); needing medical care for a family member but not being able to afford it (3); placing children with someone else (3); going without heat, electricity or water in the home (2); moving because they could not pay for housing (1); moving in with a friend (1); and needing routine child care but not being able to pay for it (1).

Children's Health Care Coverage

- One of 14 respondents stated she or he had no coverage for the children. Of the other thirteen, all had Medicaid or Health Choice.
- All 14 had a regular source of medical care for their children, but two identified this as the emergency room. Seven used a private physician, four used a clinic, and one did not specify the source of care.

Housing

- None of the fourteen respondents lived in housing that would be considered crowded under HUD criteria. Eight respondents had no problems with the physical structures of their home. One of the other six had one problem and five reported three problems.

School Performance

- Nine of fourteen respondents had a child in school. Three reported a problem with their children having to repeat a grade in the past school year and one before the past school year. Two reported a behavior problem in the past school year and one before the past school year. Two reported an attendance problem in the past school year and two before the past school year. Two reported a problem with their children getting good grades in the past school year and one before the past school year.

Child Care

- Seven of 14 respondents who had a child living in the home used child care. Four of the seven used an unpaid relative or non-relative, one used a paid relative or non-relative, one used a day care center, and one used before- or after-school care.
- Of the six who did not use child care, five stated their children were old enough to care for themselves and one did not specify a reason for not using child care.
- Two of the three using paid child care stated they got help from the county in paying for it. The other one stated the county had told her that the county did not have funding.

Other Services Received

- Four of fourteen respondents had received job placement assistance since leaving Work First, two had received job training or education, one had received transportation assistance, and one had received domestic violence assistance.

Anticipated Service Needs in the Next Six Months

- Respondents anticipated a need for the following services in the next six months: child support assistance (5); housing assistance (4); job training or education (4); emergency food or clothing (3); job counseling or job search assistance (3); child care assistance (2); transportation assistance (2); and mental health counseling (2).

Overall Comparison to Life on Welfare

- Nine of fourteen respondents felt that they were better off on welfare than after leaving welfare.