

ALASKA LEGISLATURE COMMITTEE FILES 2001-2002 86/2

10204 HOUSE HEALTH EDUCATION & SOCIAL SERVICES

49

8

Amendment
Rep Stevens

Page 2, following line 12:

Insert a new subsection to read:

“(d) It is the intent of the legislature that the Department of Education and Early Development, through its existing federally required monitoring program of district special education programs, review the potential for an individualized education program team’s inappropriate lowering of individualized education program goals and objectives for the purpose of providing a diploma to a student who has not achieved the state performance standards to the maximum extent practicable and take appropriate corrective action.”

Page 3, lines 10-19:

Delete all material and insert:

(1) a student who is a child with a disability and who does not achieve a passing score on the examination required under (a) of this section is eligible to receive a diploma if the student successfully completes and alternative assessment program required by the student’s individualized education program or required in the education plan developed for the student under 19 U.S.C. 794; an alternative assessment program must, to the maximum extent possible, conform to state performance standards established for the competency examination required under (a) of this section;”

Page 4, following line 7:

Insert new subsections to read:

“(f) A student shall receive an endorsement on the student’s diploma and transcript identifying the areas of the examination successfully passed.

Send to - STUDENT

(g) The department shall by regulation establish uniform standards for an alternative assessment program required under (c)(1) of this section. The alternative assessment program under (c)(1) of this section may not be changed after February 1 of the student’s junior year of study.” *ISB*

Page 7, lines 16-18

Delete

SB 133: PUBLIC SCHOOL EXIT EXAM

BY SENATE HEALTH, EDUCATION & SOCIAL SERVICES COMMITTEE

SECTIONAL ANALYSIS

Prepared by Aurora Hauke, Senate HESS Committee Aide

Sec.	Statute	Existing	Changes
1	Uncodified law	None.	New section INTENT added. The intent of this Act is to encourage schools and districts to develop endorsements, implement reasonable testing procedures, and that the exam should focus on skills one is expected to know in order to function in society.
2	AS 14.03.075 added by sec. 1 ch. 58, SLA 1997 Education, Libraries, and Museums Public Schools Generally General Provisions Secondary <u>student</u> [PUPIL] competency <u>examination</u> [TESTING]	A pupil cannot be issued a high school diploma unless that student passes a competency examination. A pupil who fails the exam shall receive a certificate of attendance and may be reexamined not more often than once every three months and must pass the test within three years of ceasing to attend school.	In addition to passing the test, the student can receive a waiver from the governing body but not before their final semester of attendance. Students who fail the test will not get a certificate of attendance. The procedures for reexamination are to be established by the department.
3	AS 14.03.075 added by sec. 1 ch. 58, SLA 1997	None.	New subsections added. A student will receive an endorsement on their diploma for each part of the exam passed. A student with a disability who fails the exam is eligible for a diploma if they complete their IEP or 504 plan and meet other graduation requirements. The department will establish standards for pre-examination study materials, administration procedures, and the awarding of waivers and procedures for recording exam results on transcripts.
4	AS 14.03.120(d) Education, Libraries, and Museums Public Schools Generally Education planning	Each public school must provide a report of their performance annually. The report must include various types of information which are intended to show the performance of the school.	The report must also include the number of students who received a diploma under a waiver.

Sec.	Statute	Existing	Changes
5	AS 14.07.165 Education, Libraries, and Museums Administration of Public Schools State Board of Education Duties	The board must adopt statewide goals, require local goals and adopt various regulations for grants, charter schools, boarding schools, etc.	The board must also adopt regulations implementing the exams, including criteria and procedure for waivers which includes provisions that the student satisfy the performance standards to the maximum extent possible.
6	Section 3, ch. 58, SLA 1997 Education, Libraries, and Museums Public Schools Generally General Provisions Secondary pupil competency testing	This Act takes effect January 1, 2002.	This Act takes effect February 1, 2004.
7	Uncodified law	None.	New section APPLICABILITY added. The standards and requirements required by AS 14.03.075 as amended by this Act apply to students who graduate on or after February 1, 2004.
8	Uncodified law	None.	New section TRANSITION: ACADEMIC STANDARDS FOR PUBLIC HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION added. Between February 1, 2002 and January 31, 2004, each student is required to take a competency examination or alternative assessment and meet academic requirements established by the state and local school board in order to receive a diploma. The department will determine the form and contents of the exam. A student will receive an endorsement on their diploma for each section of the exam passed.
9	Uncodified law	None.	New section TRANSITION: REGULATIONS added. The department may immediately proceed to adopt regulations necessary to implement the changes made by this Act. The regulations will take effect when the changes take effect.
10	Uncodified law	None.	New section REPORT added. The department shall deliver a report to the Legislature that describes proposed criteria, procedures and statutory changes for waivers by Feb. 15, 2002.
11	Effective date		Sections 2-5 of this Act take effect February 1, 2004.
12	Effective date		Sections 6 and 9 of this Act take effect immediately.
13	Effective date		The rest of this Act takes effect February 1, 2002.

Amendment

By: Rep. Moule

Page 2, following line 12:

Insert a new subsection to read:

“(d) It is the intent of the legislature that the Department of Education and Early Development, through its existing federally required monitoring program of district special education programs, review the potential for an individualized education program team’s inappropriate lowering of individualized education program goals and objectives for the purpose of providing a diploma to a student who has not achieved the state performance standards to the maximum extent practicable and take appropriate corrective action.”

Page 3, lines 10-19:

Delete all material and insert:

(1) a student who is a child with a disability and who does not achieve a passing score on the examination required under (a) of this section is eligible to receive a diploma if the student successfully completes an alternative assessment program required by the student’s individualized education program or required in the education plan developed for the student under 19 U.S.C. 794; an alternative assessment program must, to the maximum extent possible, conform to state performance standards established for the competency examination required under (a) of this section;”

Page 4, following line 7:

Insert new subsections to read:

“(f) A student shall receive an endorsement on the student’s diploma and transcript identifying the areas of the examination successfully passed.

(g) The department shall by regulation establish uniform standards for an alternative assessment program required under (c)(1) of this section. The alternative assessment program under (c)(1) of this section may not be changed after February 1 of the student’s junior year of study.”

Page 7, lines 16-18

Delete



Alaska State Legislature

House Special Committee on Education Representative Con Bunde, Chair

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Brian Porter
Joe Green
Peggy Wilson
Gary Stevens
Reggie Joule
Gretchen Guess

SECTIONAL ANALYSIS CSHB 166 (EDU) Version J Dated 3/27/01

Title Change: From "An Act relating to the year in which public school student competency testing begins", to "An Act relating to pupil competency testing, to the issuance of secondary school diplomas, and to certain reports regarding academic performance of schools; and providing for an effective date"

Section 1: Intent Language added to the uncodified, or temporary, state law.

Section 2: Amends the 1997 Competency Test law so that the Competency Test is truly a diagnostic tool from 10th to 12th grade. Allows adults to retake the test in order to earn a diploma.

- a) deletes Certificate of Attendance language.
- b) requires all students to take the failed portions of the Competency Test at least once a year unless the student's IEP team recommends against that.
- c) deletes language that prevented reexaminations from occurring more than once every three months and required that reexaminations of students who are no longer in attendance occur within three years.

Section 3: Amends the 1997 Competency Test law to assure that all non-severely cognitively disabled special education students receive an opportunity to learn the state performance standards and are responsible for demonstrating mastery of them. Provides non-severely cognitively disabled special education students the opportunity to demonstrate the standards in other ways. Provides that students who are unable to pass all sections of the Competency Test are recognized for the qualifications they do offer to employers and institutions of higher learning.

- a) a student with an I.E.P. may qualify for a diploma by 1) passing all portions of the test without accommodations, 2) passing all portions with accommodations described in their I.E.P., or 3) demonstrating mastery of the state performance standards with a portfolio of work.
- b) provides a provision for reciprocity for those students who have transferred, during high school, from another state. Those students shall receive a diploma if they meet their Alaskan high school's graduation requirements and passed a competency test in the state from which they transferred.

- c) This section also establishes a Certificate of Achievement for those students who do not pass all sections of the Competency Test in high school or through reexamination. A Certificate of Achievement may include the portions of the test that were passed, the student's attendance record, and other information about the student's qualifications that the school district determines to be appropriate.

Section 4: ~~Requires the Department of Education to submit a report to the Legislature by January 15 of each year regarding the progress of each school district toward high academic performance by all students. This report is intended to give the Legislature and Alaskans additional accountability for the funding provided through the Foundation Formula and the Quality Schools Initiative. The report must include, at a minimum:~~

- a) the number of students in each school who pass the Competency Test and the number who pass each section of the Competency Test.
- b) the progress of the Department in implementing the school designator system
- c) the progress of the Department in assisting high schools to become accredited
- d) a description of the resources provided to each school district for coordinated school improvement activities and staff training
- e) each district's progress in aligning curriculum to state performance standards
- f) a description of the Department's efforts to assist those schools designated to be deficient or in crisis
- g) a description of each school district's efforts to provide intervention for students who are not passing the Benchmark Tests or the Competency Test.

Section 5: Amends the 1997 Competency Test law by postponing the effective date to February 1, 2004. This change will protect those students who, for whatever reason, graduate at the end of the fall semester rather than the spring semester, provide students with additional opportunity to learn, and provide districts additional opportunity to align curriculum and train staff.

Section 6: Provides provisions for Competency Testing between February 1, 2002 and January 31, 2004. This section is added to the uncodified, or temporary, state law.

- a) As directed by the Board of Education, the test will be given at least twice a school year.
- b) Students' final results will be reflected in their transcript and diploma as directed by the Board of Education.
- c) Students will be re-tested at least once each school year on those portions the student has not passed, unless the student's I.E.P. team recommends against it.

Section 7: The effective date of Section 3 takes effect on February 1, 2004.

Section 8: Except for Section 3, this Act takes effect immediately.

HB

142

FISCAL NOTE

STATE OF ALASKA
2001 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Fiscal Note Number: 1
Bill Version: HB 142
(H) Publish Date: 2/23/01

Revision Date/Time (Note if correction): _____ Dept. Affected: Health & Social Services
Title: ATAP Program Amendments BRU: Public Assistance
Component: ATAP
Sponsor: Rules
Requester: Governor Component Number: 220

Expenditures/Revenues (Thousands of Dollars)

Note: Amounts do not include inflation unless otherwise noted below.

OPERATING EXPENDITURES	FY 2002	FY 2003	FY 2004	FY 2005	FY 2006	FY 2007
Personal Services						
Travel						
Contractual						
Supplies						
Equipment						
Land & Structures						
Grants & Claims						
Miscellaneous						
TOTAL OPERATING	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

CAPITAL EXPENDITURES						
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CHANGE IN REVENUES ()						
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FUND SOURCE (Thousands of Dollars)

FUND SOURCE	FY 2002	FY 2003	FY 2004	FY 2005	FY 2006	FY 2007
1002 Federal Receipts						
1003 GF Match						
1004 GF						
1005 GF/Program Receipts						
1037 GF/Mental Health						
Other (Specify Type)						
TOTAL	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

Estimate of any current year (FY2001) cost: 0.0

Check this box (X) if funding for this bill is included in the Governor's FY 2002 budget proposal:

POSITIONS

POSITIONS	FY 2002	FY 2003	FY 2004	FY 2005	FY 2006	FY 2007
Full-time						
Part-time						
Temporary						

ANALYSIS: (Attach a separate page if necessary)
Although this proposed legislation may allow more than 20% of the eligible ATAP caseload to receive benefits beyond 60 months, there are no projected financial impacts. The ATAP program is partially funded by the federal TANF block grant which does not vary regardless of the number of families served. Also, federal law requires the State to contribute a fixed amount of state funds toward the program, called maintenance of effort (MOE). Additionally, caseloads are projected to continue their downward trend.

Prepared by: Jim Nordlund Phone _____
Division: Director of Public Assistance Date/Time _____
Approved by: Elmer A. Lindstrom, Special Assistant Date 2/15/01 4:29 PM
Agency: Department of Health & Social Services

For distribution information, call the Governor's Legislative Office

NOTICE OF PUBLIC MEETING

Alaska Redistricting Board
Monday, March 26
Board Conference Room
410 Willoughby St. (Room 105)
Juneau, Alaska
10:30 am

Contact: Gordon Harrison, Executive Director, (907) 465-4637

The Alaska Redistricting Board will meet Monday, March 26, 2001 at 10:30 am in the conference room of the Board's offices in Juneau. The meeting will be teleconferenced to Legislative Information Office (LIO) sites around the state. The primary items of business will be discussion of the 2000 census data and instruction to staff regarding the development of initial redistricting scenarios. Also, a schedule for public hearings on existing districts will be discussed. There will be an opportunity for public comment at the beginning of the meeting. Persons wanting to make public comment from an LIO should contact that office prior to the meeting date.

22-GH1023J
Lauterbach
4/2/01

CS FOR HOUSE BILL NO. 142()

**IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA
TWENTY-SECOND LEGISLATURE - FIRST SESSION**

BY

**Offered:
Referred:**

Sponsor(s): HOUSE RULES COMMITTEE BY REQUEST OF THE GOVERNOR

A BILL

FOR AN ACT ENTITLED

1 "An Act relating to the Alaska temporary assistance program; and providing for an
2 effective date."

3 **BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA:**

4 * **Section 1.** AS 47.27.015 is amended by adding a new subsection to read:

5 (h) When determining under (a)(1) of this section whether an adult has
6 received benefits for a total of 60 months, the department shall disregard the months
7 that are required to be disregarded under 42 U.S.C. 608(a)(7)(D).

8 * **Sec. 2.** AS 47.27.025(c) is amended to read:

9 (c) The department shall, for the months of July, August, and September,
10 reduce by 50 percent the maximum assistance for which the family is otherwise
11 eligible if the family's eligibility for assistance is based on AS 47.27.010(4), unless
12 the second needy parent is determined, under regulations of the department, to
13 be physically or mentally unable to perform gainful activity or to be providing
14 care for a child who is experiencing a disability [THE UNEMPLOYMENT OF

1 THE FAMILY'S PRINCIPAL WAGE EARNER]. However, if the commissioner
2 determines that temporary economic conditions have resulted in decreased
3 employment opportunities during those months and a reduction in assistance would
4 impose an undue hardship on a family, the department may waive application of this
5 subsection with respect to that family.

6 * Sec. 3. AS 47.27.030(c)(2) is repealed.

7 * Sec. 4. The uncodified law of the State of Alaska is amended by adding a new section to
8 read:

9 TRANSITION: REGULATIONS. Notwithstanding sec. 6 of this Act, the Department
10 of Health and Social Services may immediately proceed to adopt regulations necessary to
11 implement the changes made by this Act. A regulation adopted under this section takes effect
12 under AS 44.62 (Administrative Procedure Act), but not before the effective date of the
13 statutory change authorizing the regulation.

14 * Sec. 5. Sections 2 and 4 of this Act take effect immediately under AS 01.10.070(c).

15 * Sec. 6. Except as provided in sec. 5 of this Act, this Act takes effect July 1, 2001.

Thank you

Subject: Thank you

Date: Fri, 23 Mar 2001 01:33:12 EST

From: Madjack112@aol.com

To: Representative_Peggy_Wilson@legis.state.ak.us

Non-constituent
called our office
because you were
only one responding
to Norplant issue

CM

I would like to thank you and your staff for the support today on house bill HB-142 it has been a long hard road for my family these past three years. The law suit I filed on seasonal reduction is only part of the larger issue of fair treatment after Norplant and it has been and is a fight that has been up hill most of the time.

It would be fair to say that commissioner Perdue has had to deal with many of my family issues. The recall of the Norplant two system in September of last year being one of them and it is in the Governor Office they have sent out an alert to all women's groups and the medical communities, but will not inform the 45 DSHS funded women effected by this recall directly. On March 9 of this year I got a letter from Evelyn Ramos director of Investigations for the Alaskan human rights commission after I filed a complaint, He said that I could not file a complaint that only individuals directly aggrieved by an alleged practice may file complaints with the commission and my advocacy in this area was unwelcome.

I have taken the issue of the Norplant Two recall to commissioner Perdue and the governor as well as the Alaskan human rights commission and I've done as much as I can do, However if one of the 45 women effect by this recall are affected by this system they will have legal recourse against the State of Alaska I have done a good job in this area.

As I write this e-mail to you I look across the room at my child Baby Jo and know in my heart I'm doing the right thing, that my quest for fair treatment after Norplant is one that is just and not another Alaskan Family will have to endure what my family has done through if I can help it. I'm just one man who for the past three years three month and 21 days have had to fight for my child issues and in doing find my self fighting for people I don't even know and will never meet, but if not me who?

Rep. Kookes has a news paper story on my family in his office that I left with him when I was in Juneau last week that you may find interesting. It is my hopes that you can help to ensure that these 45 women are informed directly that they have a defective birth control system in their bodies that will result in birth defects in children born to them.

Thank you
Jerry Jackson
Po Box 33
Point Baker Ak 99927
559-2219

Called in on teleconference
(You're probably aware some
Wrangell- Petersburg doctors
serve Point Baker / Point
Protection)

SITE: ANCHORAGE LIO

COMMITTEE:

House H.E.S.S.

DATE: 4-10-2001

SUBJECT OF MEETING:

SB 133/HCR 14/HB 142

UPDATE #:



PLEASE SIGN IN

PLEASE PRINT:

NAME

ADDRESS (MAILING & ZIP)

REPRESENTING

DO YOU WANT

TO TESTIFY?

Y or N

NAME	ADDRESS (MAILING & ZIP)	REPRESENTING	DO YOU WANT TO TESTIFY? Y or N
Nikole Nelsen			Ans ?s HB 142

22-GH1023F
Lauterbach
3/24/01

CS FOR HOUSE BILL NO. 142(HES)

IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA

TWENTY-SECOND LEGISLATURE - FIRST SESSION

BY THE HOUSE HEALTH, EDUCATION AND SOCIAL SERVICES COMMITTEE

**Offered:
Referred:**

Sponsor(s): HOUSE RULES COMMITTEE BY REQUEST OF THE GOVERNOR

A BILL

FOR AN ACT ENTITLED

1 "An Act relating to the Alaska temporary assistance program; and providing for an
2 effective date."

3 **BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA:**

4 * Section 1. AS 47.27.015(f) is amended to read:

5 (f) The number of families for which an exemption is in effect under (a)(1) of
6 this section may not exceed 20 [10] percent of the average monthly number of
7 families who were receiving assistance under former AS 47.25.301 - 47.25.420
8 (Aid to Families with Dependent Children Act) during the state fiscal year that
9 ended June 30, 1994 [OR THE MAXIMUM PERCENTAGE OF FAMILIES
10 ALLOWED AN EXEMPTION UNDER FEDERAL LAW, WHICHEVER IS
11 GREATER].

12 * Sec. 2. AS 47.27.015 is amended by adding a new subsection to read:

13 (h) When determining under (a)(1) of this section whether an adult has
14 received benefits for a total of 60 months, the department shall disregard the months

1 that are required to be disregarded under 42 U.S.C. 608(a)(7)(D).

2 * Sec. 3. AS 47.27.025(c) is amended to read:

3 (c) The department shall, for the months of July, August, and September,
4 reduce by 50 percent the maximum assistance for which the family is otherwise
5 eligible if the family's eligibility for assistance is based on AS 47.27.010(4), unless
6 the second needy parent is determined, under regulations of the department, to
7 be physically or mentally unable to perform gainful activity or to be providing
8 care for a child who is experiencing a disability [THE UNEMPLOYMENT OF
9 THE FAMILY'S PRINCIPAL WAGE EARNER]. However, if the commissioner
10 determines that temporary economic conditions have resulted in decreased
11 employment opportunities during those months and a reduction in assistance would
12 impose an undue hardship on a family, the department may waive application of this
13 subsection with respect to that family.

14 * Sec. 4. AS 47.27.030(c)(2) is repealed.

15 * Sec. 5. The uncodified law of the State of Alaska is amended by adding a new section to
16 read:

17 TRANSITION: REGULATIONS. Notwithstanding sec. 7 of this Act, the Department
18 of Health and Social Services may immediately proceed to adopt regulations necessary to
19 implement the changes made by this Act. A regulation adopted under this section takes effect
20 under AS 44.62 (Administrative Procedure Act), but not before the effective date of the
21 statutory change authorizing the regulation.

22 * Sec. 6. Sections 3 and 5 of this Act take effect immediately under AS 01.10.070(c).

23 * Sec. 7. Except as provided in sec. 6 of this Act, this Act takes effect July 1, 2001.

HOUSE BILL NO. 164

**IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA
TWENTY-SECOND LEGISLATURE - FIRST SESSION**

BY REPRESENTATIVE DYSON

Introduced: 3/9/01

Referred: Health, Education and Social Services, Judiciary, Finance

A BILL

FOR AN ACT ENTITLED

1 **"An Act prescribing the rights of grandparents related to child-in-need-of-aid hearings;**
2 **and amending Rules 3, 7, 10, 15, and 19, Alaska Child in Need of Aid Rules."**

3 **BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA:**

4 *** Section 1. AS 47.10.030(b) is amended to read:**

5 (b) In all cases under this chapter, the child, each parent, the tribe, foster
6 parent or other out-of-home care provider, guardian, and guardian ad litem of the child
7 and, subject to (d) of this section, each grandparent of the child shall be given
8 notice adequate to give actual notice of the proceedings and the possibility of
9 termination of parental rights and responsibilities, taking into account education and
10 language differences that are known or reasonably ascertainable by the petitioner or
11 the department. The notice of the hearing must contain all names by which the child
12 has been identified. Notice shall be given in the manner appropriate under rules of
13 civil procedure for the service of process in a civil action under Alaska law or in any
14 manner the court by order directs. Proof of the giving of the notice shall be filed with

1 the court before the petition is heard. The court may also subpoena the parent of the
2 child, or any other person whose testimony may be necessary at the hearing. A
3 subpoena or other process may be served by a person authorized by law to make the
4 service, and, where personal service cannot be made, the court may direct that service
5 of process be in a manner appropriate under rules of civil procedure for the service of
6 process in a civil action under Alaska law or in any manner the court directs.

7 * Sec. 2. AS 47.10.030 is amended by adding a new subsection to read:

8 (d) The department shall give advance written notice of all court hearings in a
9 child's case to a grandparent of the child if

10 (1) the grandparent has contacted the department, provided evidence
11 acceptable to the department of being the child's grandparent, requested notice about
12 the hearings in the child's case, and provided the department with a current mailing
13 address; or

14 (2) the department is aware that the child has a grandparent and the
15 grandparent's mailing address is on file with the department.

16 * Sec. 3. AS 47.10.070(a) is amended to read:

17 (a) The court may conduct the hearing on the petition in an informal manner.
18 The court shall give notice of the hearing to the department, and it may send a
19 representative to the hearing. The court shall also transmit a copy of the petition to the
20 department. The department shall send notice of the hearing to the persons for whom
21 notice is required under AS 47.10.030(b) and to each grandparent of the child
22 entitled to notice under AS 47.10.030(d). The department and the persons to whom
23 the department must send notice of the hearing are entitled to be heard at the hearing.
24 However, the court may limit the presence of the foster parent or other out-of-home
25 care provider and of any grandparent of the child to the time during which the
26 person's testimony is being given if it is (1) in the best interest of the child; or (2)
27 necessary to protect the privacy interests of the parties and will not be detrimental to
28 the child. The public shall be excluded from the hearing, but the court, in its
29 discretion, may permit individuals to attend a hearing if their attendance is compatible
30 with the best interests of the child.

31 * Sec. 4. AS 47.10.080(f) is amended to read:

1 (f) A child found to be a child in need of aid is a ward of the state while
2 committed to the department or the department has the power to supervise the child's
3 actions. For an order made under (c)(1) of this section, the court shall hold a
4 permanency hearing as required by (l) of this section and at least annually thereafter
5 during the continuation of foster care to determine if continued placement, as it is
6 being provided, is in the best interest of the child. The department, the child, and the
7 child's parents, guardian, and guardian ad litem are entitled, when good cause is
8 shown, to a permanency hearing on application. If the application is granted, the court
9 shall afford these persons and their counsel reasonable advance notice and hold a
10 permanency hearing where these persons and their counsel shall be afforded an
11 opportunity to be heard. The persons entitled to notice under AS 47.10.030(b) and
12 the grandparents entitled to notice under AS 47.10.030(d) are entitled to notice of a
13 permanency hearing under this subsection and are also entitled to be heard at the
14 hearing. The child shall be afforded the opportunity to be present and to be heard at
15 the permanency hearing. After the permanency hearing, the court shall make the
16 written findings that are required under (l) of this section. The court shall review an
17 order made under (c)(2) of this section at least annually to determine if continued
18 supervision, as it is being provided, is in the best interest of the child; this review is
19 not considered to be a permanency hearing and is not governed by the provisions of
20 this subsection that relate to permanency hearings.

21 * Sec. 5. The uncodified law of the State of Alaska is amended by adding a new section to
22 read:

23 INDIRECT COURT RULE CHANGE. (a) AS 47.10.030, as amended by secs. 1 and
24 2 of this Act, AS 47.10.070(a), as amended by sec. 3 of this Act, and AS 47.10.080(f), as
25 amended by sec. 4 of this Act, have the effect of amending Rules 3, 7, 10, 15, and 19, Alaska
26 Child in Need of Aid Rules, by requiring that grandparents be given notice of and an
27 opportunity to be heard at certain child-in-need-of-aid proceedings.

28 (b) Sections 1 - 4 of this Act take effect only if this section receives the two-thirds
29 majority vote of each house required by art. IV, sec. 15, Constitution of the State of Alaska.



REPRESENTATIVE FRED DYSON

HB 164 Sponsor Statement

Alaska State Legislature

- Interim (May-Dec.) -
10928 Eagle River Rd., Suite 140
Eagle River, Alaska 99577
☎ (907) 694-6683
FAX (907) 694-1015

- Session (Jan.-May) -
Alaska State Capitol
Juneau, Alaska 99801-1182
☎ (907) 465-2199
FAX (907) 465-4587

Toll free (800) 342-2199

"An Act relating to Grandparents

Updated: March 15, 2001

Contact: Representative Fred Dyson's office at (907) 465-2199

HB 164 is a modest step towards recognizing a grandparent's interest in being involved in a process that affects their grandchildren. HB 164 requires the department to notify grandparents (who have made themselves known) of upcoming custody hearings and provides them with the opportunity to be heard at Child in Need of Aid (CINA) and delinquency hearings.

Over the past couple of sessions the legislature has focused considerable effort on making our child protection and custody procedures more open, responsive and responsible. We have given foster parents more input and the right to be heard in treatment and in placement decisions and have encouraged more efficient placement procedures.

HB 164 will result in more informed decisions about the treatment and placement of Alaska's abused and neglected children. We also believe this measure will increase the likelihood of children being placed with relatives who may not have otherwise been located, heard, or considered.

The bill specifies that, unless the court specifically finds otherwise, the testimony of parents will be given more weight than a grandparents. This approach protects the primary parental interest while specifically allowing a court to defer to a grandparent for good cause.

Because we recognize that there will be cases where a grandparent is not a suitable option for child placement, HB 164 does not mandate that end. Instead, it requires notification of grandparents who care enough to make themselves known, so they can be part of the process if they will. The intended result is to encourage the department and parents to consider grandparents more frequently as a preferred placement option for children in need.

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HB 164 Sectional Analysis

Revised: March 27, 2001 LS0693\A

Section 1: Inserts "Grandparents" into the list of those who must receive notice of court proceedings that could result in termination of parental rights and responsibilities in Child in Need of Aid (CINA) cases. Qualifications of what is meant by "Grandparent" are outlined in Section 2.

Section 2: Specifies that the department shall give notice to a grandparent if the grandparent has contacted the department and has provided evidence of being a grandparent and a current address, or, if the department is aware of a grandparent and has a current address.

Section 3: Requires grandparent notification for informal court hearings conducted relative to a custody petition and gives them the right to be heard. "Grandparents" are included with; parent, tribe, foster parent or other out-of-home care provider, guardian, and guardian ad litem. The court may limit the testimony and presence of a foster parent or a grandparent if it is in the best interest of the child.

Section 4: Requires grandparent notification of a permanency hearing for a CINA child. "Grandparents" are included with; parent, tribe, foster parent or other out-of-home care provider, guardian, and guardian ad litem.

Section 5: Amends court Rules 3, 7, 10, 15, and 19 consistent with the changes made by this act and spells out that a 2/3 majority vote is required.

**Alaska Temporary Assistance Program Amendments:
Bill Summary
HB 142/SB 116**

Division of Public Assistance
February 8, 2001

**Section 1
Two-Parent Seasonal Reduction**

Two-parent families who receive Alaska Temporary Assistance (ATAP) benefits are subject to a seasonal benefit reduction during the months of July, August, and September when summer employment opportunities are high. During these months, ATAP payments to two-parent families are cut in half.

This section clarifies the statutory language regarding the seasonal reduction to two-parent families to support regulations that will reduce ATAP payments for able-bodied two-parent families by 50% during the months of July, August, and September regardless of employment status or which parent is the family's principal wage earner. In November 2000, the Superior Court found the Department's regulation inconsistent with the statute. The court found that to apply the two-parent seasonal benefit reduction the department must make a determination of which parent is the family's primary wage earner (PWE) and make a determination of whether the PWE is unemployed before it reduces the family's benefit in half. This would require the Division of Public Assistance (DPA) to return to policies similar to those in effect for ATAP's predecessor program Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC). Setting this eligibility criteria discourages formation of two-parent families and does not "make work pay." It also involves cumbersome rules and administratively demanding processes that are both unnecessary and do not promote a family's self-sufficiency goals.

**Section 2
The 20% Cap on Exemptions**

July 2002 marks the first month families in Alaska will exceed the 60-month time limit for receiving Temporary Assistance benefits. Although the 60-month limit is a key element of welfare reform, there are families who will need continued support after receiving 60 months of assistance.

There has been a 42% overall caseload reduction in ATAP since November 1996. The rate of caseload decline is slowing, however, and many clients who remain on the caseload have significant challenges to employment such as family violence, learning disabilities, mental and physical health problems and problems with substance abuse. Some, but not all, of these families will be eligible for an exemption from the 60-month limit. Federal and state laws cap the exemptions at 20% of the current caseload and define eligibility criteria for the exemptions. As the caseload has declined sharply, so has the number of possible exemptions under the 20% rule. Less than half the families who could be considered for an exemption when ATAP passed can now receive one. In future years, the number of families receiving greater than 60 months of assistance will exceed the number of exemption slots available. Many of these recipients will be

unable to work despite their best efforts. The 20% cap in both federal and state laws precludes the use of either federal or state funds to serve many families who are truly needy.

This section repeals the arbitrary 20% cap on exemptions to the 60-month limit on benefits and allows the Department to grant extensions to each family based on the criteria in current law. Extensions can then be granted to all families who meet the specific criteria. This change is necessary to avoid placing families who meet the criteria on a waiting list for an extension, and meanwhile, denying supports for basic needs.

Family Self-Sufficiency Planning for Incapacitated Adults

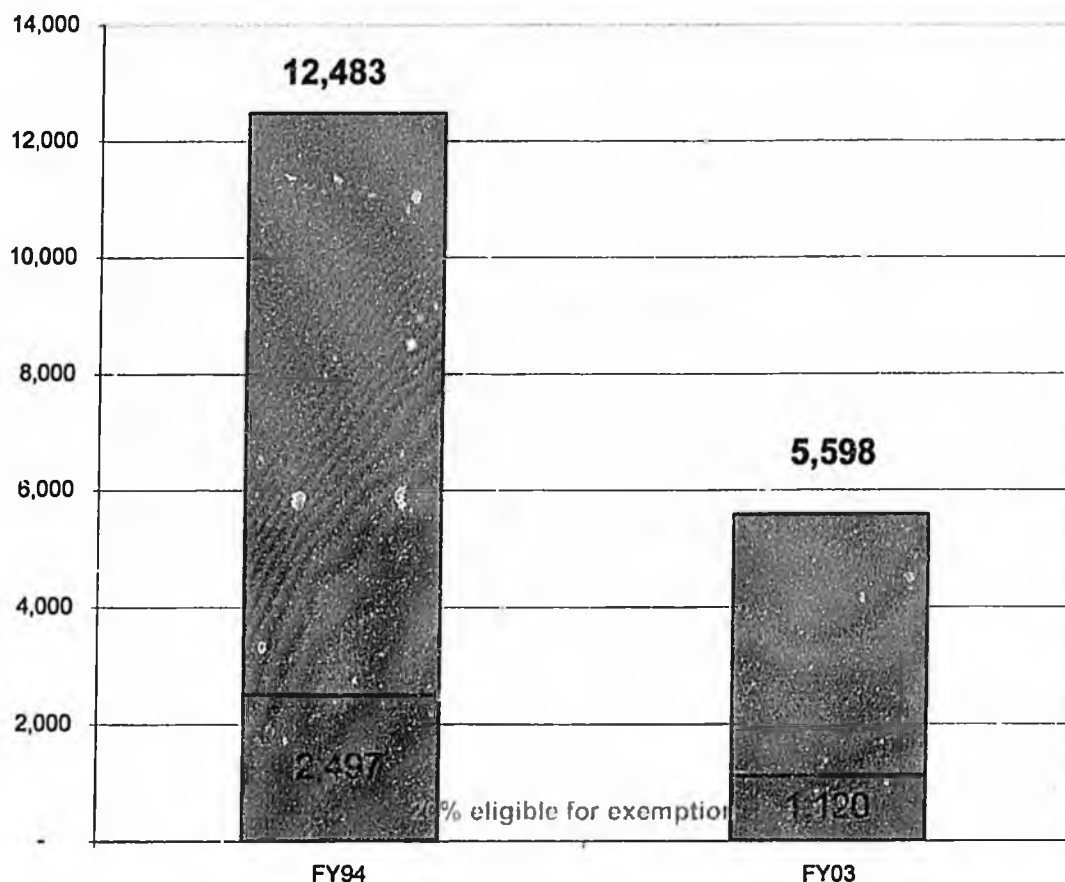
This section repeals a provision now in statute which exempts incapacitated adults (physically or mentally unable to perform gainful activity) from completing a Family Self-Sufficiency Plan (FSSP). This change will help these vulnerable families to address their challenges by requiring them to engage in appropriate self-sufficiency activities such as wellness plans, treatment activities or pursuit of disability benefits. Even if the adult cannot work, the FSSP can be used to promote activities that will enhance well-being and quality of life for the individual and the family.

Section 3 Regulations

This section allows DHHS to immediately adopt regulations necessary to implement this legislation.

Sections 4 & 5 Effective Dates

**Comparison of Number of Families
Eligible for 60-month Exemption, FY94 and FY03**



In FY94 the average monthly ATAP caseload was 12,483. By FY 2003, we expect the caseload will be 5,598. 20% of the FY94 caseload is 2,497, and 20% of the FY03 average caseload is 1,120. This is a 55% decline in the number of families eligible for an exemption to the 60-month limit.

**Projected Number of Temporary Assistance Families
Exceeding the 60-Month Time Limit**

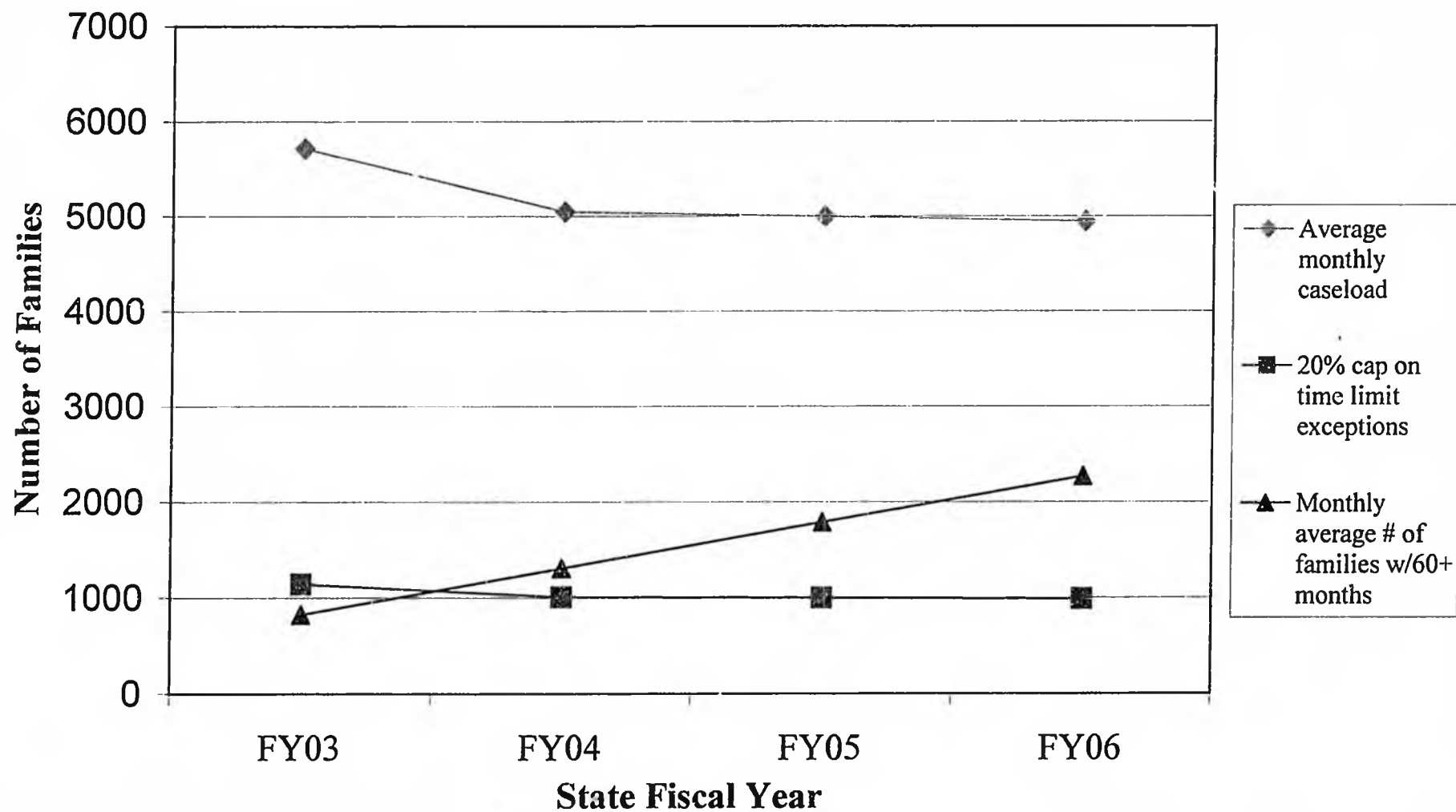
Fiscal Year	Average Monthly Caseload	Change From Previous Year	Exemptions Allowed under 20% Cap	Projected Average Families Over 60 mo.	Hardship Families Projected Eligible for Exemption	Non-Hardship Families Cut-Off	Hardship Families Cut-Off
FY94	12483		2497				
FY97	12096	0.6%	2419				
FY98	10514	-13.1%	2103				
FY99	8890*	-15.4%	1778				
FY00	7596*	-14.6%	1519				
FY01	6091**	-19.8%	1240				
FY02	5888	-3.3%	1178				
FY03	5598	-4.9%	1120	825	713	112	0
FY04	5262	-6.0%	1052	1265	1097	168	45
FY05	4900	-6.9%	980	1553	1349	204	369

Note: All Figures FY01 and later are estimates

* TCC excluded

** TCC, T&H, AVCP excluded FY01 forward

Results of Decrease in Caseload and Increase in Families with 60+ Months of Assistance



FAMILIES FACING THE ALASKA TEMPORARY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM 60-MONTH TIME LIMIT

The Alaska Temporary Assistance Program (ATAP) provides assistance with basic needs and employment services to needy Alaskan families. Eligibility for the program is time-limited – state and federal law limits most families to a lifetime maximum of 60-months of assistance.

July 2002 marks the first month that some families in Alaska will reach the 60-month time limit for receiving Temporary Assistance. Although the time limit on Temporary Assistance is a key element of welfare reform, there are truly needy families who, despite their best efforts, will need continued support beyond 60 months. These families experience serious personal and social problems that interfere with their ability to find and keep work.

A survey of case managers who work with long-term recipients (those who have had 40 or more months of assistance) completed by the Division of Public Assistance reveals that the challenges faced by these families mirror national data on welfare recipients and include:

- **Physical health problems** - 49% suffer with moderate to severe health problems that make it difficult or impossible to work.
- **Disabled children in the home** -- 21% care for children with severe medical or emotional problems.
- **Disabled relative in the home** – 11% care for another adult with a severe medical problem.
- **Domestic violence** - 23% reported family violence that impacted their ability to find or keep work.
- **Mental health issues** - 33% experienced mental health problems that interfere with employment.
- **Substance abuse** - 16% have problems with alcohol or other drugs.
- **Learning disabilities** – 12% experience a learning disability, which makes it difficult to read, write or handle mathematic calculations.
- **Literacy** – 18% have low literacy rates.
- **Multiple challenges** – 56% experienced two or more challenges, 28% faced three or more challenges.



Real Families With Real Needs

Examples of Families who are Helped by HB 142/SB 116

Frank* is a 48-year-old father of two children whose wife, Marianne, has significant medical problems requiring him to care for her. Marianne is permanently disabled and receives Social Security. Frank and their two children receive Temporary Assistance. One of the children is blind, requiring extra care. Frank participates in a home-based training program while he cares for his family, and plans to begin his own computer repair business, but it could be awhile before he works his way off assistance. The family has only 18 months before reaching the time limit.

Diane is a 40-year-old single mother with two children, one with severe medical problems. The child is in special education classes, but is ill often, which requires Diane to be available for care. She has not found an employer who is able to accommodate her need for frequent sick leave. The family has only 17 months left before reaching the time limit.

Theresa is a 36-year-old mother battling depression while raising three children. In addition to Theresa's medical condition, she had serious challenges with a teenage son. Theresa and her son are both doing better and she hopes her medical condition is stabilized. Theresa has been working part-time this last year and is attempting to get a full-time job. The family has 20 months before reaching the time limit.

Deborah is a 46-year-old mother supporting her husband Charlie, who is incapacitated, and their five children. Deborah dropped out of high school and has minimal job skills. The family does not own a car and must use public transportation. Charlie is applying for Social Security disability benefits, and Deborah works full-time, resulting in a very low monthly benefit payment – but the family's assistance is still counting towards the 60-month time limit. They have four kids, one with a serious medical problem, plus they took in a nephew who might otherwise have gone into the child welfare system. The family has 20 months before reaching the time limit.

Helen is a 27-year-old single mother with 3 children. She has a learning disability and a low reading level and has received some remedial help in literacy. She is now employed and has a supportive boss who helps her work through the learning difficulties she encounters on the job. With further assistance, Helen may attain full-time employment at a higher wage, but it could take some time. The family has 25 months before reaching the time limit.

**all names have been changed to protect confidentiality*

Proposed Exemption Criteria for Families Reaching the 60-Month Time Limit for Receiving Temporary Assistance

State law provides that recipients may be eligible for an exemption from the 60-month time limit if they meet certain criteria. The Division of Public Assistance has been further developing these criteria for adoption in regulation. The criteria includes families in the following circumstances:

- **Victim of domestic violence**

A family would receive an exemption if an individual were unable to find or keep employment, participate in work activities or achieve self-sufficiency as a result of the effects of domestic violence.

- **Adult who is physically or mentally unable to perform gainful activity**

An exemption would be allowed for families with an adult who has a diagnosed physical condition or mental disorder severe enough to limit them from obtaining or retaining any type of employment either part- or full-time.

- **Parent who is providing care for a child who is experiencing a disability**

A parent would be exempted if he or she is not able to work because they are needed in the home to care for a disabled child with a diagnosed severe emotional, mental or physical condition. A licensed medical professional must verify the need for care.

- **Hardship**

Hardship means that a family is experiencing severe or extraordinary barriers to employment and, due to circumstances beyond their control, is in need of additional months of assistance. To receive a hardship exemption, a family must belong to one of the categories below:

- **Lack of success at employment**

The recipient complies with the Family Self-Sufficiency Plan and is doing everything possible to become self-supporting, but cannot earn wages sufficient to leave Temporary Assistance. Examples of situations that could qualify include but are not limited to:

- Diagnosed medical or mental health conditions that act as an impediment to employment for which care has been prescribed by a licensed medical professional;
- Diagnosed functional limitations or impairments that act as an impediment to employment and take into consideration such problems as literacy level, learning or developmental disability or other brain disorders.

- **Caring for a disabled relative**

The recipient is not able to work because they are needed in the home to care for a disabled relative with a diagnosed severe emotional, mental or physical condition that is verified by a licensed medical professional.

- **Disaster**

Families are impacted by a specific catastrophic event meeting the criteria for a formal disaster declaration under state and federal laws.

- **Children at risk of placement outside the home**

It is determined, based on prior involvement with Division of Family and Youth Services and a current assessment, that a child would likely be removed from the home and placed into emergency shelter or foster care if assistance was ended.

TONY KNOWLES
GOVERNOR



HB 142
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STATE OF ALASKA
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
JUNEAU

February 21, 2001

The Honorable Brian Porter
Speaker of the House
Alaska State Legislature
State Capitol
Juneau, AK 99801-1182

Dear Speaker Porter:

Five years ago my Administration worked with the Legislature to create a new welfare law for Alaska. Under the banner of welfare reform, we repealed the Aid to Families with Dependent Children and Job Opportunity and Basic Skills programs and created the Alaska Temporary Assistance Program (ATAP). We have had great success with the program, with more Alaskans transitioning from welfare to work and our caseload dropping by more than 40 percent. Like many other states addressing welfare reform, we recognize what changes are needed to improve our program administration and ensure its continued success. These changes are addressed in the bill I transmit today.

The bill repeals the percentage limit on the number of families that may continue on assistance for more than 60 months due to hardship. Removal of this limit will permit the Department of Health and Social Services to base its hardship exceptions on objective criteria rather than on a fixed percentage of overall caseload. As families are successful in finding work and the overall caseload decreases, the number of hardship cases makes up a greater percentage of the total.

Alaska set an extremely aggressive goal, compared to other states, in capping our hardship cases at a specific percentage of the total. Other states either avoided time limits completely or set a broader range of exemptions to the limits. We now recognize the fixed percentage in our law artificially bars needy families with disabled adults from receiving essential cash assistance and services for their children. The first families will begin to exceed the 60-month lifetime limit in July of 2002.

HB 142

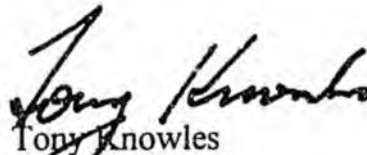
The Honorable Brian Porter
February 21, 2001
Page 2

The bill also addresses the seasonal reduction provisions for a two-parent needy family by removing outdated eligibility requirements as cited in a Superior Court ruling. This change permits the department to apply the seasonal reduction provision to all two-parent needy families in which both parents are physically and mentally able to work.

Finally, the bill requires disabled parents to have self-sufficiency plans. The state can better serve these parents by promoting their efforts toward self-sufficiency.

We have seen dramatic, positive changes for poor Alaska families. Thousands of recipients have been assisted into work and the state has saved millions of dollars in welfare benefit payments. The reform measures provided a durable framework for a new era of welfare in Alaska. I urge your favorable consideration for these improvements to the program.

Sincerely,


Tony Knowles
Governor

HB 142

**Reaching for Independence:
A Study of Families That Have Left the
Alaska Temporary Assistance Program**



Institute for Circumpolar Health Studies

University of Alaska Anchorage

3211 Providence Drive

Anchorage, Alaska 99508

February 2001

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A Study of Families That Have Left the
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3211 Providence Drive
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February 2001

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This project was supported by the State of Alaska, Division of Public Assistance FY 1999 RSA 0600122 and FY 2000 RSA 060001

Executive Summary

Background

A sweeping national welfare reform law, The Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996, established the federal Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program. TANF replaced the Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) program, which had provided funding to states to operate cash welfare programs for needy families since the enactment of the Social Security Act during the Great Depression. States receive federal TANF funds based on congressionally established block grant amounts, unlike AFDC funding, which had been an open-ended entitlement.

This report assesses the characteristics and status of Alaskans who left Alaska's welfare rolls after the July 1997 implementation of the Alaska Temporary Assistance program, Alaska's version of TANF. Studies of this type (commonly called welfare "leaver" studies) are underway in many of the states. In general, leaver studies are designed to document the outcomes of families that left the welfare rolls after the states' implementation of welfare reform.

The Alaska Temporary Assistance program is administered by the Division of Public Assistance, an agency within the Alaska Department of Health and Social Services. The Division of Public Assistance commissioned the Institute for Circumpolar Health Studies (ICHS), an applied social welfare research unit within the University of Alaska Anchorage (UAA), to conduct the study. ICHS conducted the study in partnership with the UAA School of Social Work.

The Division of Public Assistance and the UAA evaluation team established the following objectives for this study:

- To assess the characteristics and status of families that left the welfare rolls ("leavers") after the July 1997 implementation of the Alaska Temporary Assistance program,
- To compare leaver families that returned to the welfare rolls after a period of absence ("returners") to non-returners,
- To identify factors that may impact the ability of former Temporary Assistance clients to stay off assistance, and
- To assist the Division of Public Assistance in using the evaluation findings to assess the effectiveness of its efforts.

The evaluation team used Division of Public Assistance administrative data and the results of a survey of a representative sample of 694 Alaskans who left the Temporary Assistance program rolls during the 24-month period ending in October 1999. Survey interviews were conducted during the spring of 2000. Statistical comparisons between the sample and the universe of all Temporary Assistance recipients who left the rolls during the study period established that the sample was representative of the population.

The study data were reviewed by Division of Public Assistance staff and an advisory and oversight committee appointed by the Commissioner of the Department of Health and Social Services. The results presented here include summaries of study data and interpretations of the meaning of the data.

The findings below are grouped according to the basic constructs or factors used in other states to assess the results of welfare reform on families that leave, and sometimes re-enter, the welfare rolls. As the title of this study suggests, most of the subject families were indeed "reaching for independence" with varying degrees of success.

Findings

Demographics and Family Characteristics

Most recipients who left the Temporary Assistance programs were younger, high-school-educated females with small families.

Alaska Native families left the caseload at about the same rate as non-Native families.

Households that had included only one eligible parent during the study period but included a "significant other" at the time of the interview were significantly more likely than similar cases that did not include a significant other to be off Temporary Assistance at the time of the interview.

Getting off welfare is not the same as staying off welfare. Three out of ten families returned to the Temporary Assistance rolls during the 24-month study period. This phenomenon of leaving and returning to welfare is often called caseload "churning." The occurrence of such repeated interactions with the welfare system highlights the need for steady employment and strong support services to people leaving welfare as they strive to maintain their independence.

Specifically, the study found that:

- Eighty-eight percent (88%) of recipients who left Temporary Assistance were female.
- The average age of Temporary Assistance leavers was 34 years.
- The typical family included two children.
- Although the proportion of Alaska Native families in the Temporary Assistance caseload (37%) is greater than the proportion of Alaska Natives in the state population, Native families left the caseload at about the same rate as non-Native families.

- Households that had included only one eligible parent during the study period but included a "significant other" at the time of the interview were significantly more likely than similar cases that did not include a significant other to be off Temporary Assistance at the time of the interview.
- Eight out of ten (81%) people who left Temporary Assistance had at least a high school education or equivalent.
- Three out of ten (30%) of the cases that left the Temporary Assistance caseload during the study period returned to the Temporary Assistance rolls at least once during the study period.
- Consistent with the overall geographic distribution of the Temporary Assistance caseload, significantly more respondents with two-parent families lived in rural Alaska (52%) than lived in urban Alaska (20%).
- Over half (51%) of the respondents cited employment as their reason for leaving Temporary Assistance.

Employment and Earned Income Opportunities

Employment is a crucial factor in a family's ability to leave welfare. Numerous indicators point toward the importance of quality jobs to becoming independent of Temporary Assistance. Study participants who did not return to the Temporary Assistance rolls were more likely than returners to have held permanent, non-seasonal, full-time jobs and to have had higher hourly wages than returners did. As expected, people with less than a high school education or who had serious health problems or disabilities had more trouble maintaining independent employment.

Specifically, the study found that:

- Almost two-thirds (65%) of all respondents were employed at the time of the interview.

- Three-quarters (75%) of the respondents who were off Temporary Assistance at the time of the interview were employed.
- Three in ten (27%) of the respondents were back on Temporary Assistance at the time they were interviewed.
- Thirty-eight percent (38%) of the respondents who were back on Temporary Assistance at the time of the interview were employed.
- The average wage for people interviewed who were working was \$9.73 per hour in 1998 and \$10.52 per hour in 1999.
- Respondents with a high school diploma or equivalent were significantly more likely to be employed and off Temporary Assistance than those with less education.
- Health problems, disabilities, and problems with child care were the most frequently mentioned challenges to employment.

Unearned Income

Cash income from non-employment sources may contribute significantly to a family's total income and ability to leave and stay off the Temporary Assistance rolls. Unearned income that is received on a regular basis may be especially important in meeting a family's ongoing financial needs.

While many Alaskans believe that the Permanent Fund Dividend is an important way of reducing the need for Temporary Assistance, many people who left Temporary Assistance had their Permanent Fund dividends garnished to pay off their debts, suggesting that they were having trouble meeting their financial obligations. We also found that regular child support payments were available to few families that left the Temporary Assistance rolls and that almost as many families paid out child support as received it.

Specifically, the study found that:

- Fewer than one out of five respondents (18%) reported that their household received child support payments. The average payment amount was \$282 per month.
- Twelve percent (12%) of respondents reported that their household paid out child support, averaging \$318 per month.
- Thirty-seven percent (37%) of respondents reported that a household member's 1999 Permanent Fund dividend was garnished.
- Sixteen percent (16%) reported that at least one member of the household received Adult Public Assistance payments.

Use of Transitional Services and Community Help

Getting off Temporary Assistance cannot be equated with no longer needing public services. Former Temporary Assistance recipients relied on government health insurance, food stamps, or community resources to help them stay off the Temporary Assistance rolls. These services must be available if the Temporary Assistance caseload is expected to continue to decline.

Specifically, the study found that:

- The most frequently cited government service used by respondents after they left the Temporary Assistance rolls was government health insurance, including Medicaid, tribal health care, and Denali KidCare.
- One-third (34%) of respondents said they were not receiving food stamps at the time of the interview. Most of those not using food stamps reported that they did not need or want food stamps, or believed that they were not qualified.
- Some respondents (30%) used food banks, faith-based organizations, family

support, or some other form of community support while they were off the Temporary Assistance rolls.

Services Received by Temporary Assistance Recipients

Well trained and responsive Public Assistance caseworkers are a crucial element in helping people stay off Temporary Assistance. They are instrumental in helping people plan for the transition from welfare to work, prepare themselves for work, find jobs, and maintain employment. Temporary Assistance clients are also an important source of volunteer community service labor.

Specifically, the study found that:

- Sixty-two percent (62%) of respondents indicated their Public Assistance caseworker had required them to work, look for a job, or go to some kind of job training.
- An average of 13% of respondents indicated they had participated in some form of volunteer or unpaid work between 1998 and 1999.

Child Care

All families with children must address their child care needs in order to balance family life with employment. This is also true with Temporary Assistance recipients who leave the rolls. Subsidized child care is an essential welfare-to-work service. Survey respondents reported that they used subsidized child care less after they left the Temporary Assistance rolls than they did while they were receiving benefits. It is essential to maintain child care benefits and assure access to subsidized care as part of the welfare transitional package. Further study will be necessary to understand the subsidized child care utilization patterns of Temporary Assistance leavers.

Specifically, the study found that:

- One-third of all respondents (33%) reported that a lack of child care had disrupted their ability to look for a job or go to school or training.
- One-third of the respondents (33%) who had preschool age children reported that they used child care for them in order to find or keep a job.
- Twenty-four percent (24%) of respondents who had school age children had used child care for them.
- Three in ten (31%) reported that they had received subsidized child care for training and other work-related reasons before they left the Temporary Assistance caseload, while only 18% said they had received subsidized care after leaving the Temporary Assistance rolls.
- Child care centers and family day care homes were the most frequently mentioned forms of child care used. Friends and relatives provided most of the remaining care.
- Almost nine out of ten (86%) of those who used child care were satisfied with the quality of child care they received.

Housing

Adequate shelter is one of the basic necessities of life. Without stable housing, it is difficult to maintain gainful employment. One in three survey respondents had trouble paying for this basic need. The data show that people who returned to the Temporary Assistance rolls had more trouble than those who stayed off Temporary Assistance. Continued attention must be paid to basic housing as a crucial component of welfare reform.

Specifically, the study found that:

- Housing arrangements were stable for 70% of respondents in the year preceding the interview, with 30% reporting at least one move in the last year.
- The average housing cost for respondents was \$430 per month, and their

average utility cost was \$133 per month.

- Twenty-eight percent (28%) of the respondents were living in either subsidized housing or a public housing project.
- Over one-third (36%) reported being unable to pay rent, housing, or utility bills at least once in the past year, with people not on Temporary Assistance less likely to have this experience.

Transportation

There is a strong relationship between the availability of reliable transportation and people's ability to maintain employment and stay off the Temporary Assistance rolls. Three-quarters of the survey respondents had adequate transportation. This clearly helps people maintain stable employment. The data suggest that the liberalized Temporary Assistance policy on vehicle ownership is good public policy.

Specifically, the study found that:

- Three quarters (75%) of respondents reported having adequate transportation to get to work, training or child care.
- Personally owned vehicles were the most common form of transportation.
- People with reliable transportation were significantly more likely to be off Temporary Assistance and employed at the time of the interview.

Health Issues

While most former Temporary Assistance recipients are healthy, many recognize health problems and disability as a major challenge to stable employment. Lack of adequate health insurance affected the lives of one out of three families that left Temporary Assistance. This finding reinforces the need for continuing government-sponsored medical insurance as an im-

portant component of welfare-to-work strategy.

Specifically, the study found that:

- Eighty-nine percent (89%) of the respondents reported that their current health was fair or better, with 11% indicating poor health. Their spouses and children were reported to be in comparably good health.
- Thirty percent (30%) of respondents reported at least one family member with no medical coverage.
- Seventeen percent (17%) of respondents said that someone in their household had not received needed health care during the past year, most often due to financial constraints.

Client Perceptions and Attitudes

People who left Temporary Assistance agree with the welfare-to-work philosophy, yet express some reservations about their long-term ability to remain independent. During their quest for independence, many repeatedly move from welfare to work and back to welfare. Some people worry about the availability of Temporary Assistance benefits if they should need these services in the future. The impact of the new limits on welfare eligibility needs further investigation.

Specifically, the study found that:

- More than nine out of ten (96%) people interviewed reported that they would rather work than receive Temporary Assistance.
- More than half (55%) of the respondents said that their lives were better while they were off the Temporary Assistance rolls.
- About seven out of ten (71%) respondents agreed with the appropriateness of Temporary Assistance time limits, with half of them (50%) strongly agreeing.

- Over eight out of ten (85%) respondents agreed that people on Temporary Assistance should be required to find a job and work.
- More than six out of ten (62%) people interviewed believed that their Temporary Assistance caseworker was interested in their well-being and gave them good advice and support.

Rural Issues

The availability of quality jobs in rural Alaska is going to affect the success of the welfare-to-work efforts in many areas of the state. Although benefit time limits do not apply in many small villages, the nature of temporary and seasonal employment in rural Alaska makes time limits on Temporary Assistance benefits a critical issue.

Specifically, the study found that:

- Almost nine out of ten rural Temporary Assistance recipients (88%) were Alaska Natives. There were significantly more respondents with two-parent families in rural Alaska (52%) than in urban Alaska (20%); this is consistent with the overall geographic distribution of the Temporary Assistance caseload.
- The higher cost of living and seasonal and temporary employment patterns probably offset higher wage levels in rural Alaska.
- Rural respondents believed that the available jobs were of lower quality and harder for them to find than their urban counterparts believed.
- Rural residents were less willing than urban residents to relocate to find employment.

Conclusions

Division of Public Assistance data show that both the Temporary Assistance rolls and the Temporary Assistance budgets

have been shrinking since the Fiscal Year 1998 implementation of welfare reform in Alaska. The change to the "welfare-to-work" policy underlying Alaska's welfare reform efforts is generally recognized as a good public policy properly implemented. There is agreement, even among Temporary Assistance beneficiaries, that work is better than welfare. Many former Temporary Assistance recipients are now part of the workforce and appear to be successfully replacing benefits with earnings. They credit the caseworkers of the Division of Public Assistance and its affiliated agencies for helping them make the transition to independence.

However, the results of this study also suggest that these trends may not continue on their present course. The ability of former Temporary Assistance recipients to remain in the workforce is challenged by perceptions of shortages of quality jobs, problems with child care, and family problems. The inevitable economic downturns of the future are likely to affect this population strongly. A substantial proportion (30%) of those who left Temporary Assistance returned to the rolls during the study period, some repeatedly bouncing back and forth from welfare to work. The dynamics of this caseload "churning" phenomenon warrant further study. Many of those who remain off the Temporary Assistance rolls are working in the lower range of the wage scales. Many depend on seasonal and temporary work. Their situations seem to be economically fragile.

It is essential to provide the supports necessary to maintain the gains that Alaska has made in implementing its welfare-to-work policies. As the caseload falls, this may be increasingly difficult because the population remaining on Temporary Assistance may require more sophisticated and intensive interventions to help them prepare for independence, and to support their transition to work. More needs to be learned about the characteristics of the Alaskans who remain on the Temporary

Assistance rolls in order to assure them the same opportunities to become stable members of the Alaskan workforce. Program strategies must be in place to support families that, despite their best efforts to achieve independence, exhaust their eligibility for Temporary Assistance when the 60-month time limit takes effect in mid-2002.

Table of Contents

Executive Summary	i
Table of Contents	viii
Introduction	1
Background: Welfare Reform in Alaska.....	1
The Need for Program Evaluation.....	2
Evaluation Objectives	2
The Basic Study Approach.....	2
Project Oversight	3
Study Methodology and Respondent Characteristics	4
Operational Definitions Used in the Sampling Frame.....	4
Data Sources.....	4
Procedures for Developing the Sampling Frame.....	5
Sample Selection.....	6
Respondent Selection.....	6
Response Rates	6
Tests of Generalizability.....	8
Merging of Administrative and Survey Data Sets	8
Participation of Native TANF Programs.....	8
Face-to-Face Interview or Debriefing	8
Demographics and Family Characteristics	11
General Respondent Characteristics	11
Returners and Non-returners	12
Current Recipient Status and Caseload Churning.....	12
Geographic Distribution	13
Urban/Rural Distribution.....	14
Ethnic Distribution.....	15
Family Types	16
Reasons for Leaving the Caseload	18
Staying off Temporary Assistance.....	19
Returning to Temporary Assistance	20
Employment and Earned Income Opportunities	21
Employment.....	21
Employment Status During the Sample Period	21
Current Employment and Recipient Status	22
Employers, Types of Work, Job Permanence, and Hours Worked	23
Weekly Hours of Work	25
Presence of Second Working Adult.....	27
Current Status and Presence of a Significant Other in One-Parent Families.....	28
Periods of Unemployment.....	30
Wage Levels.....	30
Job Promotion and Pay Increases	31
Educational Background.....	31

Use of Work-Related Training Services	32
Job Readiness and Job Advancement	33
Availability of Jobs	33
Relocation.....	35
Job Search Strategies.....	35
Challenges to Employment	36
Unearned Income	37
Alaska-Specific Forms of Unearned Income	39
Use of Transitional Services and Community Help.....	41
Food Stamp Utilization.....	42
Benefits Provided by Non-Profit Organizations	42
Respondent-Reported Strategies for Getting by While Off Temporary Assistance	42
Services Received by Temporary Assistance Recipients.....	43
Types of Services Used	43
DPA Services Utilization by Returners and Non-Returners	44
Child Care.....	46
Utilization Rates.....	46
Types of Care	46
Quality of Care.....	47
Disruptions for Lack of Care.....	47
Housing	48
Housing Stability	48
Housing Costs and Subsidized Housing	48
Housing Quality	49
Transportation	50
Types of Transportation	50
Commute Time	50
Access to Reliable Transportation.....	51
Reliance on Others for Transportation	52
Reliability of Public Transportation.....	52
Health Issues	53
Health Status	53
Health Care Coverage	54
Individuals without Health Care Coverage	54
Client Perceptions and Attitudes	56
Attitudes about Work and Welfare.....	56
Perceptions of Availability of Education and Training.....	59
Attitudes about Temporary Assistance Caseworkers	60
Rural Issues	61
Ethnic Distribution.....	61
Family Types	62
Urban and Rural Wage Levels.....	62
Vehicle Ownership, Temporary Assistance Status, and Urban/Rural Residency.....	63
Community Perceptions of the Job Market.....	63
Willingness to Relocate.....	63

Appendices

Appendix A: Survey Instrument

Appendix B: Flow Chart: Selection of Respondents and EIS and Survey Data

Appendix C: Food Stamp Program Urban/Rural Cities List

Introduction

Background: Welfare Reform in Alaska

The last decade of the 20th Century saw sweeping changes in the way America provides for the basic financial needs of its low income children and families. The Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) program, which provided funding to states to operate cash welfare programs since the passage of the Social Security Act during the Great Depression era, was replaced by the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program under the General Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996.¹

Passage of TANF signaled a fundamental shift in the philosophy of welfare, from providing cash maintenance for poor and needy families toward some form of self-sufficiency and adult caretakers.

Under the new TANF program, states are required to establish maximum income and employment requirements for recipients, as long as they are able to work at home. The amount of federal funding that states could receive with TANF changed significantly, with automatic entitlements and limited exceptions, and a 60-month lifetime limit on benefits. States no longer receive federal matching grants for TANF programs; TANF is now a block grant to the states, with each state's historical funding level preserved.

Alaska enacted welfare reform legislation in June 1996² in anticipation of the impending federal welfare reform law. The State of Alaska's version of TANF, known as the Alaska Temporary Assistance program (herein referred to as Temporary Assistance), replaced AFDC in July 1997. Temporary Assistance, like its federal counterpart, encourages the independence of recipients and emphasizing work and self-sufficiency by including a 60-month lifetime limit on cash benefits. Alaska's Temporary Assistance program is administered by the Division of Public Assistance (DPA), an agency of the Alaska Department of Health and Social Services.

Under previous law, only the states could operate and receive funding for AFDC programs. The federal welfare reform legislation authorized Native American tribes and Alaska Native organizations to share in the TANF Block grant and operate separate TANF programs for their members. In Alaska, the 12 ANCSA regional nonprofit corporations and the Metlakatla Indian Community are eligible for Native TANF funding. In 2000, the Alaska Legislature passed a bill sponsored by Governor Knowles that authorizes state funding for Native-run TANF programs to four organizations: the Tanana Chiefs Conference, the Tanana Council of Tlingit and Haida Indian Presidents of Alaska; and the Association of Native-run TANF programs in the Metlakatla Indian Community. To date, three Alaska Native organizations have taken over TANF programs for Native families living in the Metlakatla Indian Community and decided to run a TANF program.

¹ Public Law 104-193

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Introduction

Background: Welfare Reform in Alaska

The last decade of the 20th Century saw sweeping changes in the way America provides for the basic financial needs of its low income children and families. The Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) program, which provided funding to states to operate cash welfare programs since the passage of the Social Security Act during the Great Depression era, was replaced by the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program under the federal Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996,¹ enacted in August 1996.

Passage of TANF signaled a fundamental shift in the objective of welfare, from providing ongoing income maintenance for poor children and their adult caretakers, toward short-term aid and rapid movement of welfare families toward employment and self-support.

Under the old AFDC system, families with income and assets below state-established maximums were entitled to benefits as long as a dependent child was living in the home. There was no limit on the amount of federal matching funds states could receive for their AFDC programs.

TANF changed this, eliminating the automatic entitlement to benefits and, with limited exceptions, subjecting recipients to a 60-month lifetime limit on cash benefits. States no longer receive open-ended federal matching for the costs of their welfare programs; TANF funding is paid as a block grant to the states, the amount based on each state's historic claims for AFDC funding.

Alaska enacted welfare reform legislation in June 1996² in anticipation of the impending federal welfare reform law. The State of Alaska's version of TANF, known as the Alaska Temporary Assistance program (herein referred to as Temporary Assistance) replaced AFDC in July 1997. Temporary Assistance, like its federal counterpart, encourages the independence of recipients by emphasizing work and self-sufficiency and including a 60-month lifetime limit on cash benefits. Alaska's Temporary Assistance program is administered by the Division of Public Assistance (DPA), an agency of the Alaska Department of Health and Social Services.

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¹ Public Law 104-193

² Chapter 107, Session Laws of Alaska 1996

The Need for Program Evaluation

Temporary Assistance and the Native TANF programs represent a rapid, fundamental shift in Alaska's social policy. In Alaska, as elsewhere, the TANF caseload has declined dramatically since the implementation of welfare reform. Average monthly Temporary Assistance and Native TANF caseloads for Fiscal Year 2000 stood at 7,987 families, 34% lower than the average monthly caseload for state fiscal year 1997 (the last year before the implementation of welfare reform), and 39% below the historic high of 13,164 AFDC families in April 1994.

The rapid decline in the Temporary Assistance caseload raises important questions about how families that have left the Temporary Assistance rolls are faring. The Division of Public Assistance is aware that some families that have left Temporary Assistance have since returned. Others have continued to utilize other public assistance programs such as Medicaid and food stamps. However, a substantial number of families simply ceased all contact with the Division of Public Assistance.

There are also many questions about the impacts of Temporary Assistance policies and services, as well as the impacts of non-public assistance services families use that might to help them stay off the rolls. Temporary Assistance families will begin to lose eligibility because of the 60-month time limit in July 2002. Policymakers need objective, reliable information to fine-tune program policies, and to target services so that families are supported in achieving economic self-sufficiency before they run down the benefit clock.

These questions, along with a legislative requirement to "conduct studies and research in order to evaluate and monitor the

effectiveness of [Temporary Assistance],³ led the Department of Health and Social Services to sponsor this study of families that have left the Temporary Assistance rolls.

This study is a cooperative effort of the Institute for Circumpolar Health Studies at the University of Alaska Anchorage (UAA), the UAA School of Social Work, and the Division of Public Assistance. This report presents the results of the first phase of a planned multi-year evaluation of the Temporary Assistance program.

Evaluation Objectives

The Division of Public Assistance and the UAA evaluation team established the following objectives for this study:

- To assess the characteristics and status of families that have left the welfare rolls ("leavers") since the July 1997 implementation of the Temporary Assistance program,
- To compare leaver families that have returned to the welfare rolls after a period of absence ("returners") to non-returners,
- To identify factors that may impact the ability of former Temporary Assistance clients to stay off assistance, and
- To assist the Division of Public Assistance in using the evaluation findings to assess the effectiveness of their efforts.

The Basic Study Approach

The study subjects consisted of current and former recipients who were identified using Division of Public Assistance administrative records as Temporary Assistance "leavers." A leaver is defined as a recipient who received one or more months of Temporary Assistance, then left the rolls for at least two consecutive months. This definition of a leaver was selected in the interest of com-

³ Alaska Statutes 47.27.005(7)

parability. A large number of states that are also conducting TANF leaver studies use this same definition. In this study, the subjects were randomly selected from Division of Public Assistance computer records of Temporary Assistance families that received assistance for at least one month between October 1997 and September 1999 and then left the rolls for at least two consecutive months before December 1999.

Many families have multiple episodes of Temporary Assistance use, returning to the rolls after a period of non-use. Leavers who returned to the rolls for one or more episodes of assistance after having been identified are categorized in this analysis as "returners." Leavers who never returned to the rolls after leaving once are categorized as "non-returners."

It is important to bear in mind that all of the subjects of the study, both non-returners and returners, are leavers under our definition. Families that never left the rolls were not included in this study.

"Child-only" cases, which constituted 7.8% of identified leaver cases, were excluded from the study survey. A child-only Temporary Assistance case consists of a needy child with a non-needy adult caretaker. Typically, child-only cases are established when the child lives with a relative, such as a grandparent, aunt, or uncle, who is not the child's parent and therefore not financially responsible for the child's support. Child-only cases are not subject to Temporary Assistance time limits or work requirements and are outside the scope of the research questions. TANF leaver studies conducted in other states have also excluded child-only cases.

Project Oversight

The health and welfare of low-income Alaskan children and their families is an important and sensitive topic, and the evaluation of services for this population requires a

broad understanding of the numerous factors that affect the health and well-being of Alaskans. For this reason, it was important to have an objective group of knowledgeable Alaskans oversee this project and assist the project sponsor and the evaluation research staff in the formation of questions and the interpretation of survey data. In September 1999, the Commissioner of Health and Social Services appointed a Temporary Assistance Evaluation Advisory Committee.

The duties and responsibilities of the advisory committee were to:

- Participate in meetings with the project sponsor and evaluation research staff,
- Monitor the course of the study,
- Review the plan for the evaluation and data collection protocols,
- Assist in the interpretation of data, and
- Review findings and make recommendations.

The Division of Public Assistance established a project coordinator as the principal contact point within the Division for both the University research team and the Advisory Committee.

The advisory committee met at critical points during the conduct of the study. The first meeting was to review evaluation questions and constructs. In the second meeting, the committee reviewed proposed data collection questionnaires and approaches to assure that they were defensible, accurate, and responsive to the information needs of the project sponsor and the public. The third meeting was intended to review preliminary data that were generated through the study. At the last meeting, the committee reviewed the draft findings, conclusions, and recommendations prior to the submission of this report to the project sponsor. During the course of the project, information and project documentation were disseminated to members by e-mail. Meetings were held both face-to-face and by teleconference.

Study Methodology and Respondent Characteristics

The data used for this evaluation project were taken from a sample of Temporary Assistance leavers. The sample was randomly selected from all Alaskans who received benefits from the Alaska Temporary Assistance Program at least once since October 1997 and then left the program for a period of at least two consecutive months prior to November 1999. The resulting data set was merged with administrative data routinely collected and maintained by the Division of Public Assistance as part of their statewide Eligibility Information System.

This section describes the sampling process, including a description of the data bases used, operational definitions of leavers and returners, the rationale for the number of respondents interviewed, and the overall method for capturing desired information.

Operational Definitions Used in the Sampling Frame

The first step in designing a sampling strategy is defining the desired characteristics of the subjects who are to be included in the sampling frame. The sampling frame is the total population from which the sample is drawn. For the purpose of this study, a "leaver" is defined as an individual who received at least one month of Temporary Assistance benefits during the sample period and subsequently became a non-recipient for at least two months. This same definition has been used in many studies of TANF leavers in other states.⁴

⁴ Isaacs, Julia B. and Matthew R. Lyon. 2000. A Cross-State Examination of Families leaving Welfare: Findings

Data Sources

The data set used for this analysis is a combination of survey data collected using telephone and face-to-face interviews and administrative data maintained by the Division of Public Assistance in the eligibility information system. This section describes each data set.

1. The DPA Eligibility Information System (EIS): The Division of Public Assistance has the programmatic and statutory responsibility for determining eligibility for Temporary Assistance cash payments. This is a detailed and intricate process of collecting data from prospective beneficiaries to determine their eligibility for assistance under state and federal law.

Eligibility workers who gather information from applicants in most parts of Alaska collect the data. Fee agents collect the same information in parts of Alaska where there are no Division of public Assistance offices, and hence no state eligibility workers.

This information is stored in the state-maintained Eligibility Information System. As a mainframe system, EIS is capable of storing massive amounts of eligibility information, and of regularly updating files on both the families that apply for Temporary Assistance and each individual within that family. Records are maintained for each month for which there is a transaction or cash payment. The sample for this study was

from the ASPE-funded Leavers Studies. A paper presented at the National Association for Welfare Research and Statistics (NAWRS) 40th annual workshop in Scottsdale, Arizona, August 1, 2000.

taken from all records and cases from October 1997 through November 1999. Records from October and November 1999 were used to confirm the leaver status of cases that received Temporary Assistance benefits in August and September 1999. However, cases that entered the caseload after September 1999 were not selected for the survey.

2. Survey Data: Detailed information was required to address the research questions that far exceeded what was available in the EIS administrative data set. For that reason, the study collected data using face-to-face and telephonic interviews of a selected number of Temporary Assistance leavers.

A survey instrument was developed by the evaluation team and the Division of Public Assistance, and reviewed by the Temporary Assistance Evaluation Advisory Committee. This survey instrument (see Appendix A) was first administered to 44 Alaskans in a beta or pre-test phase. The instrument was revised and administered to 694 people between March 24 and May 5, 2000. Ivan Moore Research, an Anchorage-based public opinion research firm, conducted 499 telephonic interviews. An additional 95 interviews were conducted by UAA staff (79 of these were done face-to-face, 16 by telephone); these were intended to capture more phenomenological and experiential data, as well as to assess the reliability of the telephonic survey data. Data from all interviews were entered into an electronic data set maintained by the evaluation team. The total combined sample size was 694 people.

Procedures for Developing the Sampling Frame

This study focused on families, not individual TANF beneficiaries. Therefore, the sampling frame included families, not individuals. Data from two DPA sources were combined to consolidate information on families for the sampling frame. While the EIS records on families contained the content for all the variables needed in the study, the EIS records on individual family members provided the social security numbers and names required to contact potential respondents drawn from the sampling frame. The data from these two sources were merged.

Only "leavers" were included in the sampling frame from which the random sample of telephonic and face-to-face respondents was drawn. As mentioned earlier, a leaver is defined as a case with a history of at least one break period of at least two months between monthly Temporary Assistance payments over the two-year study period. The non-leavers (or "stayers") were not included in this study.

Cases that did not include an eligible adult were also eliminated from the sampling frame. In the sampling frame that contained all leavers, there was a family type designation "child-only" that was excluded from the study population. Child-only cases do not include an adult who is subject to the Temporary Assistance work requirements. Children are not subject to the 60-month benefit time limit. Thus, child-only cases would not appropriately be included in a study of this nature.

Sample Selection

A probability sample was drawn using stratified random sampling procedures. The strata selected were the geographic service districts of the Division of Public Assistance. Essentially, a Public Assistance district is the area served by an individual Public Assistance field office. The proportional representation of all clients within districts was applied to the estimated number of respondents required for the power needed for this study. That proportional sampling led to the stratification system employed in drawing the sample both for University-conducted and contractor-conducted telephonic interviews.

Potential respondents were selected randomly for inclusion within each stratum. Selected cases appeared in each stratified sampling frame in random order. To avoid bias, both the University interviewers and the contract telephonic interviewers selected respondents from the sampling pool in the order in which they appeared in the sampling frame.

Respondent Selection

Experience from attempting to contact potential respondents in the beta test suggested that at least 3 times as many people should be on the sample selection list as respondents actually needed. This was because some potential respondents were difficult to find, had moved and left no forwarding phone number, or refused to participate. The survey schedule required that all interviews be completed within a six-week timeline. Therefore, each stratum

for the sample contained a randomized list with far more respondents than the number required. People were called in the order in which they appeared on the list. Interviewers were instructed to keep working down their lists until the interview team completed the required number of interviews for each district.

To assure that response bias was minimized, there were repeated efforts to contact potential respondents to assure their inclusion within the final sample. For example, the telephone interviewers and the face-to-face interviewers called potential respondents no less than three times before they were dropped from consideration for inclusion in the sample. When possible, individuals were traced through successive addresses or alternative telephone listings to assure that they were included in the sample. People were eliminated from consideration if:

- The contact information in the administrative records was not current and no current telephone number could be found,
- Repeated efforts to contact and interview them were unsuccessful and the interviewers ran out of time, or
- The individual refused to participate in the interview.

Response Rates

Tables 1 and 2 (next page) display a detailed analysis of the efforts to contact individuals and the resulting response rates.

Table 1. Contact Rate Calculations for Contractor-Administered Interviews

District	Unsuccessful Attempts to Interview			Total Unsuccessful	Total Contractor Interviews	Response rate
	Contact made	No phone # found	Refused			
ANCHORAGE	168	352	72	592	221	27.18%
BETHEL	24	24	10	58	46	44.23%
CFO	16	23	5	44	34	43.59%
FAIRBANKS	70	83	17	170	75	30.61%
JUNEAU	10	30	6	46	19	29.23%
KENAI	20	39	15	74	36	32.73%
KETCHIKAN	14	21	3	38	23	37.70%
KOTZEBUE	3	5	2	10	11	52.38%
MAT-SU	15	66	23	104	63	37.72%
MULTIPLE	27	42	12	81	47	36.72%
NOME	6	15	1	22	15	40.54%
SITKA	3	5	1	9	9	50.00%
TOTAL	376	705	167	1248	599	32.43%

Table 2. Contact Rate Calculations for UAA-Administered Interviews

District	Unsuccessful Attempts to Interview			Total Unsuccessful	Total UAA Interviews	Response rate
	Contact made	No phone # found	Refused			
ANCHORAGE	7	62	3	72	34	32.08%
BETHEL	0	4	1	5	7	58.33%
CFO	1	3	3	7	6	46.15%
FAIRBANKS	5	20	2	27	13	32.50%
JUNEAU	2	5	1	8	4	33.33%
KENAI	4	14	0	18	4	18.18%
KETCHIKAN	0	4	0	4	4	50.00%
KOTZEBUE	1	1	0	2	2	50.00%
MAT-SU	6	13	0	19	11	36.67%
MULTIPLE	6	11	1	18	5	21.74%
NOME	2	1	0	3	3	50.00%
SITKA	1	2	0	3	2	40.00%
TOTAL	35	140	11	186	95	33.81%

In Table 1 and Table 2, "contact made" means that the interviewer had some contact with the potential respondent, the potential respondent did not refuse to be interviewed, yet no interview was completed. This includes instances where a message was left but the surveyor's call was not returned; the potential respondent asked to be called back at a more convenient time or promised to call the interviewer back at a more convenient time and no subsequent contact occurred; or the potential respondent failed to appear for a scheduled face-to-face interview. The "multiple" district includes only cases where the family lived in more than one district during the sample period.

The target response rate for the survey was 70%. The actual average response rate of approximately 33% fell well below the target because of the constraints of time.

Some leaver studies in other states, through repeated and costly attempts to contact respondents, had response rates that substantially exceeded those in this study. Given the limited resources available and the necessity of completing the survey in six weeks, the response rate achieved was acceptable. Because the response rate was below target, tests of generalizability were conducted to establish that the surveyed cases were representative of the sample population.

Tests of Generalizability

A series of statistical tests was conducted to assess the generalizability of the sample. The working hypothesis was that the sample was not representative of the general population of individuals who had left the public assistance rolls. Factors included in the analysis were geographic representation, ethnic distribution, and responder vs. non-responder.

The results of these tests indicate that the sample was representative of the general population despite the less-than-expected response rate.

Merging of Administrative and Survey Data Sets

Once the survey was completed and survey data entered into a Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) data set, the data were merged back into the family unit data based on the EIS number that was common to both sets. A schematic showing the methodology for the selection of respondents and a combination of EIS and survey data is shown in Appendix B.

Participation of Native TANF Programs

Tanana Chiefs Conference (TCC) began operating its Native TANF program in October 1998. At that time, TCC took over the administration of 417 Temporary Assistance cases. These cases were included in the population from which the survey sample was drawn, and may be included among the survey respondents. These cases represent less than 3% of all cases that received benefits during the two year study period and less than 4% of all leavers. All of these cases received benefits from the state Temporary Assistance program during the first nine months of the sample period. Their inclusion in the sample is not expected to significantly affect the results of this study.

Face-to-Face Interview or Debriefing

A telephone survey contractor conducted 599 of the 694 interviews completed for the survey. University staff conducted the remaining 95 interviews.

The intent of the university-completed subsample was to validate the responses of the general survey population and to assess the level of individual respondents' responses when the personal element was added to the interview. Body language and side talk during face-to-face interviews can convey rich information about the respondent's feelings and beliefs. Whenever possible, the university interviewers completed their interviews face-to-face; 82 of the 98 university-completed interviews were in fact conducted face-to-face. The remaining 16 interviews were conducted telephonically because travel to the respondent's community was impractical or prohibitively expensive.

The face-to-face interviews were held in geographic locations throughout the state. The samples were stratified to assure that a representative number of interviews was conducted in each of the 13 Division of Public Assistance administrative districts.

Three language barriers arose for the university interviewers: Russian, Spanish, and Laotian. In the first two cases, an interpreter was used. In the third case, no Laotian interpreter could be located and the interview with that individual was not completed.

The research team held a post-survey debriefing session with the university interviewers in order to get a qualitative feel for the findings and the experience of talking with Temporary Assistance leavers regarding the myriad of very personal issues addressed in the interviews. All of the interviewers indicated that they had had a very positive experience and that the face-to-face process added depth to the responses of the interviewees.

Some interviewers reported that rural and urban respondents differed dramatically in their concerns about their communities and their local needs. However, the interviewers reported that both urban and rural re-

spondents expressed consistent, strong concern about the need for and scarcity of safe, available, and affordable child care.

The interviewers who worked the rural cases reported that rural respondents frequently stated that there are few jobs in their communities and that they do not want to move to find employment. The rural interviewers perceived that rural respondents are also concerned about Temporary Assistance for two reasons. First, many have a number of children and feel that the mothers should be home with the children and not employed outside of the home, regardless of the Temporary Assistance expectations or regulations. Curiously, this attitude was seen to be coupled with the second reason: the frequently expressed sentiment that Temporary Assistance recipients are lazy and just do not want to work. At least a few of these respondents, however, qualified this perception with the belief that, for example, when the local economy is poor due to a poor fishing season, then Temporary Assistance is a positive program that helps families.

Some urban interviewers reported that their respondents believed that there are many available jobs, but that they are either over- or under-qualified for the available employment. These respondents expressed a desire for more training in specialized areas so they could qualify for and maintain better jobs and thereby improve their standard of living. Many of these respondents indicated they have no medical coverage and do not qualify for Medicaid.

When asked to rate the quality of the interviews they conducted, the interviewers rated their personal interactions with the respondents as very positive. Their overall impression was that the level of understanding of the survey questions by the respondents was very high and that the quality of their responses was primarily "excellent" or "good."

This level of understanding and response quality was the expectation of the face-to-face interviewers. The survey team used the face-to-face interview format to check whether the general respondents had a good understanding of the survey questions and that the responses were valid. Responses of the contractor-conducted telephone interviews were comparable to the responses of the university-conducted interviews. This process was able to support the reliability and validity of the survey instrument.

Demographics and Family Characteristics

The study respondents were the individuals designated in Division of Public Assistance Temporary Assistance case records as the primary information contact for the case. The primary information contact is normally the "case name": the adult caretaker who submitted the original application for assistance.

General Respondent Characteristics

The study sample consists of 694 current and former recipients of Temporary Assistance who were randomly selected from a population of 14,235 cases (identified as "leavers") out of a total population of 20,096 cases that received at least one monthly Temporary Assistance grant during October 1997 through September 1999. Figure 1 shows that 71% of all cases in the administrative data set were leavers and 29% were "stayers" who never left the caseload.

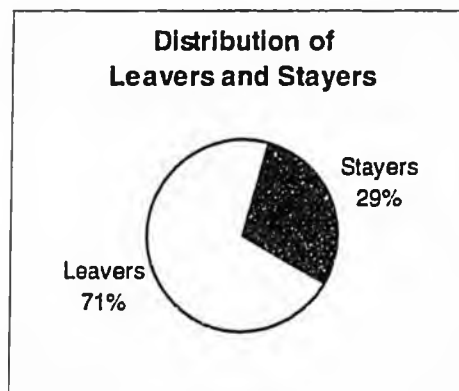


Figure 1

Findings:

- Eighty-eight percent (88%) of recipients who left Temporary Assistance were female.
- The average age of Temporary Assistance leavers was 34 years.
- The typical family included two children.
- Although the proportion of Alaska Native families in the Temporary Assistance caseload (37%) is greater than the proportion of Alaska Natives in the state population, Native families left the caseload at about the same rate as non-Native families.
- Households that had included only one eligible parent during the study period but included a "significant other" at the time of the interview were significantly more likely than similar cases that did not include a significant other to be off Temporary Assistance at the time of the interview.
- Eight out of ten (81%) people who left Temporary Assistance had at least a high school education or equivalent.
- Three out of ten (30%) of the cases that left the Temporary Assistance caseload during the study period returned to the Temporary Assistance rolls at least once during the study period.
- Consistent with the overall geographic distribution of the Temporary Assistance caseload, significantly more respondents with two-parent families lived in rural Alaska (52%) than lived in urban Alaska (20%).
- Over half (51%) of the respondents cited employment as their reason for leaving Temporary Assistance.

Returners and Non-returners

For purposes of this study, there are two subcategories of leavers: returners and non-returners. A "returner" is defined as a leaver who subsequently returned to the Temporary Assistance rolls at least once by November 1999, the most recent month of data that was available at the time the sample was selected. A non-returner is a leaver who did not return to the rolls during the period covered by the data.

The survey sample included 235 returners and 459 non-returners (34% and 66%, respectively- see Figure 2). After child-only cases were removed, the sample population included 3,937 returners and 9,250 non-returners (30% and 70%, respectively- see Figure 3). Thus, returners are somewhat over-represented in the survey sample, probably because non-returners were more difficult for the surveyors to find.

Current Recipient Status and Caseload Churning

Survey respondents were asked whether or not they were currently receiving Temporary Assistance. Twenty-nine percent (29%) of respondents reported that they were recipients at the time of the interview. The interviews were conducted in March, April, and May 2000.

The respondents who reported that they were currently receiving benefits included both returners and non-returners, because returners are defined as leavers who re-entered the caseload no later than November 1999, two months after the last month of the two years of administrative data from which the sample was selected. Eighteen percent (18%) of the cases categorized as non-returners were back on assistance at the time of the interview, while 49% of the

cases categorized as returners were no longer receiving Temporary Assistance.

This phenomenon of caseload "churning" is important and may bear further investigation. DPA officials have long known that many families come and go as their needs and their incomes change, but their patterns of usage have not been investigated in the past and it is unclear how welfare reform has impacted those patterns.

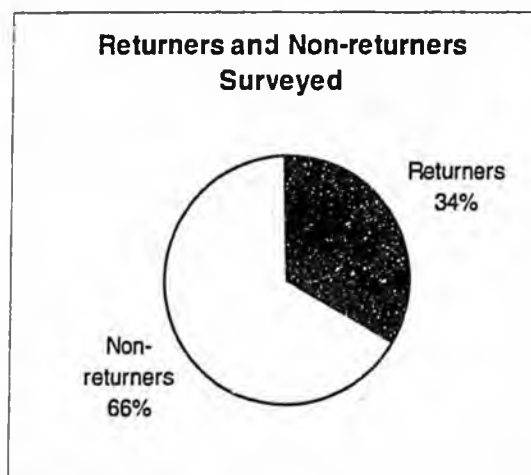


Figure 2

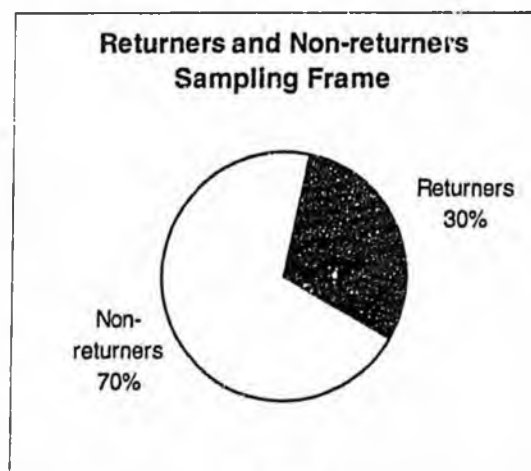


Figure 3

Geographic Distribution

The number of cases selected for the survey was stratified by Division of Public Assistance administrative district to assure that the survey data were representative of the statewide caseload distribution. DPA is organized into 12 administrative districts (see the map below). Figure 4 shows the distribution of the sample.

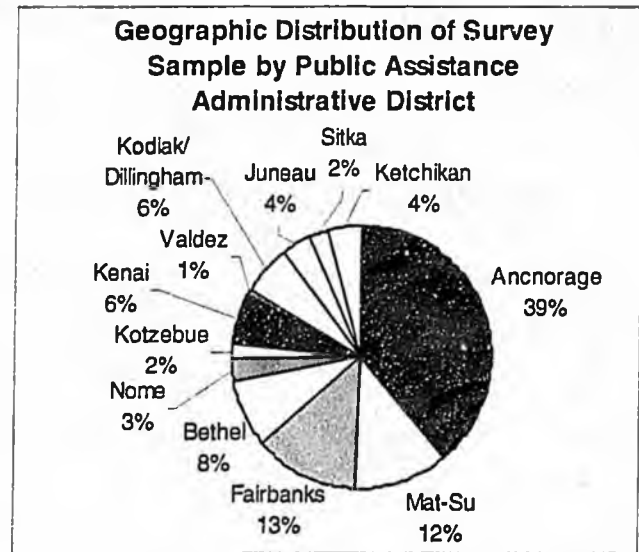
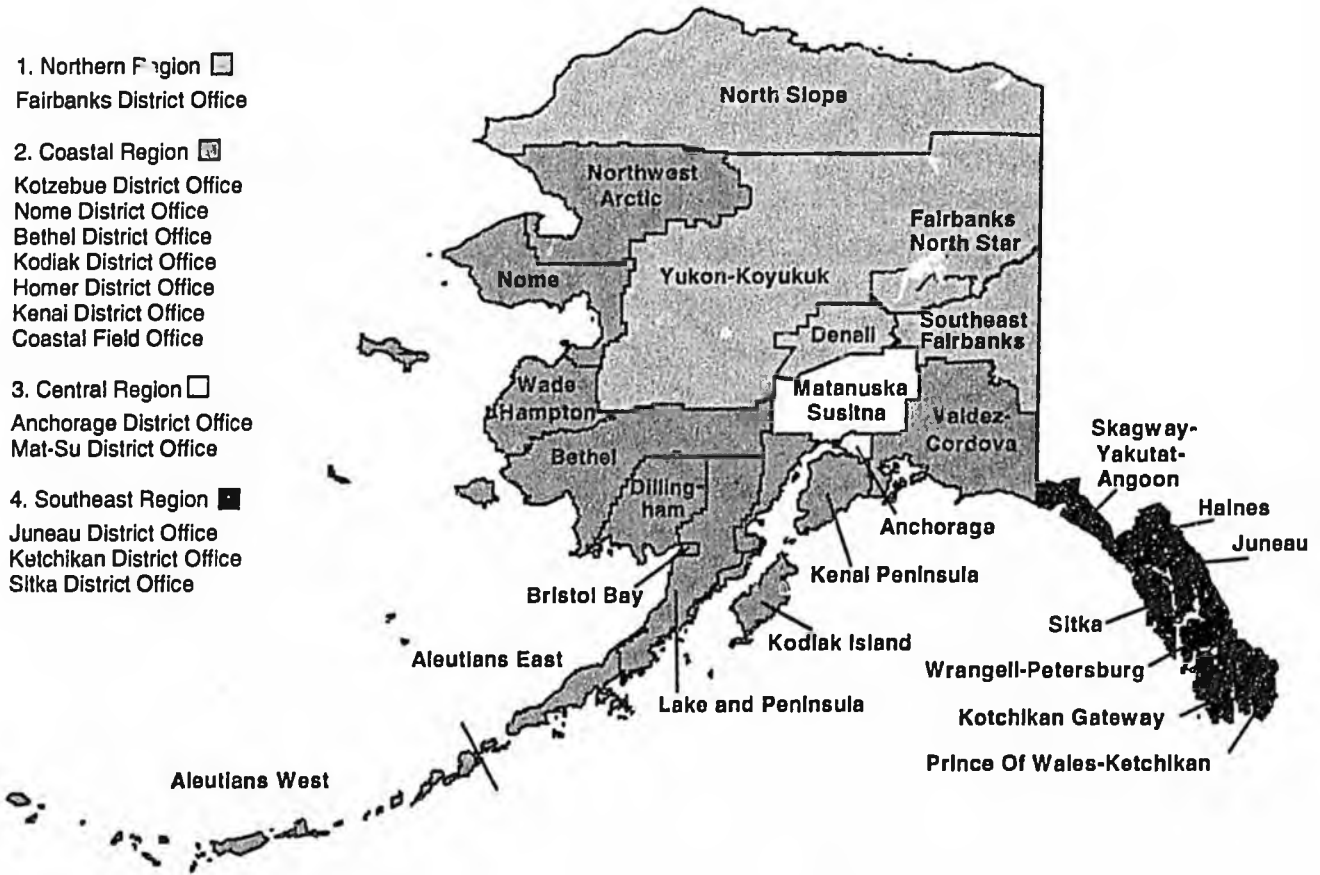


Figure 4

DPA Regions Based on Alaska Boroughs and Census Areas



Urban/Rural Distribution

While there are many questions about the different effects of public assistance programs and welfare reform in rural Alaska, there are no universally accepted criteria to distinguish between rural and urban communities. To facilitate this analysis and to be consistent with the criteria used by the Division of Public Assistance, each community was categorized as either urban or rural according to the Urban, Rural I, and Rural II cities list used by the Food Stamp program.

The Food Stamp program cities list is established under federal regulations, based on market basket studies of food costs throughout Alaska. Food Stamp households in the two rural categories receive a higher level of benefits than urban households of the same size and income level (see Appendix C for the Food Stamp program urban/rural cities list). Rural II households receive a higher Food Stamp benefit than Rural I households.

Only about 3% of Temporary Assistance leavers live in Rural I communities, while about 18% live in Rural II communities. For the purpose of this analysis, Rural I and Rural II communities are combined into a single "rural" category.

The urban/rural distributions of the survey sample and all leavers are shown in Figures 5 and 6. Rural cases are somewhat over-represented in the survey sample, comprising 23% of respondents (vs. 19% of all leavers), apparently because the surveyors were more successful in locating rural leavers.

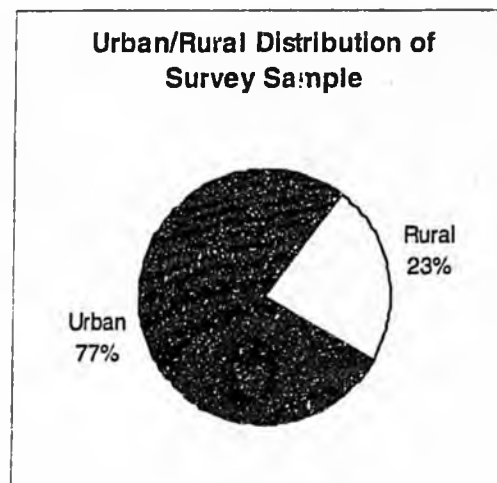


Figure 5

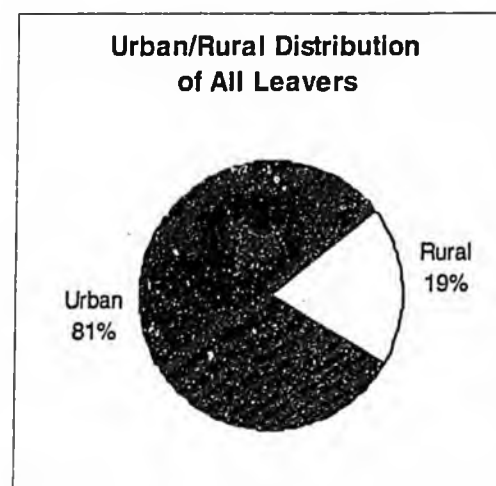


Figure 6

Ethnic Distribution

The ethnic distribution of the survey sample is displayed in Figure 7. The ethnic identity assigned to each case is based on the ethnic code assigned to the survey subject in the Division of Public Assistance administrative record. In general, ethnic identity is self-reported, although in some cases the ethnic identity code may be assigned by the Temporary Assistance caseworker.

The ethnic distribution of the leavers closely resembles that of the caseload as a whole, which includes both leavers and stayers as shown in Figure 8. The different ethnic groups appear to be leaving the Temporary Assistance caseload at about the same rate.

The ethnic distribution of the population of Alaska (shown in Figure 6) is very different from the distribution of Temporary Assistance recipients. Alaska Natives and American Indians represent 16% of the state population, yet 37% of all cases and 39% of surveyed leavers are Alaska Native or American Indian. African Americans are also over-represented in the Temporary Assistance caseload. Conversely, whites are under-represented in the caseload.⁵



Figure 7

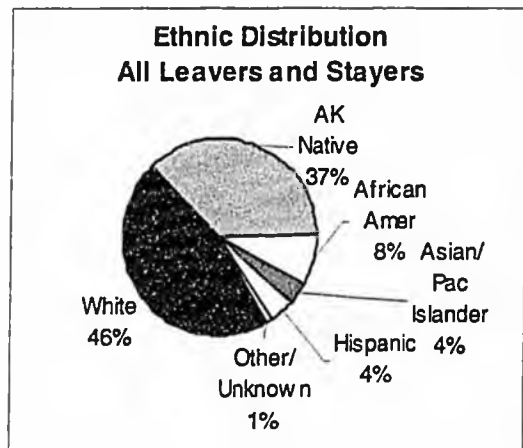


Figure 8

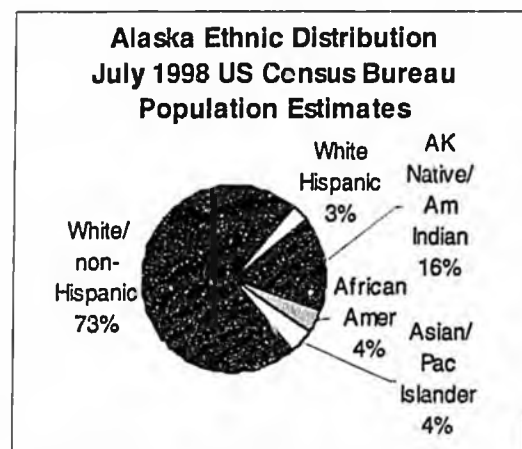


Figure 9

⁵ Population Division, U.S. Census Bureau, 1999. Population Estimates for July 1, 1998 (ST-98-30)

Family Types

Temporary Assistance cases are categorized under program rules into several different family types. Different work requirements, benefit calculation formulas, and time limit rules apply to the different family types. Child-only cases were excluded from the sample selection. Temporary Assistance family types include:

- **One-parent family:** one caretaker (a parent or another close relative) and one or more children.
- **Two-parent family:** two able-bodied parents (married or unmarried) and one or more children in common.
- **Incapacitated:** two parents, where at least one parent is medically unable to work, with one or more children.
- **Third trimester:** pregnant women in their last trimester who have no other children in the home.
- **Child-only:** a family where the child lives with a caretaker relative who is neither needy in her own right nor legally responsible for the support of the child. Child-only cases are commonly established when the child lives with a grandparent or another relative. Child-only cases are also established when the child lives with a parent who receives permanent disability benefits.⁶

Under state and federal law, child-only cases are exempt from time limits on Temporary Assistance benefits. For this reason, child-only cases were not included in the survey. Leaver studies in other states have excluded child-only cases for the same reason.

The distribution of family types in the caseload as a whole, including both leavers and stayers, is shown in Figure 10. Child-only cases constituted about 12% of the cases, one-parent families constituted

about 72%, and two-parent families constituted about 14%. Pregnant women and Incapacitated parent families make up a very small proportion of the cases.

Figure 11 illustrates the distribution of family types in the survey sample. This distribution is based on the aggregated distribution of family types for the 694 surveyed cases for each month in the study period.

As the distribution in Figure 11 shows, about 1% of the surveyed cases were child-only cases. These cases were child-only for at least one month during the study period, but also received benefits as another family type at some point during the study period, and were therefore included in the study.

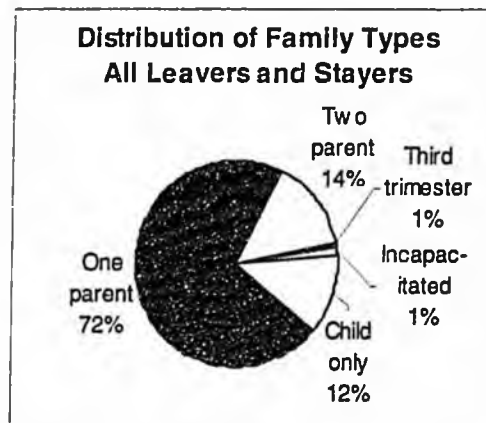


Figure 10

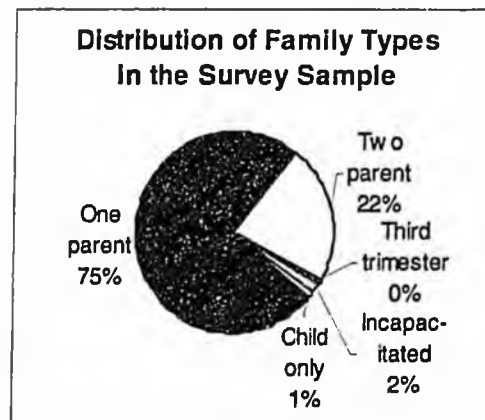


Figure 11

⁶ Alaska Administrative Code Title 7, Chapter 45.

Figure 12 shows that the distribution of "stayers" (cases that did not leave the caseload during the study period) is remarkably different from the distribution of leavers, and from all families in the caseload. Child-only cases represent 20% of the stayer cases, as might be predicted by the nature of most of these cases, which are made up of children living with either a disabled parent or a non-needy relative who is not a parent.

Figure 13 compares family types for leavers and stayers. Twelve percent (12%) of all leavers and stayers were child-only cases, while 8% of all leaver cases were child-only. "Pure" child-only cases (cases that were child-only for every month in the data set) were removed from the survey sample.

Two-parent families were more likely to be leavers than one-parent families. Two-parent families constituted 14% of all cases, but constituted 18% of the leavers and only 9% of the stayers in the sample period data. One-parent families represented 71% of all cases, 72% of the leavers, and 69% of the stayers. These relationships are shown in Figure 13.

Over time, the higher proportion of leavers among two-parent families would be expected to reduce the proportion of two-parent families in the Temporary Assistance caseload, yet Division of Public Assistance caseload records show no such trend. The two-parent caseload percentage fluctuated seasonally, but continued to average about 14% since the implementation of welfare reform. (Caseload spreadsheet provided by the Division of Public Assistance, August 21, 2000.)

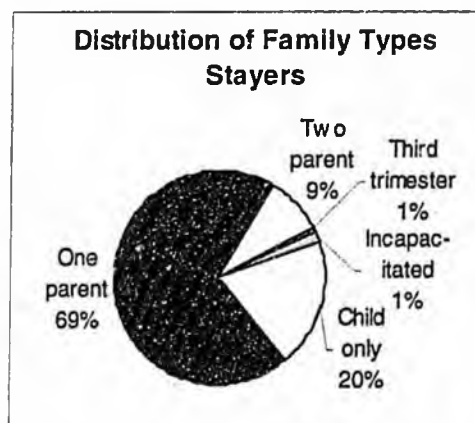


Figure 12

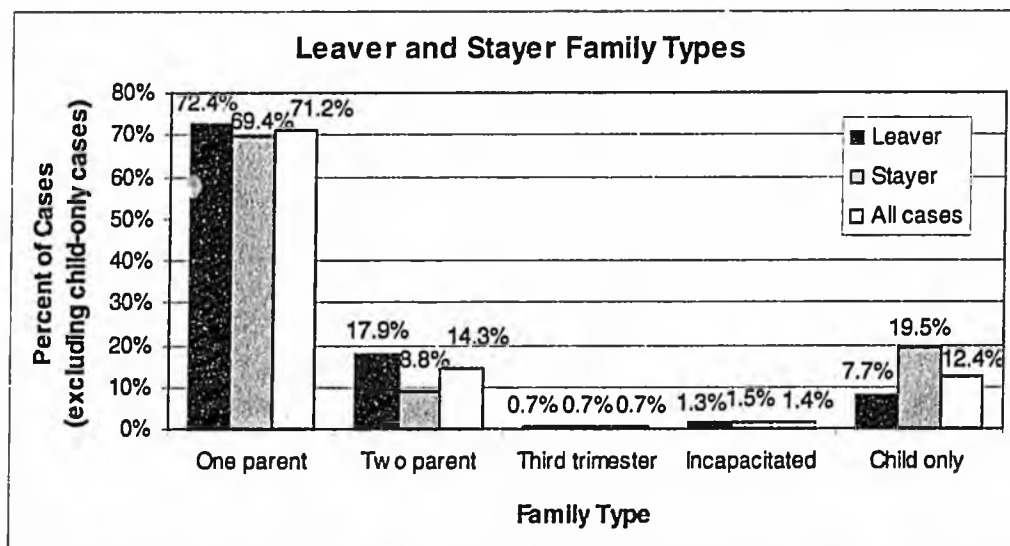


Figure 13

Caseloads have been declining in remarkably different patterns, illustrating the greater variability of the two-parent caseload. Figure 14 illustrates the rates of change in the one-parent and two-parent caseloads since January 1998, showing the downward trends of both caseloads, and the marked seasonal fluctuations in the two-parent caseload.

The data point toward a higher degree of seasonally episodic participation in the two-parent caseload, with a greater proportion of two-parent families leaving the caseload during the summer and fall than single parents, but being replaced during winter and spring at a rate that largely offsets the effect of their higher rate of departure.

Alaska law provides that Temporary Assistance payments to two-parent families are reduced by 50% during the months of July, August, and September; this reduction may discourage some families from participating during the summer. Seasonal fluctuations in the job market are also a likely factor. Additional research in this area may lead to a better understanding of this phenomenon and help policymakers identify strategies to reduce the winter rises in the two-parent caseload.

Reasons for Leaving the Caseload

The question of why families leave the Temporary Assistance program seems straightforward, but is in fact quite complex.

Division of Public Assistance administrative records simply do not provide enough information to address the issue. Case closures are accomplished by the DPA information system, which includes a data field for entry of a code that indicates the reason for every case closure. However, the reason recorded in the administrative record often does not capture the actual circumstances under which a family left the rolls.

The Temporary Assistance program requires recipients to send in a written report of income, changes in the household, and other information related to eligibility. A recipient who has become employed and no longer wants to receive assistance may simply decide not to send in the monthly report form. Many cases are closed for administrative reasons, such as failure to complete the required paperwork. In such cases, the actual circumstances and reason for leaving remain unrecorded.

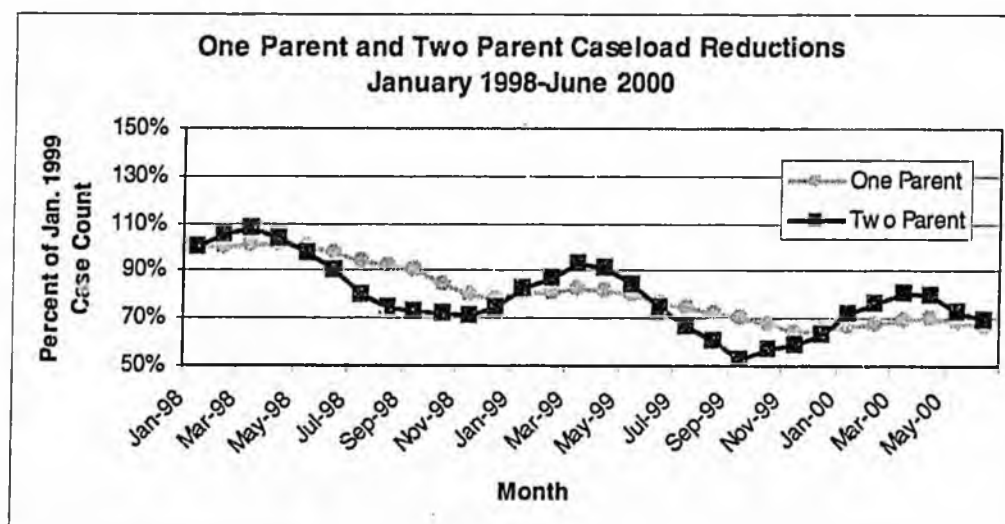


Figure 14

In an attempt to get an accurate understanding of the reasons families leave Temporary Assistance, the survey instrument included an open-ended question that asked why the respondent stopped receiving assistance when their case was last closed. Their responses were analyzed and categorized using Non-numerical Unstructured Data Indexing, Searching, and Theorizing (NUD*IST) software. The results are shown in Figure 15.

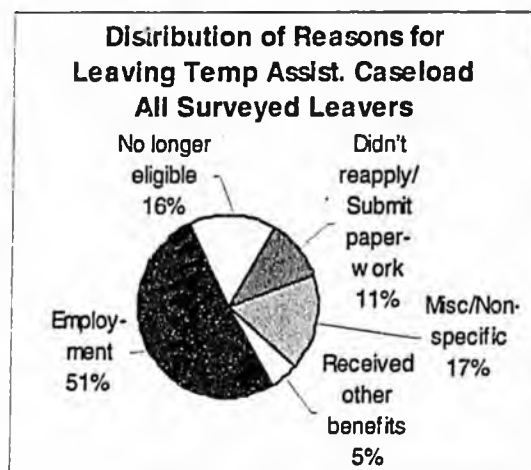


Figure 15

Just over half of the respondents (51%) specified employment as the reason they stopped receiving assistance. Another 27% reported that they left because they were no longer eligible, or because they did not reapply or submit required paperwork. However, these individuals may actually have left because of employment, but

reported accurately that their cases were closed for administrative reasons. The array of circumstances that led to these administrative closures was not successfully captured by the survey. It is likely that a substantial share of the administrative case closures occurred because of employment. Only 5% of the respondents indicated that they stopped receiving assistance due to other benefits, such as unemployment, child support, or Social Security.

Staying off Temporary Assistance

The leavers who were not receiving Temporary Assistance at the time of the interview were asked, in an open-ended question, how they had been able to stay off the program. Their responses are tabulated in Table 3 below.

More than four-fifths of the respondents (81%) identified employment (either the employment of the respondent or of someone else) as a factor in the family's ability to stay off Temporary Assistance. Receipt of other program benefits allowed 11% of the respondents to stay off Temporary Assistance.

Table 3 includes responses from 493 respondents who were not receiving Temporary Assistance at the time of interview.

Table 3. Self-Reported Factors that Allowed Respondents to Stay off Temporary Assistance

Response Category	Number of Responses	Percent of Responses
Employment	413	81%
Receiving other program benefits (i.e. SSI, Unemployment Insurance, Disability benefits, Student financial aid)	56	11%
Help from another person	29	6%
Perseverance/Personal commitment	9	2%
Total	507*	100%

*Note: some respondents reported more than one service

Returning to Temporary Assistance

The leavers who were back on Temporary Assistance at the time of the interview were asked, in an open-ended question, why they had returned to the rolls. Their responses are tabulated in Table 4.

Members of this group most frequently cited lack of employment as the reason for their return to the caseload. Interestingly, the proportion of current recipients who cited lack of employment was much lower,

at 31%, than the proportion of non-recipients (81%) who cited employment as key to their staying off assistance. Instead, the recipient group cited a range of issues. This points to the complexity of the personal and family issues that can result in leavers' return to the caseload. Additional, more detailed research in this area may lead to a better understanding these dynamics.

Table 4 includes responses from the 201 respondents who were receiving Temporary Assistance at the time of the interview.

Table 4. Self-Reported Factors that Caused Respondents to Return to Temporary Assistance

Response Category	Number of Responses	Percent of Responses
Lack of employment	63	31%
General/Nonspecific reasons, e.g., I needed help	51	25%
Health/disability issues	32	15%
Personal issues, e.g., divorce, separation, family problems	21	10%
Issues involving children	20	10%
Pregnancy	6	3%
Education	6	3%
Seasonal employment	6	3%
Total	205*	100%

*Note: some respondents reported multiple factors that allowed them to stay off Temporary Assistance.

Employment and Earned Income Opportunities

Employment

Ending dependence by promoting work is a specified goal of the federal welfare reform legislation and the Alaska Temporary Assistance program. Several states have reported that most families that left the caseload were employed at some time after they left assistance, and that many of these families worked at low-wage jobs. This study shows that many Alaskans who left the Temporary Assistance program were gainfully employed. However, Figure 16 shows that 13% of the respondents reported being permanently disabled or unable to work for health reasons.

Employment Status During the Sample Period

Survey participants were asked to report about their employment and earnings during each quarter in 1998 and 1999. The employment data were recorded whether or not the respondent was receiving Temporary Assistance during the quarter.

Sixty-six percent (66%) of the respondents were employed at some time during 1999, and 59% were employed at some time in 1998. On average, respondents who worked in 1998 or 1999 worked a total of 4.7 quarters over the two-year period.

Findings:

- Almost two-thirds (65%) of all respondents were employed at the time of the interview.
- Three-quarters (75%) of the respondents who were off Temporary Assistance at the time of the interview were employed.
- Three in ten (27%) of the respondents were back on Temporary Assistance at the time they were interviewed.
- Thirty-eight percent (38%) of the respondents who were back on Temporary Assistance at the time of the interview were employed.
- The average wage for people interviewed who were working was \$9.73 per hour in 1998 and \$10.52 per hour in 1999.
- Respondents with a high school diploma or equivalent were significantly more likely to be employed and off Temporary Assistance than those with less education.
- Health problems, disabilities, and problems with child care were the most frequently mentioned challenges to employment.

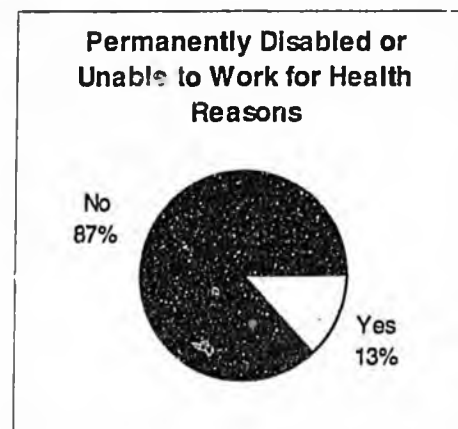


Figure 16

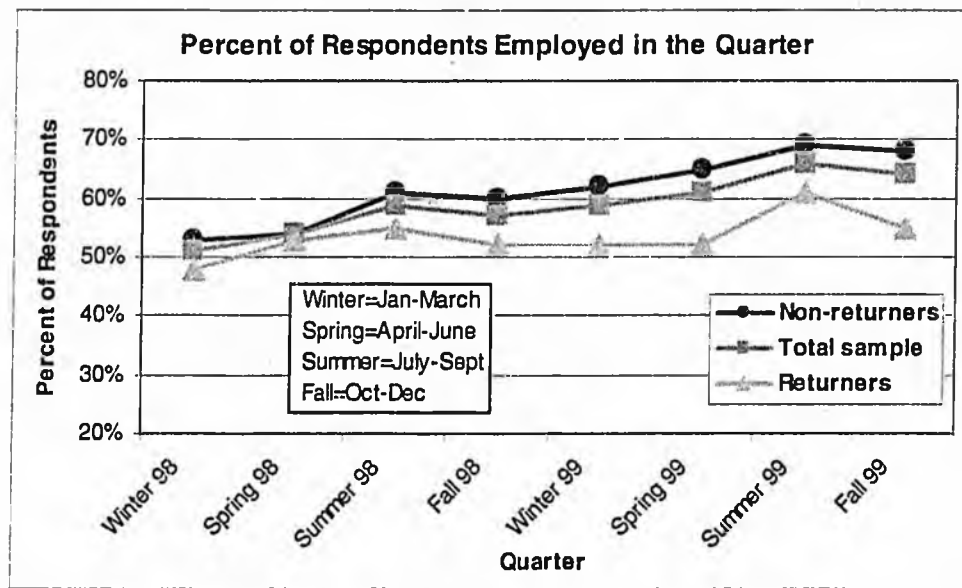


Figure 17

Figure 17 shows the employment trend over the eight quarters from winter 1998 through fall 1999, including a breakdown of returners and non-returners. The employment rates of non-returners were consistently higher than the employment rates of returners. Rates for non-returners increased from 53% in the first quarter of 1998 to 65% in the last quarter of 1999. The employment rates of returners also increased by a smaller percentage, from 48% to 55% over the two-year period.

Current Employment and Recipient Status

The survey sample included only recipients who left the Temporary Assistance caseload in the 24 months ending in September 1999. Interviews were conducted in March, April, and May 2000. To get an indication of their current situation, respondents were also asked about their employment status and their Temporary Assistance recipient status at the time of the interview. However, some refused to disclose their employment status. This analysis is based on 610 complete responses given by 694 survey participants.

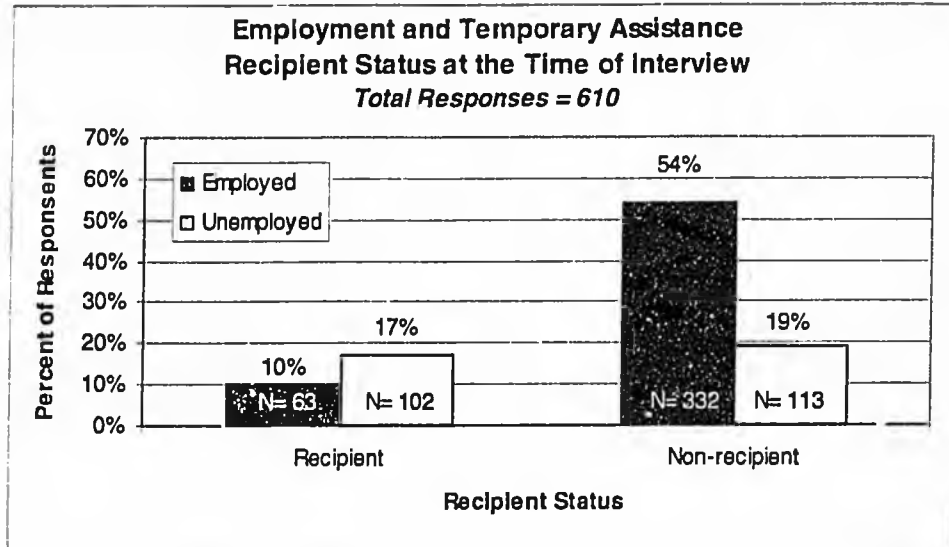


Figure 18

Figure 18 shows the distribution of survey respondents relative to their employment and Temporary Assistance status. Respondents who were employed at the time of the interview were significantly more likely to not be current recipients of Temporary Assistance benefits (chi-square=70, df=1, $p < .000$). Fifty-four percent (54%) of all respondents were employed and not receiving Temporary Assistance benefits at the time of the interview. Nineteen percent (19%) were unemployed and not receiving Temporary Assistance benefits at the time of the interview. Three-quarters (75%) of the respondents who were off Temporary Assistance at the time of the interview were currently employed.

Ten percent (10%) were both employed and receiving Temporary Assistance benefits at the time of the interview. Seventeen percent (17%) were unemployed and current Temporary Assistance recipients at the time of the interview.

Employers, Types of Work, Job Permanence, and Hours Worked

Figure 19 shows the distribution of types of employers among respondents who were employed in 1998 or 1999. The majority of respondents who worked in 1998 and 1999 were employed in the private, for-profit sector of the labor market. Government constituted the second largest category of employers. Only 6% of respondents who worked in 1998 or 1999 reported being self-employed. Self-employed respondents worked in a broad variety of enterprises.

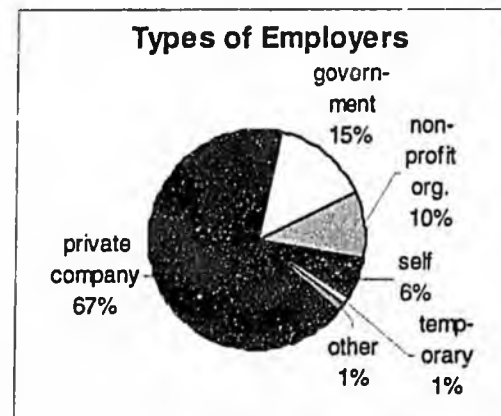


Figure 19

As shown in Figure 20, most respondents who reported employment in 1998 or 1999 worked in unskilled jobs (29%), construction or trades (18%), professional or technical jobs (9%), or commercial fishing or farming (8%).

The permanence of employment placements was related to the respondents' ability to stay off Temporary Assistance. Returners were more likely to hold temporary or seasonal jobs than non-returners (chi-

square=108, df=2, p<. 0001). Figure 21 shows the distribution of permanent, seasonal, and temporary work, broken down by returners and non-returners. Eighty-one percent (81%) of the non-returners held permanent jobs, but only 64% of the returners held permanent jobs. The majority of respondents who worked in 1998 or 1999 reported working in permanent jobs, with a small group working in temporary or seasonal employment.

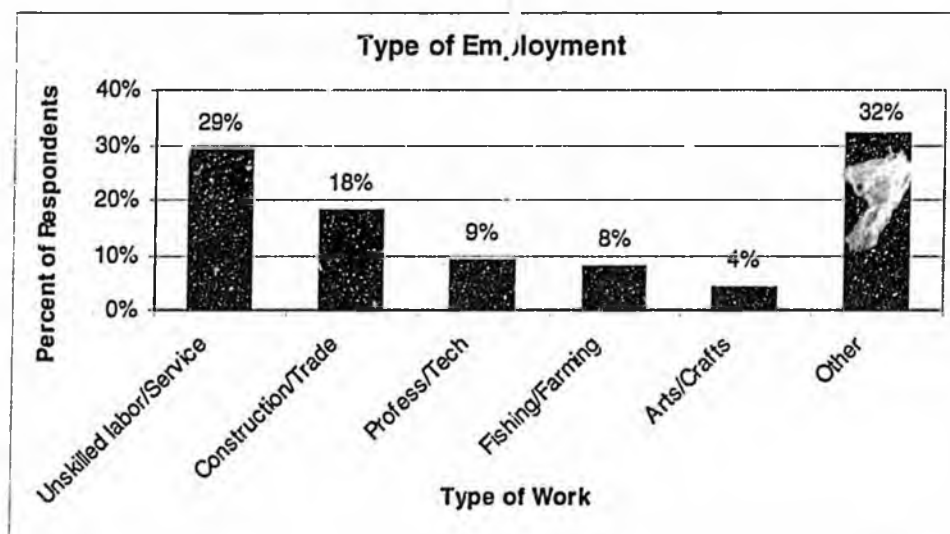


Figure 20

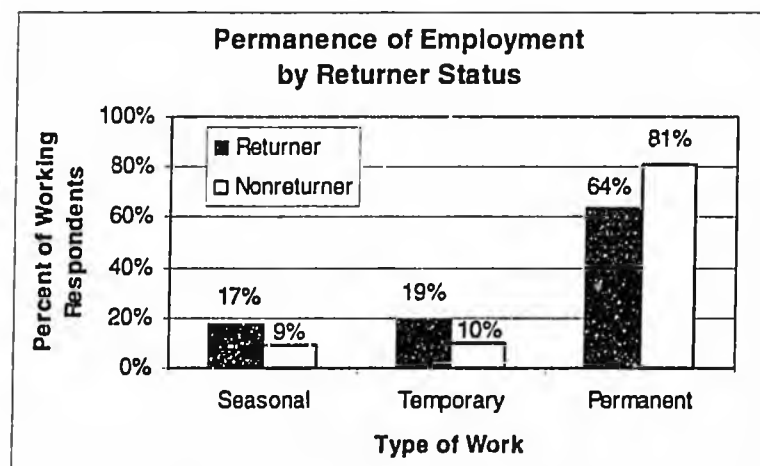


Figure 21

Of the seasonal workers, more people were employed during the summer months. Sixteen percent (16%) of respondents reported having seasonal employment in the summer of 1998, and 15% reported having seasonal employment in the summer of 1999. This seasonal pattern is illustrated in figure 22.

Weekly Hours of Work

Most respondents who worked in 1998 or 1999 were employed for 31 to 40 hours a week, with 32% reporting working over 40 hours per week. Work patterns differed between returners and non-returners. Non-returners worked significantly more hours per week (chi-square=62, df=4, p<.0001). Figure 23 shows the rates of hourly employment by returner status.

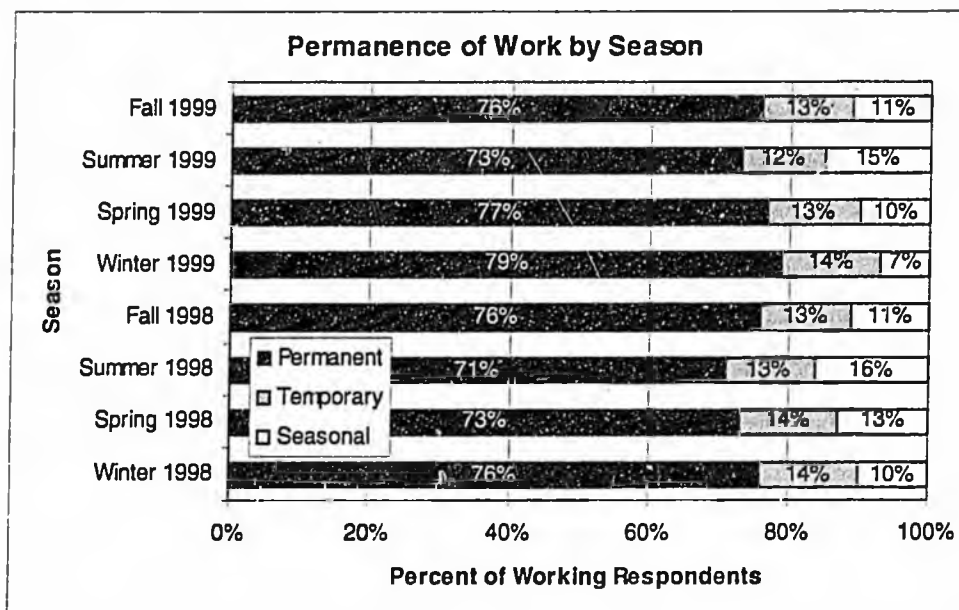


Figure 22

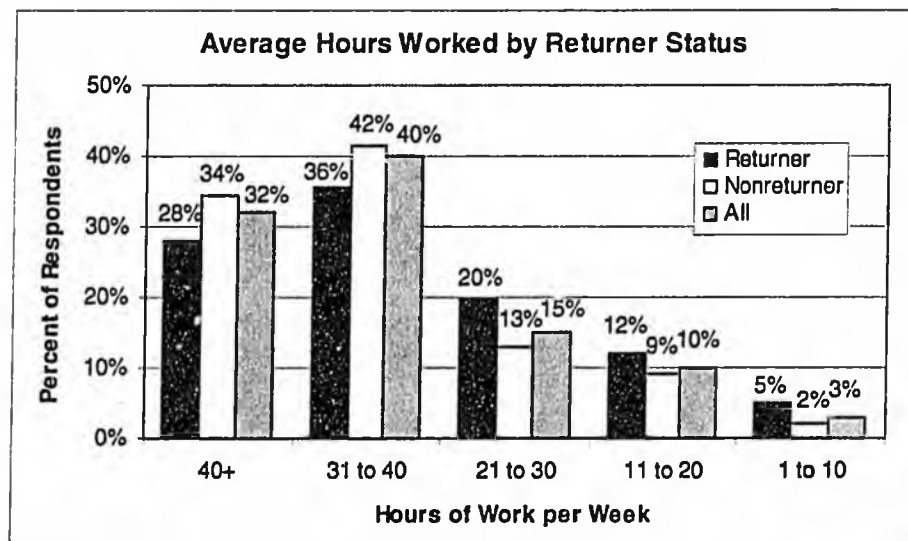


Figure 23

Weekly hours of employment for respondents who worked in 1998 or 1999 did not fluctuate much over the four seasons of the year, with only minor increases of hours worked in the summer and spring quarters

of 1998 and 1999. Figure 24 illustrates this seasonal pattern.

Figure 25 shows the rates of weekly hours of employment by returner status.

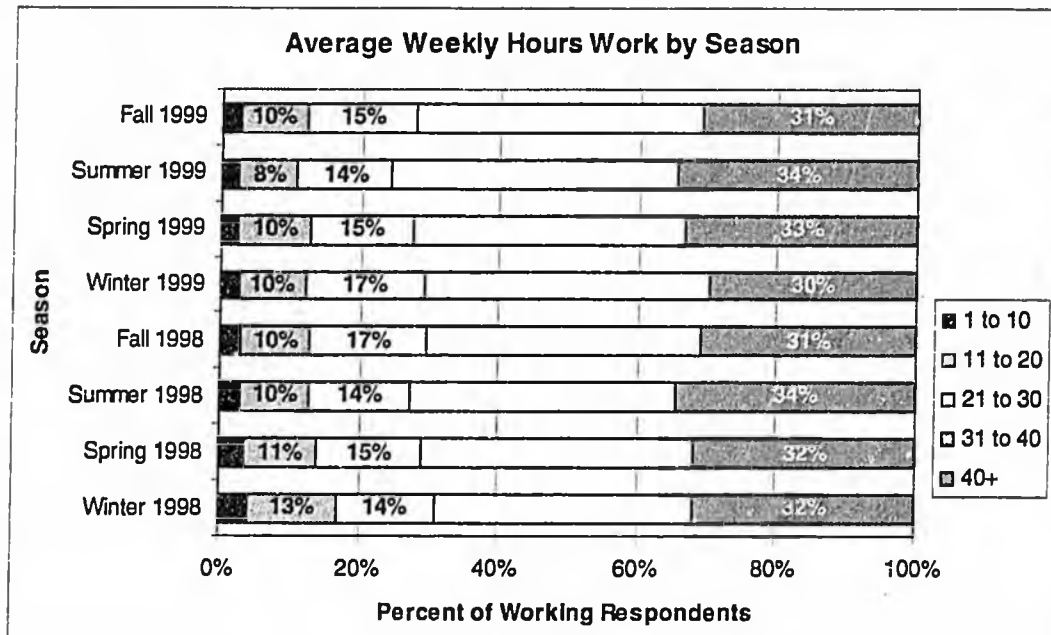


Figure 24

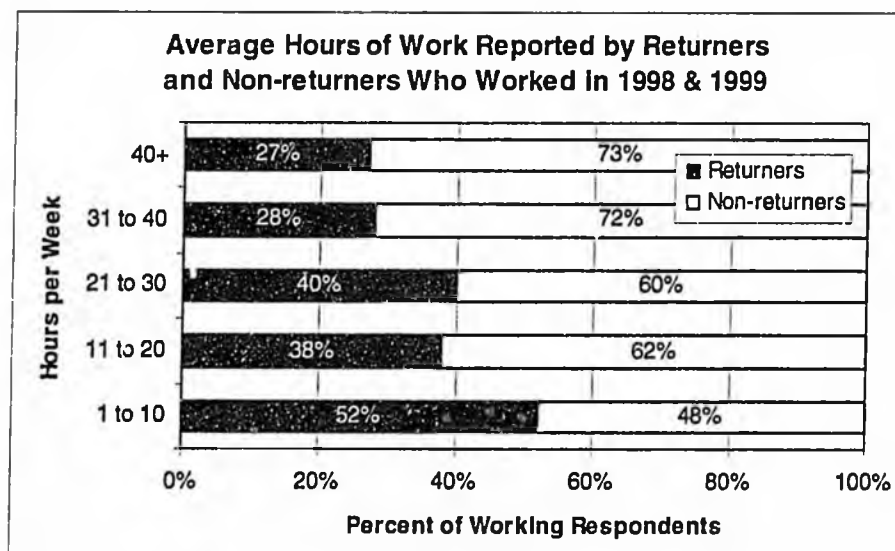


Figure 25

Presence of Second Working Adult

A number of respondents reported that there was another working adult in the household who worked for pay during the eight quarters studied. Figure 26 shows a steady rate of such employment across the quarters: 35% to 42% of all respondents had another adult in the family who was

employed in at least one of the eight quarters studied. The presence of a second working adult may be an important factor in keeping people off Temporary Assistance. Non-returners (41%) were more likely to have had an additional working adult in the home than returners were (31%). Additional research in this area may yield better understanding of the role of additional workers in the home.

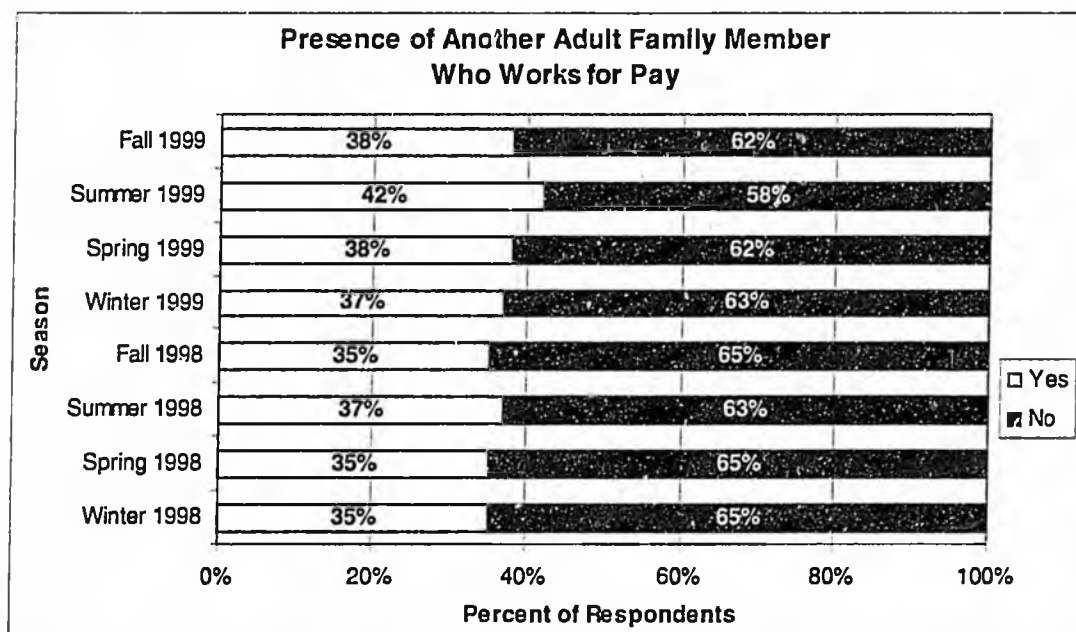


Figure 26

Current Status and Presence of a Significant Other in One-Parent Families

Thirty-four percent (34%) of the respondents who had one-parent cases during the study period reported the presence of a "significant other" adult in their household at the time of the interview. Respondents were asked to describe in their own words

their relationship to the members of their household. For the purposes of this study, a significant other is a household member identified as a spouse, boyfriend, girlfriend, fiancée, or another non-related adult who might be a domestic partner of the respondents. Figure 27 lists the categories and shows the proportional distribution of the types of adult family members who were considered to be significant others.

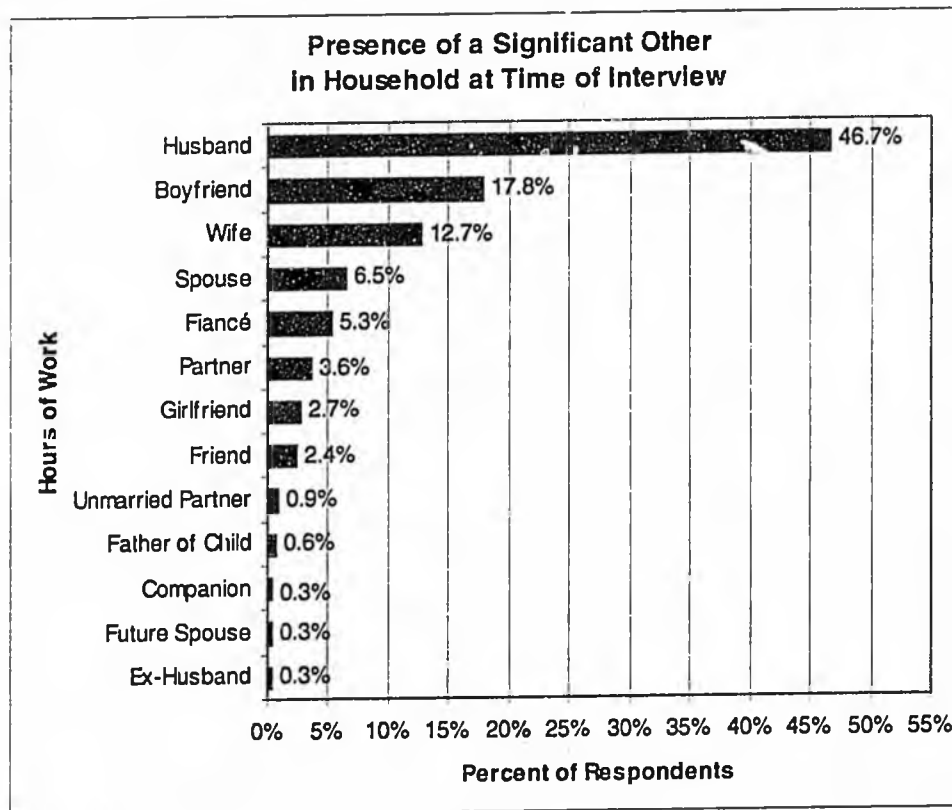


Figure 27

Figure 28 shows the distribution of cases with a significant other in the household, broken down by family type.

Households that had included only one eligible parent during the study period but included a "significant other" at the time of the interview were significantly more likely

than similar cases that did not include a significant other to be off Temporary Assistance at the time of the interview (chi-square=13.42, df. =3, p<004). Figure 29 shows the percentage of one-parent respondents by Temporary Assistance recipient and employment status.

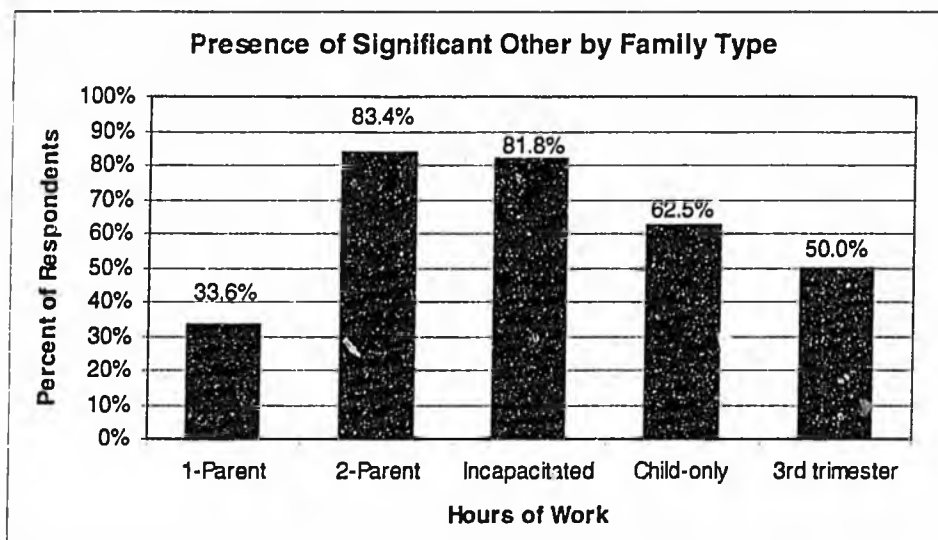


Figure 28

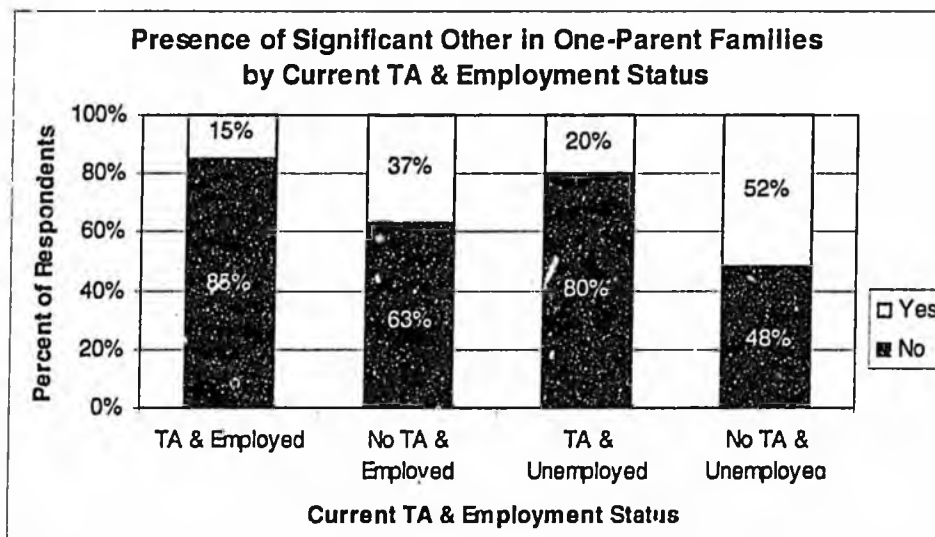


Figure 29

Periods of Unemployment

There remain many open questions about the impacts of Alaska's seasonal economy and subsistence activities on its low-income population.

Respondents who were employed at the time of the interview, or reported working in 1998 or 1999, were asked to recount the longest period of unemployment they experienced in 1999. Thirty-four percent (34%) reported that they were employed for the whole year, while the remaining 66% were unemployed for an average of 24 weeks, with the median period of unemployment at 19 weeks. Respondents who reported having been unemployed may or may not have been Temporary Assistance recipients during the unemployment period.

Wage Levels

Earned income is a fundamental indicator of family independence and well-being. The level of earnings and opportunities for promotion available from employers

contribute substantially to the ability of families to leave Temporary Assistance and remain financially independent.

A small number of respondents reported very high hourly earnings (as high as \$100 per hour in one instance). In the analyses presented in this section, reported wages of \$50 per hour or more were excluded from the distributions because they were outliers that would otherwise artificially overstate the typical range of wage levels in the sample. Figure 30 shows the quarterly mean hourly wage levels of the respondents who worked during the quarter.

The mean hourly wage of non-returners was significantly higher between 1998 and 1999 than the mean hourly wage of returners. Non-returners had an increase in their hourly wages over the two-year period.

The average hourly wage of respondents was \$9.73 per hour in 1998 (SD=4.25) and \$10.52 per hour in 1999 (SD=4.72). Wages varied considerably, with the peak average wage of \$10.85 per hour earned in the summer quarter of 1999.

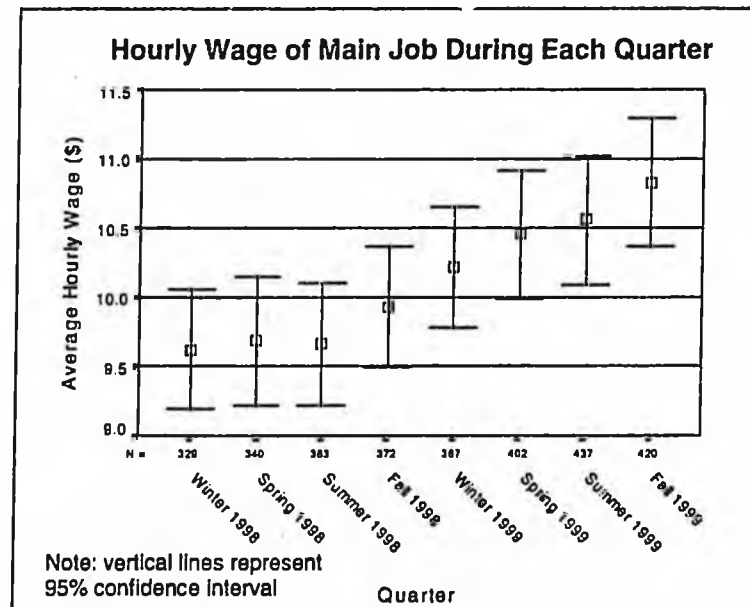


Figure 30

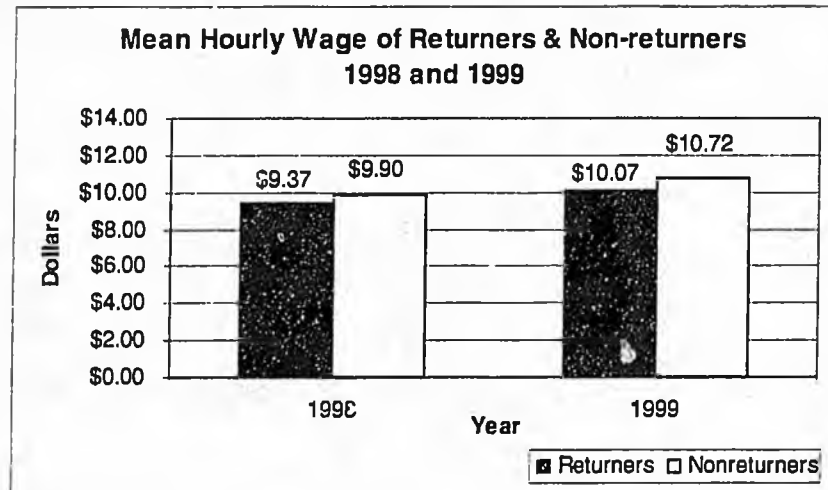


Figure 31

Returners had lower hourly wages than non-returners. Over the two years studied, the returners had a mean hourly wage of \$9.74 (SD= 4.04), while the non-returners had a mean hourly wage of \$10.34/hour (SD=4.72).

Figure 31 compares the average wages of returners and non-returners for the two years studied.

Job Promotion and Pay Increases

Some respondents who worked in 1998 or 1999 or were employed at the time of the interview reported that their jobs provide opportunities for advancement. Forty-three percent (43%) said their most recent jobs afforded opportunities for promotion and 39% reported that they had received a promotion. Forty-four percent (44%) indicated they had received at least one pay increase in their most recent job.

Educational Background

Educational background has been shown many times to be an important predictor of

employment success. The entry-level job market generally expects workers to have successfully completed a minimum of a high school education with literacy and basic math skills.

Most (62%) of the respondents had the equivalent of a high school diploma, with 12 or more years of education (minimum=0, maximum=18, SD=2 years). Half of the respondents who did not have high school diplomas had completed their GED. Thirty-seven percent (37%) of those without a diploma or GED reported they were currently working on one. These data are displayed in Figure 32.

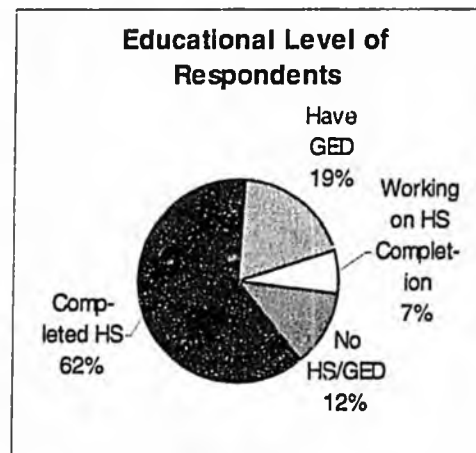


Figure 32

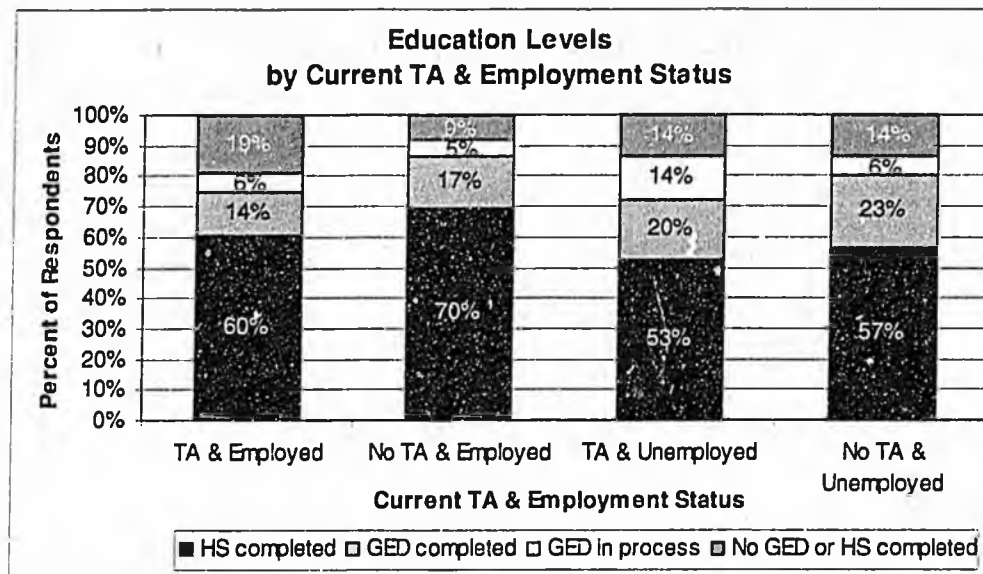


Figure 33

The education of respondents was related significantly to their recipient status and employment status at the time of the interview (chi-square=23.41, df=9, p<.005). Figure 33 shows that 74% of respondents who were back on Temporary Assistance and employed at the time of the interview had the equivalent of a high school education (high school diploma or GED). Eighty-seven percent (87%) of employed non-Temporary Assistance recipients had a high school equivalent education. Seventy-three percent (73%) of unemployed Temporary Assistance recipients had a

high school equivalent education, and 80% of unemployed non-Temporary Assistance recipients had completed high school or a GED.

Use of Work-Related Training Services

Table 5 shows a breakdown of work-related training services that respondents reported having used during the past three years.

Table 5. Work-Related Training Services

Service	N	Percent of Responses
Aptitudes / Skills Awareness Training	164	23%
Job Skills Training	223	31%
On-the-Job Training	283	40%
ESL Coursework	26	4%
Trade Apprenticeship	20	3%
Total	716	100%*

*Note: some respondents reported more than one service

Twenty-three percent (23%) of respondents indicated they had taken a workshop or training to help them understand their skills and what kinds of jobs they were best suited for. Returners were significantly more likely to have participated in such a process, with 30% of returners and 20% of non-returners having such training (chi-square=7.46, df=1, p<.006).

Respondents who participated in job skills training were more likely to be on Temporary Assistance at the time of the survey than people who left Temporary Assistance (chi-square=5.37, df=1, p<.02). Twenty-nine percent (29%) of non-returners received job skills training, while 38% of returners participated in job skills training. This suggests that returners were active in obtaining additional help to prepare them for employment success.

Many of the respondents (51%) indicated they had participated in classes that taught them how to look for a job, prepare a resume, or how to behave in job interviews. Of those who had participated in such training, 65% had attended job readiness training provided by the Division of Public assistance or a DPA work services contractor.

Four percent (4%) of respondents reported they had taken English as a Second Language coursework (ESL). Six percent (6%) of the returners had taken ESL, while only 3% of non-returners had taken ESL (chi-square=3.14, df=1, p<.08). Although these numbers are small, they suggest that limited English skills may be related to returner status.

Forty-one percent (41%) of respondents reported they had a job that provided training while they worked. On-the-job training was not related to respondents' status as returners or non-returners to Temporary Assistance.

Job Readiness and Job Advancement

The respondents who were working at the time of the interview or reported that they had worked during the previous two years were asked a series of questions about their most recent job.

Seventy-nine percent (79%) of the respondents who worked in 1998 or 1999 or were employed at the time of the interview reported that they had not received any non-employer, pre-employment vocational education, or training. Most (80%) of these respondents indicated that they had not had the necessary skills when they started their jobs, and 60% reported that they had received on-the-job training. This indicates that the majority of respondents who worked did not possess the skills they needed for the jobs they took and that employers were the primary source for job-specific training.

Promotional opportunities can encourage employment stability and progressive increases in earnings. Forty-three percent (43%) of the respondents who worked in 1998 or 1999 or were employed at the time of the interview reported that their jobs provided opportunities for promotion. Sixty-three percent (63%) of those who reported opportunities for promotion said they would not need additional education or training to be eligible for promotion and 44% reported that their employers offered education or training that could lead to a promotion.

Availability of Jobs

An understanding of the availability of suitable employment (or the lack of it) and recipients' perceptions about the job market is essential to understanding the dynamics of movement from welfare to work.

As Figure 34 demonstrates, most respondents (84%) reported that they believe there are jobs available in their communities that they are qualified for. Respondents who were unemployed at the time of the interview were significantly less likely to believe there were jobs available that they were qualified for (chi-square = 13.58, df=3, p<.004). Eleven percent (11%) of both the employed Temporary Assistance recipients and the employed non-recipients indicated that jobs were not available in their community. Twenty percent (20%) of the unemployed Temporary Assistance recipients and 23% of the unemployed non-recipients indicated that jobs were not

available in their communities for which they were qualified.

Over 40% said jobs were very or fairly easy to find in their community, while 50% indicated jobs were fairly hard or very hard to find.

Most of the people surveyed were satisfied with the quality of jobs available to them in their community. Seventy percent (70%) reported that the available jobs were of average or better quality; with 11% saying the jobs they could get were of very low quality. These data are displayed in Figure 35.

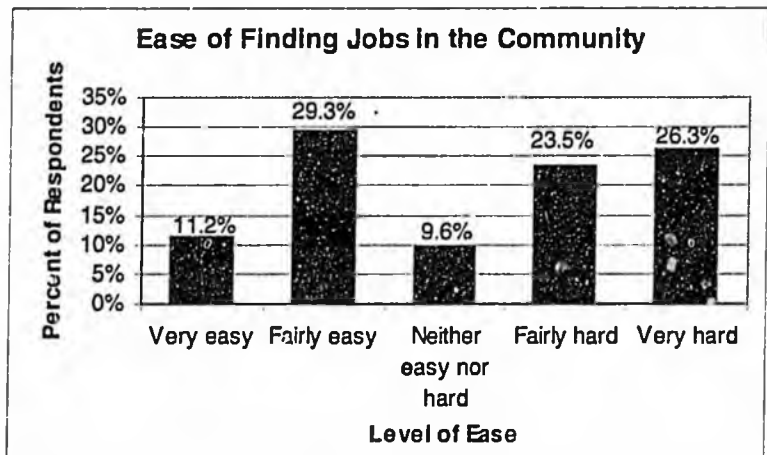


Figure 34

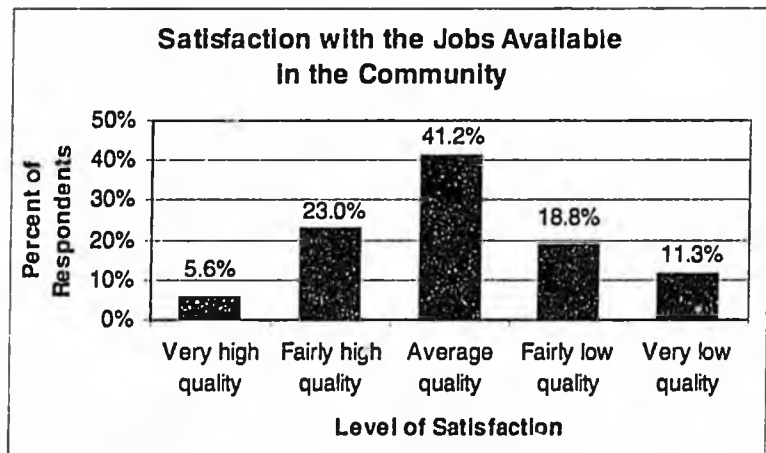


Figure 35

Relocation

When asked to indicate their agreement or disagreement with the statement "I would have to move to another community to get a good job," most respondents indicated they would not need to relocate to find quality employment. Thirty percent (30%) agreed they would have to move, but the remaining respondents had mixed or negative responses to the question. Figure 36 details the responses to this question.

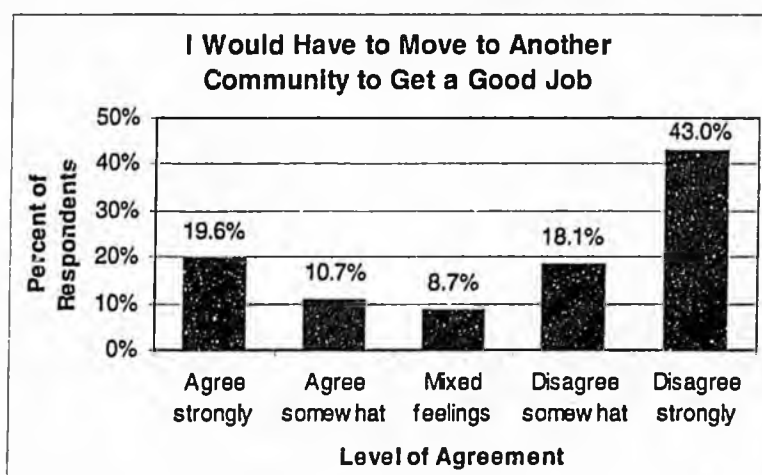


Figure 36

Employment and recipient status at the time of the interview correlated significantly with people's opinions about the need to move to another community to find a good job (chi-square=21.13, df=12, p<.05).

Sixty-seven percent (67%) of respondents who were employed and off Temporary Assistance at the time of the interview and 64% of those who were neither receiving Temporary Assistance nor employed at the time of the interview did not agree that they would have to move to get a good job. Sixty percent (60%) of respondents who were both receiving Temporary Assistance and employed at the time of the interview did not agree that they would need to move to find a good job. However, current Temporary Assistance recipients who were unemployed at the time of the interview were much more likely to think they would have to move to find good employment; only 51% of this group disagreed with the statement that they would have to move to find a good job.

Respondents were also asked whether or not they would be willing to move to another community to get a good job. As figure 37 shows, 55% of respondents indicated that they would be willing to move.

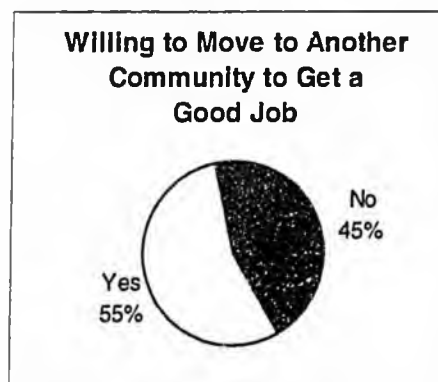


Figure 37

Job Search Strategies

All survey participants, regardless of their Temporary Assistance recipient status, were asked about their use of outside help to find employment. Respondents indicated that they had successfully used a number of different forms of outside help to find work in the past year. The informal assistance of family and friends was the most commonly reported source of job leads (29%). Newspaper advertisements (26%) and the Internet (12%) helped some people find work. Many respondents reported that they found work through agencies, such as the Department of Labor and Workforce Development (18%), the Division of Public Assistance (19%), or Native employment programs (9%).

Challenges to Employment

An understanding of the challenges to employment encountered by Temporary Assistance leavers is fundamental to understanding why some families are able to become or remain self-sufficient while others are not.

Respondents were asked, in an open-ended question, to identify anything that had made it difficult for them to keep or find a job during the previous 12 months. Forty-one percent (41%) identified problems in this area. Some reported more than one problem.

The most commonly identified challenges to employment success were health problems or disability (33%), availability of child care (19%), and transportation problems (17%).

Other challenges cited included personal problems (9%), problems with children (9%), lack of available employment (7%), lack of education or training (7%), pregnancy (5%), and seasonal unavailability of work (2%).

Respondents were also asked to identify family and legal problems that had interfered with their ability to work during the past year. A small number reported such problems. Four percent (4%) cited involvement in child protection, and 4% reported that criminal issues (3% adult and 1% juvenile justice) caused work problems. Three percent (3%) cited child custody disputes, and 5% said other family issues had interfered with their ability to work.

Unearned Income

Cash income from non-employment sources may contribute significantly to a family's total income and ability to leave and stay off the Temporary Assistance rolls. Unearned income that is received on a regular basis may be especially important in meeting a family's ongoing financial needs.

Survey respondents were asked if they had received income from 10 different sources in the past three months. The most commonly reported form of unearned income was child support; 18% of respondents reported that they received an average of \$282 per month in child support payments.

Sixteen percent (16%) reported that they received state Adult Public Assistance (needs-based state payments to low-income aged, blind, or disabled adults), and an average of 1.71 adults in the households reported receiving Adult Public Assistance income (SD=1.18). Many of the households that reported receiving Adult Public Assistance probably included elders and other extended family members who were not Temporary Assistance recipients.

Findings:

- Fewer than one out of five respondents (18%) reported that their household received child support payments. The average payment amount was \$282 per month.
- Twelve percent (12%) of respondents reported that their household paid out child support, averaging \$318 per month.
- Thirty-seven percent (37%) of respondents reported that a household member's 1999 Permanent Fund dividend was garnished.
- Sixteen percent (16%) reported that at least one member of the household received Adult Public Assistance payments.

A total of 15% of respondents received either Social Security benefits (federal payments to insured disabled workers, retirees, and survivors of insured workers) or Supplemental Security Income (needs-based federal benefits for low income elderly and disabled adults and disabled children). Smaller proportions of respondents reported receiving unearned income from various other sources in the past three months. Table 6 summarizes reported income sources.