United States General Accounting Office

GAO

Report to the Chairman, Committee on Finance, U.S. Senate

July 1993

WELFARE TO WORK

States Move Unevenly to Serve Teen Parents in JOBS

149517

GAO/HRD-93-74

GAO

United States
General Accounting Office
Washington, D.C. 20548

Human Resources Division

B-246750

July 7, 1993

The Honorable Daniel Patrick Moynihan
Chairman, Committee on Finance
United States Senate

Dear Mr. Chairman:

In response to your May 1991 request, we reviewed how states are serving teen parents in the Job Opportunities and Basic Skills Training (JOBS) program established by the Family Support Act of 1988 (FSA). As agreed with your office, we examined (1) the extent to which states have enrolled young mothers (ages 16-19) receiving Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) in JOBS[1] and helped them to complete their secondary educations; (2) the approaches states have used to serve teen parents in JOBS; and (3) barriers to teen parents successfully completing their secondary educations while in JOBS.

Scope and Methodology

We randomly sampled teen parents receiving AFDC during a selected month of fiscal year 1992 in 16 states and mailed a questionnaire to their JOBS and AFDC caseworkers to collect data on each teen parent.[2] Teen parents in these states comprised about 70 percent of the nation's AFDC teen parent population. To clarify certain responses, we conducted telephone interviews with caseworkers who responded to our questionnaires for a random sample of the teen parents included in our review. We also conducted telephone interviews with JOBS and teen parent program directors in the 16 states to determine the states' approaches to serving teen parents and to identify and rank the barriers to teen parents' successfully completing their educations. Using the information collected on state approaches, we developed and applied criteria to classify the extent to which each state placed a special emphasis on serving teen parents in JOBS. We also visited JOBS and welfare offices and teen parent programs in Massachusetts, California, and Tennessee, three states that placed different degrees of emphasis on serving teen parents in JOBS. Finally, using logistic regression, we assessed whether state approaches

[1]We define enrollment in JOBS as ever having participated in an approved JOBS activity beyond the required initial assessment of a participant's skills, work experience, needs, and other factors.

[2]The states in our review are California, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Louisiana, Massachusetts, Michigan, Mississippi, Missouri, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Tennessee, Texas, and Wisconsin. While we requested states to provide data for October 1991, not all did so. Eleven states provided data for October 1991, two provided data for November 1991, two for January 1992, and one for February 1992.

were related to enrollment of teen parents in JOBS and their completing high school educations.

We did our work between June 1991 and November 1992 in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards. We did not verify, however, the data collected through the questionnaire or interviews with caseworkers. Appendix I provides a detailed description of our scope and methodology.

Background

While adolescent mothers are a small share of the nation's AFDC caseload, the public costs associated with their dependence on welfare are high. The Center for Population Options estimated that in 1990 the federal government spent $25 billion in AFDC, Medicaid, and Food Stamps to support families begun by teens. Studies have shown that teenage parents have little education and few of the life or parenting skills they need to cope with their difficult circumstances. These and other personal deficits—such as low self-esteem and high rates of educational failure—place them at great risk of long-term welfare dependency.

Because of its focus on helping families avoid long-term welfare dependence, JOBS places greater emphasis on states serving teen parents than past welfare-to-work programs. Unlike past programs, JOBS encourages states to target their resources by spending at least 55 percent of their JOBS funds on long-term and potential long-term AFDC recipients, a group that includes teen parents without high school educations or recent work experience.[3] In addition, states are to provide appropriate educational and training activities and supportive services, such as child care and transportation, for all JOBS participants—including teen parents. JOBS also directs states to require teen parents who have not completed their secondary educations to participate in educational activities directed toward the attainment of a high school diploma or its equivalent. Older teen parents not making good progress in such educational activities may be required instead to participate in training or work-related activities. Finally, while AFDC recipients aged 20 or older who have children under 3 years of age are exempt from participation in JOBS, states are not allowed

[3]To obtain the highest level of federal funding, states must spend at least 55 percent of their JOBS funds on individuals from one or more of the following groups: (1) applicants or recipients who have received AFDC for any 36 months out of the past 5 years; (2) custodial parents under the age of 24 who (a) have not completed or are not enrolled in high school or its equivalent or (b) have had little or no work experience in the preceding year; or (3) members of AFDC families which—by virtue of the age of the youngest child—will become ineligible for AFDC within 2 years. States must also meet minimum levels of participation to obtain the full amount of federal funding to which they are entitled.

to exempt teen parents who have not completed their high school educations for this reason.

Despite its specific requirements, JOBS does accord states substantial flexibility in deciding whether and how teens will be served. Although about $1 billion in federal funds is available for JOBS each year, states must commit their own resources to obtain the federal dollars allocated to them. In recognition of the state financial role in JOBS, FSA generally allows states to operate their programs—including teen parent activities—subject to available state resources. Although JOBS encourages states to meet minimum participation and targeting requirements, states also are not required to serve every eligible AFDC recipient. For example, states are to excuse any AFDC recipient—including a teen parent—from participation if necessary supportive services are unavailable. In addition, no JOBS funds are specifically earmarked for teen parents.

Results in Brief

While JOBS is helping some AFDC teen parents complete their educations, states have moved unevenly to enroll teen parents in the program. Overall in the states we reviewed, about 24 percent of the AFDC teen parents had been enrolled in JOBS. The share of teen parents enrolled in each of these states, however, varied substantially, ranging from 7 to 53 percent. In selecting teen parents for enrollment in JOBS, states did not appear to favor enrolling the easier to serve—those who were exempt from participating but chose to volunteer—over those mandated to participate and considered hardest to serve.

States' approaches to serving teen parents and their overall financial commitment to the JOBS program affected whether a teen parent was enrolled in JOBS. The five states that (1) placed a high priority on serving teen parents, (2) emphasized providing services tailored to teen parents, and (3) directly administered, monitored, or financially supported teen parent services enrolled an average of 34 percent of their teen parents, compared with 20 percent in the other states reviewed. In addition, teen parents living in states making a greater financial commitment to JOBS were more likely to be enrolled than those in other states.

While state actions emerged as key factors affecting teen parents' enrollment in JOBS, inadequate local services and characteristics of the teen parents themselves emerged as key factors affecting their success in school. About one-fifth of the teen parents pursuing a high school education in JOBS had completed their educations and another two-fifths

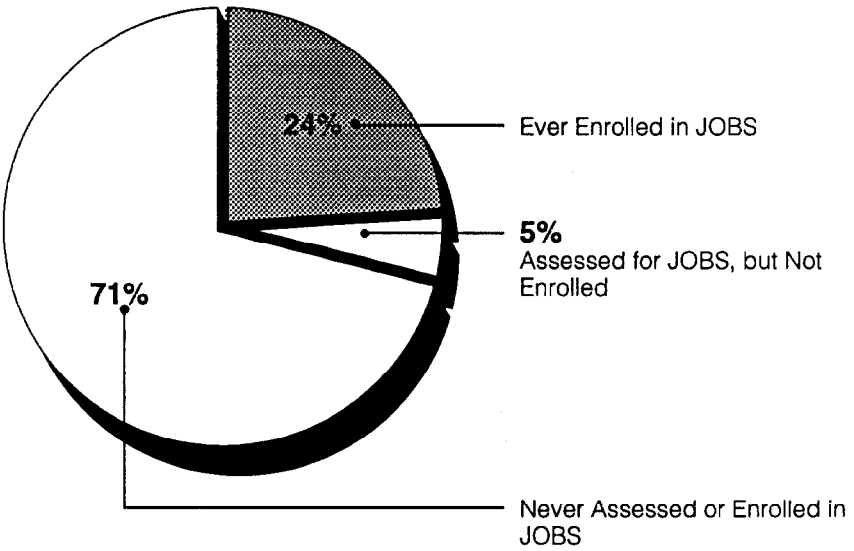
were still attending school. However, many others—up to 35 percent—failed to complete their educations, often due to second pregnancies or personal and family problems. Teen parents who received an enriched service, such as parenting classes, or those who received financial assistance with child care were more likely to complete their educations than those who did not. However, according to program administrators, these services and funding to expand them are in short supply.

About One-Fourth of AFDC Teen Parents Enrolled in JOBS

Since JOBS began,[4] about 24 percent of an estimated 144,000 AFDC teen parents in the 16 states we reviewed had ever been enrolled in JOBS, as shown in figure 1. States did not appear to favor enrolling those considered easier to serve—those who were exempt but volunteered for JOBS—compared with those who were mandated to participate. However, teen parents who were dependents in others' AFDC cases were less likely to be enrolled than those who headed their own AFDC cases. In addition, many teen parents who were mandated to participate also had never been enrolled. Also, up to one in three teen parents exempted from participation in JOBS were incorrectly exempted by the states.

[4]California, Florida, Georgia, Massachusetts, Michigan, New Jersey, Ohio, and Wisconsin began operating JOBS in 1989; the remainder of the states included in our review began JOBS in 1990.

Figure 1: JOBS Enrollment Status of AFDC Teen Parents in 16 States



Little Evidence of States' Creaming Among Teen Parents

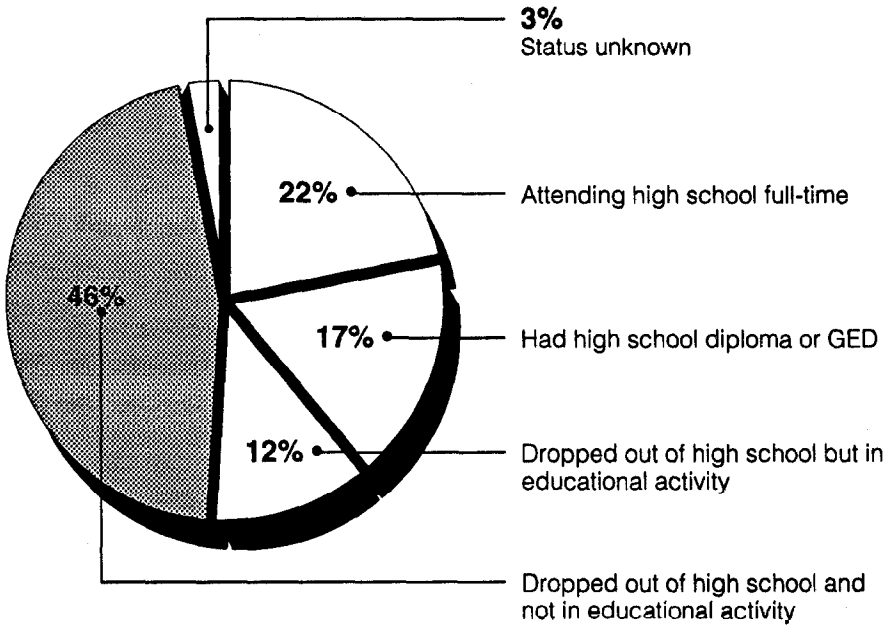
States enrolled both teen parents who were mandated to participate and those who were exempted but chose to volunteer, and did not appear to favor enrolling those considered easier to serve—the volunteers. While AFDC recipients may be classified as mandatory for JOBS, states do not have to enroll them. Within the flexibility accorded by JOBS, states may emphasize volunteers rather than mandatory recipients. In the 16 states we reviewed, about 56 percent of the teen parents who had ever been enrolled in JOBS were mandatory participants, generally because they had no high school diploma and were not enrolled in school.[5] Another 35 percent were volunteers, having been exempted from participation but choosing to enroll. The exemption status of the remaining 9 percent was unknown.

Teen parents considered easier to serve were not more likely to be enrolled in JOBS. Earlier GAO reports have shown that past employment and training programs sometimes selected from among their total pool of eligible persons those whom providers believed might be easiest to serve,

[5]A young mother under the age of 20 is classified as mandatory unless she is exempted from participation. She may be exempted because, among other things, she is a parent or other relative caring for a child under 3 years of age and has a high school education, is ill or incapacitated, or is needed in the home to care for another household member. In addition, she may be, in effect, exempted if it is determined that she has good cause not to participate. This report uses the term exempted to describe any of these situations.

a practice commonly referred to as "creaming."[6] Generally, demographic and other factors that might raise the cost of serving teen parents, lengthen their stay in JOBS, or reduce the probability of obtaining a degree did not affect the likelihood that teens had ever been enrolled in the 16 states.[7] Most important, teen parents who had been classified as mandatory—and thus might be expected to be the hardest to serve—were almost three times more likely to ever have been enrolled compared with those who were classified as exempt. Overall, 46 percent of the teen parents enrolled in JOBS previously had dropped out of high school and were not in any educational activity at the time they were first assessed for JOBS, as shown in figure 2.

Figure 2: Initial Education Status of AFDC Teen Parents Enrolled in JOBS in 16 States



[6]Work and Welfare: Current AFDC Work Programs and Implications for Federal Policy (GAO/HRD-87-34, Jan. 29, 1987) and Job Training Partnership Act: Services and Outcomes for Participants With Differing Needs (GAO/HRD-89-52, June 9, 1989).

[7]As described in appendix I, variables we examined for creaming were a teen parent's length of most recent stay on AFDC, teen parent's age, age of child, mandatory versus voluntary status, ethnicity, and AFDC status—casehead or dependent. Among the variables for which the direction of the relationship indicated creaming, only AFDC status and age of child were statistically significant. AFDC status is discussed in the text that follows. As to age of child, teen parents whose youngest child was aged 1 or older were 1.4 times more likely to be enrolled than those with younger children. Creaming also could occur based on other factors, such as motivation, academic abilities, or work experience, that we were unable to measure.

Hard-To-Identify Dependent Teen Parents Less Likely to Be Enrolled

One group of young mothers—teens receiving benefits as dependents in others' AFDC cases—were, however, less likely to be enrolled than teen parents who headed their own AFDC cases. In many states, a dependent teen parent remains "hidden" in state and local data systems and may not be easily identified for the purposes of enrollment in JOBS. Before JOBS, states generally did not include dependent teen parents in welfare-to-work activities because federal policy exempted AFDC mothers caring for children under the age of 6 from the requirement to participate. Some in the social services community have been concerned that this hard-to-identify group would be overlooked, with few becoming enrolled in JOBS. Controlling for other factors, our analysis showed that dependent teen parents were half as likely to be enrolled in JOBS as teen parents who headed their own AFDC cases in the 16 states.

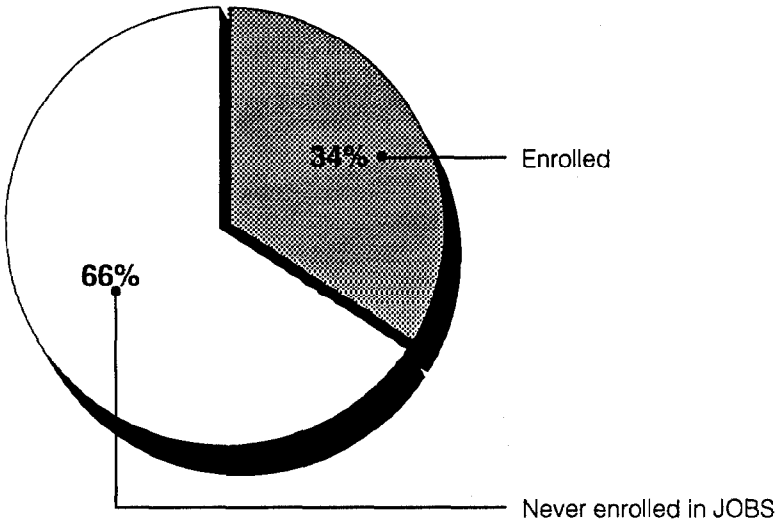
A dependent teen mother, however, may not be overlooked for long, because she may leave her mother's case to begin her own AFDC case.[8] At this point, she becomes easily identifiable in state and local data systems. We believe such a transition may have occurred for a majority of the dependent teen parents in our review. About 66 percent of the teen mothers originally identified by states as dependents in others' AFDC cases were subsequently identified as caseheads when caseworkers responded to our questionnaires 6 months later.

Many Teen Parents Classified as Mandatory Were Not Enrolled

Of the teen parents classified as mandatory, 66 percent had never been enrolled in JOBS, as shown in figure 3. Enrollment of mandatory teen parents is required only to the extent that state resources permit. Of those mandatory teen parents who had never been enrolled, 5 percent had been sanctioned for refusal to participate in JOBS, 84 percent had never been sanctioned, and the sanction status of 10 percent was unknown. We did not determine whether there were any parents who had refused to participate in JOBS and were not sanctioned.

[8]Generally, an individual may not be claimed as a dependent for the purposes of determining AFDC eligibility or benefits if he or she is age 18 or older.

Figure 3: Percent of AFDC Teen Parents Classified as Mandatory Who Had Ever Been Enrolled in JOBS in 16 States



Some Teen Parents Incorrectly Exempted

States have incorrectly exempted some teen parents who should have been mandated to participate in JOBS. Unlike older AFDC parents, teen parents may not be exempted from participation in JOBS because they have a young child unless they have completed their high school educations. However, for about 85 percent of the nearly 90,000 teen parents exempted from participation in the 16 states, the exemption reason identified in our questionnaire was caring for a young child.[9] Based on follow-up interviews with caseworkers responsible for a sample of teen parents included in our review, up to 30 percent of the teen parents that were exempted from participating in JOBS had been inappropriately exempted. For the remaining 70 percent, the teen parents were exempt for one or more allowable reasons, although often these reasons had not been cited in the questionnaire.[10]

[9]The next most frequently cited reason for teen parents being exempted was attending school, for about 5 percent of the cases. Less than 5 percent were exempted for any one of the other allowable exemption reasons, including pregnancy, lack of transportation, lack of child care, and other reasons.

[10]Based on our interviews with caseworkers, for the 70 percent of teen parents appropriately exempted, the following were cited as exemption reasons: 30 percent were attending high school or GED classes, 21 percent had high school or GED diplomas and were caring for a young child, 18 percent were pregnant, 18 percent did not have transportation. For the remaining 14 percent, other reasons, including living too far from JOBS activities and lack of child care, were cited.

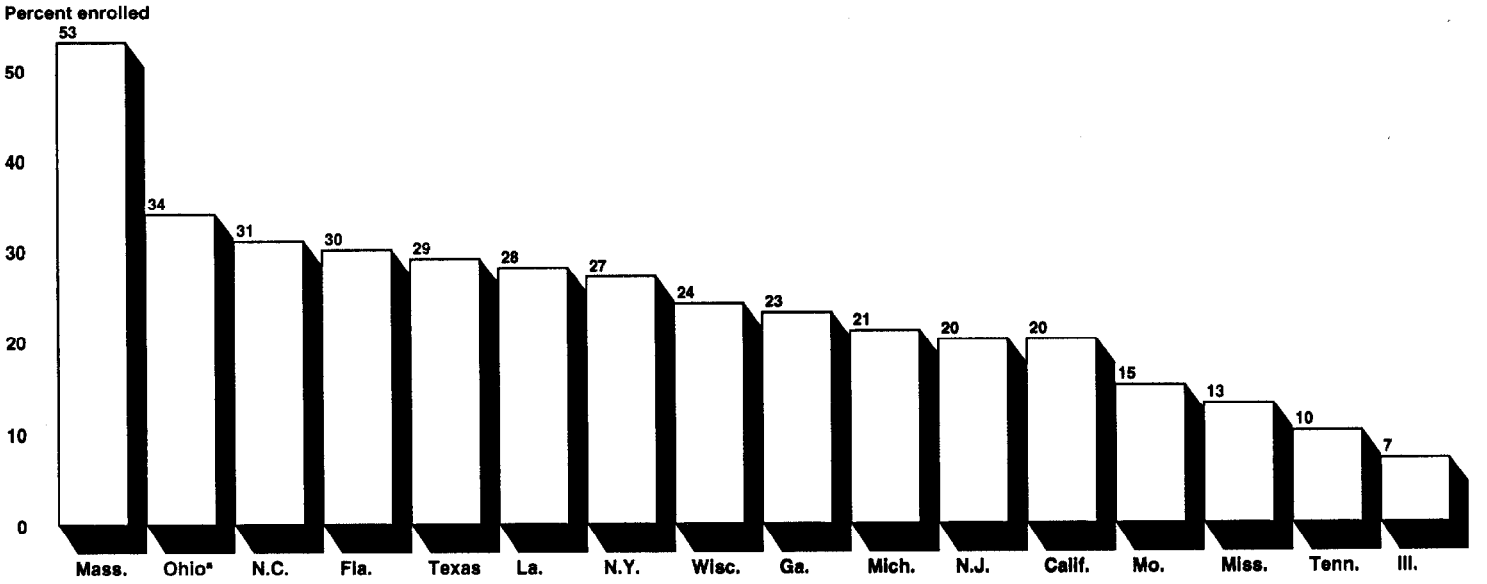
These incorrect exemptions did not appear to be related to a lack of caseworker training. In 77 percent of the cases sampled, the caseworkers had been trained in JOBS regulations. However, about half of both the trained and untrained caseworkers believed that a teen parent who was a high school dropout and caring for a young child was to be exempted from participation in JOBS.[11]

State Actions Are Significant Factors in Enrolling Teen Parents in JOBS

The states included in our review moved unevenly to enroll teen parents in JOBS, with enrollment rates ranging from 7 to 53 percent, as shown in figure 4. Exercising the discretion accorded by JOBS, the 16 states varied considerably in their financial commitment to the JOBS program and the extent to which they emphasized serving teen parents. When states demonstrated a moderate or strong financial commitment to JOBS or placed a strong emphasis on serving teen parents, teen parents were more likely to be enrolled in JOBS than when states did not demonstrate such a commitment.

[11]Because of the limited scope of our work, we did not explore this further to identify the reasons for teen parents being incorrectly exempted.

Figure 4: Percent of AFDC Teen Parents Ever Enrolled in JOBS in 16 States, by State



Note: Sampling errors at the 95-percent confidence level are plus or minus 5 percentage points or less—Ill., Tenn., Miss., Mo., N.C., Wisc.; plus or minus 6 or 7—Calif., Ga., La., Mich., N.J., N.Y., Tex.; plus or minus 9—Fla., Mass., Ohio.

[a]The enrollment rate in Ohio may be understated because of an ongoing state evaluation that randomly assigned some teen parents to a control group that did not participate in JOBS.

States Varied Considerably in Their Approaches to Serving Teen Parents in JOBS

States differed in their level of financial commitment to the JOBS program and the degree to which they emphasized serving teen parents in JOBS. The 16 states varied greatly in their financial commitment to JOBS, creating differences across the states in their abilities to enroll participants and provide services. For fiscal year 1991, the National Governors' Association and the National Association of State Budget Officers noted that states faced budget problems related to little or no economic growth. In this fiscal environment, only one of the 16 states committed enough of its own resources to JOBS to take full advantage of the federal dollars allocated to it in fiscal year 1991. The other 15 states used from 14 to 92 percent of their federal JOBS funds.

In addition to variation in financial commitment, states varied in the extent to which they emphasized teen parents in JOBS.[12] Five states—Florida, Massachusetts, North Carolina, Ohio, and Wisconsin—strongly emphasized serving teen parents in JOBS. These states placed a high priority on enrolling teen parents in JOBS, and all but Wisconsin had policies to provide JOBS services to teen parents that are tailored to teens' special needs. In addition, each state directly administered, monitored, or financially supported teen parent services. These five states have used JOBS resources to build upon previous state-level programs or strategies designed to help teen parents complete their educations or become self-sufficient.

Of the remaining 11 states, two—California and New Jersey—placed a moderate emphasis on serving teen parents in JOBS. Both states embraced policies that give teen parents high priority in enrollment and support the provision of special program and supportive services tailored to teens. In addition, both used a combination of regulation and guidance to encourage local welfare offices to meet state objectives. However, both have left day-to-day administration to localities, as might be expected given that counties administer the AFDC program in these two states. Yet, no special funding or incentives were used to direct local services to teen parents, as in the five states above. Both of these states developed their approaches after implementing JOBS. California's JOBS director stated that it began its initiative in response to JOBS' emphasis on teen parents, while a New Jersey official said that the state agency used JOBS resources to move statewide with a teen parent program piloted in a limited area.

The remaining nine states did not place special emphasis on teen parents in JOBS, most for reasons related to lack of funding, insufficient services, or program immaturity.[13] While all of these states recognized the importance of serving teen parents, they did not single them out for special attention in JOBS beyond acknowledging their inclusion in the federally designated target group. Five of these states cited insufficient services or lack of funding as reasons for their not emphasizing teen parents. In addition, one of these five states and another three cited as reasons their lack of experience in administering welfare-to-work programs or the newness of JOBS—including their need to focus on other implementation issues. While the five states that strongly emphasized teen parents built upon their

[12]See appendix I for a complete description of our measure of state emphasis in serving teen parents.

[13]These states are Georgia, Illinois, Louisiana, Michigan, Mississippi, Missouri, New York, Tennessee, and Texas. For more information about programs in Illinois and New York that serve AFDC teen parents but did not meet our criteria, see appendix I, table I.4.

existing teen parent strategies, such strategies or programs did not exist in six of the nine states. In the absence of a state-directed effort, however, JOBS resources were used to support some local initiatives. For example, in both Louisiana and Tennessee, the JOBS program provided child care and transportation financial assistance to teen parents attending special programs operated in urban centers.

State Approaches Linked to Teen Parent Enrollment in JOBS

State choices about the extent to which they emphasized teen parents in JOBS and their overall financial commitment to the program were related to teen parent enrollment. The five states with a strong emphasis on teen parents enrolled an average of 34 percent of their teens compared with 20 percent in the remaining states.[14] And, controlling for other factors, our analysis showed that teen parents living in states with a strong emphasis were 1.7 times more likely to be enrolled in JOBS compared with teen parents living in states that placed no special emphasis on teen parents.[15] In addition, teens living in states that used more than one-third of the federal JOBS dollars available to them were more likely to be enrolled than those in states using one-third or less.

Adequate Services and Teen Parent Motivation Key to Completing Secondary Education in JOBS

Inadequate local services and factors related to teen parents' motivation are key barriers to their completing their secondary educations and moving towards self-sufficiency. Outcomes varied for those teen parent participants enrolled in high school or general educational development (GED) programs, with one-fifth completing their educations, two-fifths currently enrolled, and a little over one-third no longer enrolled at the time of our review.[16] Those participants who received an enriched service—such as educational alternatives to mainstream public high school or parenting classes—or child care had more success completing their educations than those who did not. In addition, teens who were exempt from participation but chose to volunteer for JOBS fared better than those mandated to participate. JOBS and teen parent program directors corroborated the importance of these factors and ranked them overall as more significant barriers in serving teen parents than federal rules and regulations.

[14]This difference is statistically significant at the 95-percent confidence level.

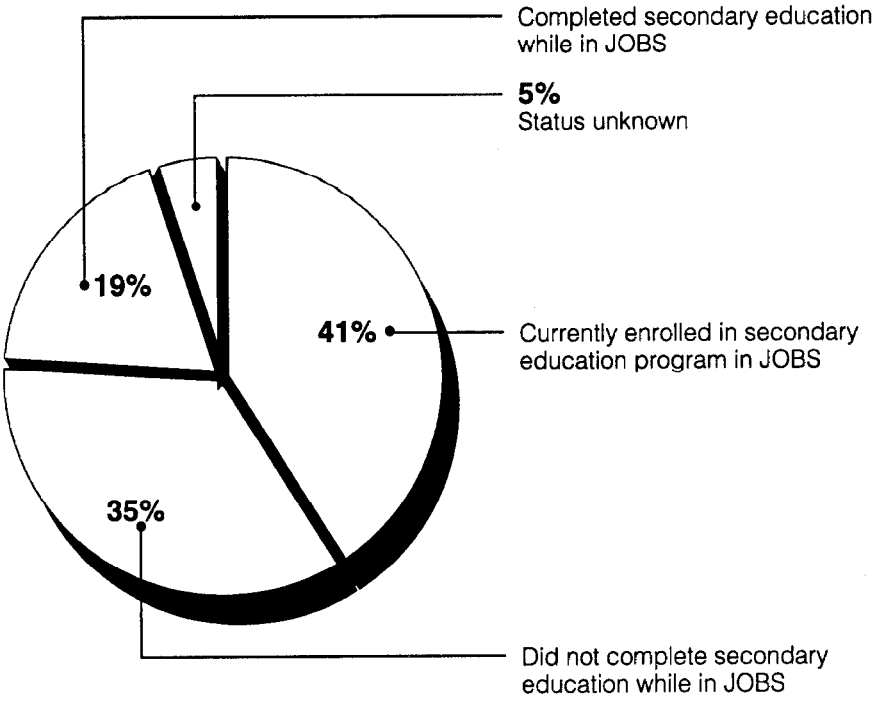
[15]See appendix I for details on the logistic regression model we used to estimate the likelihood that a teen parent would be enrolled, given various factors.

[16]A person who left high school without graduating may earn a GED high school diploma by satisfactorily completing the GED testing program.

Outcomes Varied for Teen Parents Pursuing Secondary Educations in JOBS

A majority of the teen parents pursuing a secondary education in JOBS had completed their educations or were still enrolled at the time of our review. About 72 percent of the teen parents enrolled in JOBS in the 16 states participated in high school or GED programs.[17] Of these, about 19 percent had completed their secondary educations and 40 percent were currently enrolled, as shown in figure 5. Thirty-five percent, however, had not completed their educations and were no longer enrolled.

Figure 5: Status of AFDC Teen Parents Enrolled in High School or GED While in JOBS in 16 States



Note: This excludes teen parent participants in New York City because data were unavailable.

Enriched Services, Child Care, and Teen Parent Motivation Linked to Educational Success

Teen parents' personal characteristics and their receipt of enriched services or child care were important factors in their successfully completing their secondary educations while in JOBS. Experts believe that teen parents often need enriched services and assistance with child care to successfully complete their high school educations and move towards self-sufficiency. Controlling for other potentially important determinants, our analysis showed that teen parents who were provided an enriched

[17]See appendix III for additional information about the activities of teen parents enrolled in JOBS.

service—including educational alternatives to mainstream public high school, life skills training, or parenting classes—were 1.8 times more likely to complete their secondary educations than those not provided such services in the 16 states.[18, 19] Also, those who received publicly funded child care were 1.8 times more likely to complete their educations than those who did not receive such child care assistance.[20]

Other important factors linked to teen parents completing their high school educations were their pre-JOBS educational and volunteer status. Teen parents who were enrolled in high school or another educational activity at the beginning of their JOBS enrollment were 1.8 times more likely to complete their educations than those who began JOBS as high school dropouts. Also, those who were sufficiently motivated to volunteer for participation in JOBS even though they had been exempted were twice as likely to complete their educations as mandated JOBS participants.[21, 22]

Caseworkers also cited factors linked to poor motivation as reasons for teen parents not completing their educations while in JOBS. The reasons most often cited by caseworkers for a teen not completing her education were a subsequent pregnancy (40 percent of the teens) and personal or family problems, including lack of motivation or family conflict (26 percent). Other reasons included a lack of child care or transportation.[23] Factors such as adolescent pregnancy and personal problems have been associated with low self-esteem and educational failure. These factors, in turn, are linked with motivational problems.

[18]For a description of the types of services teen parent participants received, see appendix III.

[19]See appendix I for details on the logistic regression model we used to assess the effects of independent factors on the likelihood that a teen parent JOBS participant pursuing secondary education would complete her high school or GED diploma.

[20]This factor was statistically significant at the 91-percent rather than the 95-percent confidence level.

[21]Teen parents who are classified as mandatory may also volunteer for JOBS under certain conditions. For example, a mandatory teen parent may ask the welfare agency to enroll her in JOBS activities before the agency has required her to participate. We were not able to measure this type of voluntary activity.

[22]It is important to note that while these teens are more successful than others in JOBS, they very likely would have been successful without enrollment in JOBS. This is demonstrated by findings on the school behaviors of teen parents randomly assigned to a control group in Ohio's evaluation of its JOBS programs for teen parents. These findings are presented in Dan Bloom and others, LEAP: Interim Findings on a Welfare Initiative to Improve School Attendance Among Teenage Parents, Ohio's Learning, Earning, and Parenting Program, Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation (New York, N.Y.: May 1993).

[23]Reasons were cited for 64 percent of the teens not completing their educations. For the remaining 36 percent, the reasons were not known by the caseworker or the caseworker failed to respond. For 5 percent of these, the teen parent's AFDC case was closed.

Program Directors Rank Lack of Adequate Services and Personal Deficits as Most Significant Barriers to Success

The judgments of JOBS and teen parent program directors and service providers corroborated our findings that local services and teen parent characteristics are important factors related to teen parents completing their secondary educations. In ranking barriers to serving teen parents, such as rules and regulations, management and administration, services and funding, and teen parent characteristics, 10 of 16 state directors ranked the lack of adequate services and funding as the most significant barrier they face. Local service providers we interviewed also stated that the programs and services they need to serve teen parents are in short supply. For example, in Lowell, Massachusetts, a state-administered program for teen parents serves nearly 50 young mothers each year, but maintains a waiting list for referrals.

JOBS and teen parent program directors also reported that teen parents they work with have substantial personal deficits, such as low educational attainment and lack of motivation, that create barriers in serving them. Directors from four states ranked this barrier as the most significant, and six ranked it as the second most significant. Those we spoke with were especially concerned about previous educational failure, home circumstances, and lack of motivation, job skills and work experience; the majority rated these individual factors as barriers to a substantial or very great extent. Officials of local welfare offices and teen parent programs we visited also cited such factors as significant barriers. They emphasized the important role that resources—including adequate services and funding to expand services—can play in breaking down these barriers. They said that special programs and services tailored to the needs of young mothers can help teen parents overcome or better cope with their problems and improve their motivation.

Few JOBS or teen parent program directors we interviewed believed that either federal regulations or the Department of Health and Human Services' (HHS) administration presented the most significant barrier in serving teen parents. One of 16 state directors rated rules and regulations as the most significant barrier when compared to services and funding, teen parent characteristics, and program administration. One ranked management and administrative processes first.

Conclusion

Our review indicates that JOBS can be used to help AFDC teen parents, even those considered hardest to serve, complete their secondary educations. While the 16 states in our review vary in important ways that affect teen parents' enrollment, this variation is to be expected in a program such as

JOBS, created as a financial and programmatic partnership between the federal and state governments.

Although states have moved to serve teen parents in JOBS, we cannot draw any firm conclusions about the overall effectiveness of JOBS in helping these young mothers. The numbers served are relatively small and not enough is known about the impact of JOBS on reducing welfare dependence among teen parents and their families. Moreover, JOBS is a relatively young program that states have been operating in an environment of mounting fiscal distress and competing demands on their budgets. However, as state programs evolve, the economy recovers, and states choose to devote more funds to JOBS, states may have increased capacity to enroll teen parents and strengthen the infrastructure of education and support services tailored to meet their needs.

Because some teen parents have been incorrectly exempted from JOBS and states may be missing opportunities to enroll dependent teen parents before they become AFDC cases of their own, we believe that action should be taken to ensure that all teen parents are properly identified and informed of the requirement to participate in JOBS.

Recommendations to the Secretary of HHS

Because some teen parents appear to be incorrectly exempted from JOBS, we recommend that the Secretary of Health and Human Services take action to determine the extent of the problem and work with the states to correct it, as appropriate.

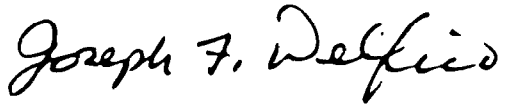
In addition, because some evidence suggests that states may be overlooking dependent teen parents, we recommend that the Secretary take action to ensure that dependent teen parents are properly identified by states and informed of JOBS requirements.

Agency Comments

In commenting on a draft of this report (see app. V), HHS noted that the report confirms information it has obtained regarding states serving teen parents in JOBS. In addition, HHS concurred with our recommendations, stating that it planned to use the information in the report as a basis for providing technical assistance to states on correctly identifying eligible teen parents and informing them of JOBS requirements. HHS also provided technical comments on the draft of our report. We made changes where appropriate in finalizing the report.

Copies of this report are being sent to the Secretary of Health and Human Services and the Chairmen of the Senate Subcommittee on Social Security and Family Policy and House Committee on Ways and Means. Copies will also be made available to others on request. If you have any questions concerning this report or need additional information, please call me on (202) 512-7215. Other major contributors are listed in appendix VI.

Sincerely yours,



Joseph F. Delfico
Director, Income Security Issues

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Abbreviations

AFDC	Aid to Families with Dependent Children
FSA	Family Support Act
GED	general educational development diploma
HHS	Department of Health and Human Services
JOBS	Job Opportunities and Basic Skills Training Program

Scope and Methodology

To accomplish our objectives, we identified and collected data on a random sample of teen parents receiving AFDC benefits in 16 states; conducted telephone interviews of state-level JOBS and teen parent program directors in these states; visited state and local JOBS and teen parent programs in three of the states; and used logistical regression, a multivariate statistical technique, to analyze the results.

Sampling and Collecting Data on AFDC Teen Parents

To determine the extent to which AFDC teen parents had been enrolled in JOBS and helped to complete their educations, we collected data on AFDC teen parents sampled in 16 states, illustrated in figure I.1. We included in our review teen mothers, aged 16 through 19,[1] receiving AFDC benefits for a selected month in fiscal year 1992.[2] To develop as representative a sample of teen parents as possible, we identified 19 states with the greatest numbers of AFDC teen parents in fiscal year 1989. In cooperation with state social services, human services, and other agencies in 16 of these states,[3] we developed lists of AFDC teen parents living in areas where the JOBS program was operating.[4] These lists divided teen parents into two groups: teen mothers who received AFDC benefits as the heads of their own AFDC cases or as dependents in others' AFDC cases. Because most states were unable to identify teen parents who were receiving AFDC benefits as dependents, we requested states to provide lists of dependent teens who might possibly be parents.[5] We then drew random samples from each

[1]This group includes those at least 16 but no older than 19 years of age for all of fiscal year 1991. As a result, only those 16-year-olds who turned 16 on the first day of the fiscal year—those subject to JOBS requirements for the entire year—were included, limiting the total number of 16-year-olds in our review.

[2]While we requested states to provide data for October 1991, not all did so. Eleven states provided data for October 1991, two provided data for November 1991, two for January 1992, and one for February 1992.

[3]Three states did not provide data. Minnesota did not provide the data within 6 months of our original request, Pennsylvania was in the process of restructuring its AFDC data system and could not provide data in time, and Washington chose not to participate.

[4]By October 1992, states were required to make JOBS available in areas covering at least 95 percent of their AFDC populations. At the time of our review, 10 of the 16 states were operating statewide. In the remaining states, the share of teen parents living in JOBS areas of each state ranged from 38 to 89 percent.

[5]We identified a possible dependent teen parent as any female, aged 16 through 19, in an AFDC case with a child to which she might have given birth at age 15 or older. For example, under the assumption that a 16-year-old could have given birth at age 15 and be living in an AFDC household as a dependent, we included in our possible teen parent pool all households that had at least one 16-year-old female recipient and at least one other recipient aged 1 or younger. As expected, this process added measurement error; we identified two teens who were not parents for every three teens who were parents. We measured this error through a screening question in our questionnaire and adjusted our sample accordingly. Generally, all teen parent caseheads were included, regardless of the age at which they might have given birth.

group in each state, totalling 3,639 cases for the 16 states overall.[6] The number of teen parent caseheads and possible dependent teen parents meeting our criteria and the number randomly sampled from each group are shown in table I.1. Except for state enrollment rates that are representative of each state, our results can be generalized to the 16 states combined and are weighted by state.

[6]Generally, AFDC teen parents receiving benefits through the AFDC-Unemployed Parent program for two-parent households were excluded from our review. In Massachusetts, Michigan, and New Jersey, we were provided data that included the AFDC-Unemployed populations. However, data collected through our questionnaires allowed us to screen some of these cases out.

Figure I.1: Sixteen States Included in GAO Review

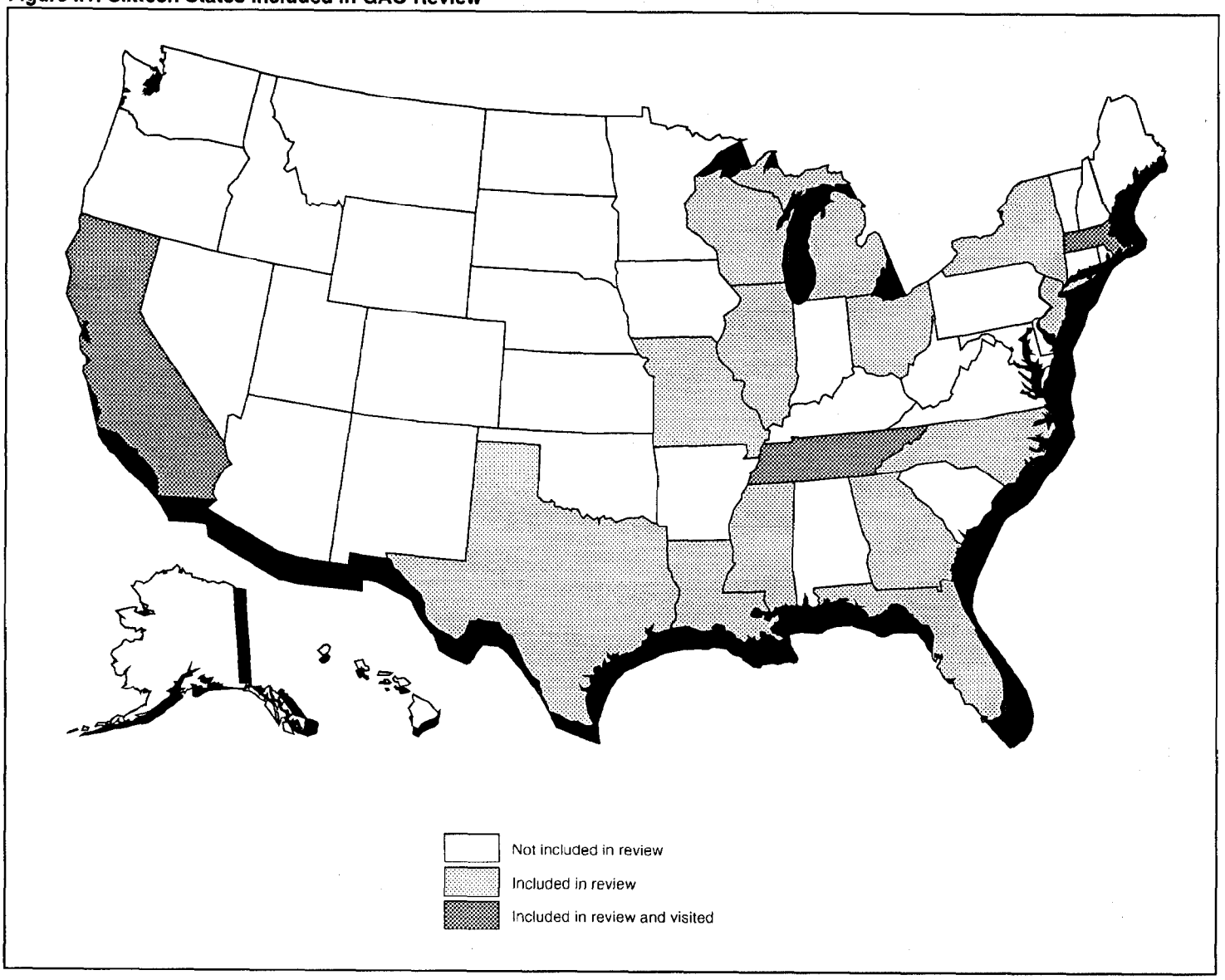


Table I.1: GAO Random Sample of AFDC Teen Parents in 16 States

	Number of AFDC teens meeting our criteria		Number of AFDC teens randomly sampled	
State	**Casehead**	**Possible teen parent**	**Casehead**	**Possible teen parent**
California	30,161[a]		150	
Florida	12,493	1,205	120	30
Georgia	7,722	784	190	30
Illinois	13,823	2,512	265	45
Louisiana	2,582	68	140	30
Massachusetts	4,485	194	120	30
Michigan	15,004	2,498	120	30
Mississippi	1,674	166	270	30
Missouri	4,934	247	270	30
New Jersey	8,373	548	120	30
New York[b]	6,253	566	54	30
New York City	10,419[c]		136	
North Carolina	2,934	631	265	54
Ohio	17,268	4,278	120	30
Tennessee	5,387	628	269	31
Texas	14,467	102	270	30
Wisconsin	1,216	1,168	153	147
Total	**159,195**	**15,595**	**3,032**	**607**

[a]Based on state-level data, the casehead or dependent status of AFDC recipients could not be determined. To identify possible teen parents—caseheads or dependents—we used the same methodology developed to identify dependent teen parents in other states.

[b]Excludes New York City.

[c]This listing contained both caseheads and dependents, but did not distinguish between them.

To confirm each teen's status as a mother receiving AFDC and to collect additional information related to her, we mailed questionnaires to the county or district AFDC office having responsibility for the teen.[7] Each office received two questionnaires for each teen—one with AFDC-related questions and one with JOBS-related questions—to be completed by the teen's AFDC or JOBS caseworker.[8] We mailed these questionnaires between

[7]During the time between sample development and data collection, about 12 percent of the sampled teen parents' AFDC cases had been closed; this includes cases that may have been transferred to another jurisdiction. Our review includes closed AFDC cases reported to be open when the sample was selected.

[8]Services that teen parents received were measured cumulatively from the date JOBS began in a substate area to the point of questionnaire receipt.

April and August 1992. Overall, as shown in table I.2, we obtained a 93-percent response rate for retrieving both questionnaires for each teen.

Table I.2: Total Sample Size, Questionnaire Response Rate, and Adjusted Sample Size of AFDC Teen Parents, by State

State	Total number sampled[a]	Response rate (percent)[b]	Total in adjusted samples[c]
California	150	95	127
Florida	150	88	108
Georgia	220	94	181
Illinois	310	89	243
Louisiana	170	99	162
Massachusetts	150	93	128
Michigan	150	91	124
Mississippi	300	95	261
Missouri	300	86	235
New Jersey	150	97	128
New York[d]	220	99	178
North Carolina	319	89	266
Ohio	150	89	106
Tennessee	300	94	261
Texas	300	95	272
Wisconsin	300	100	222
Total	**3,639**	**93**	**3,002**

[a]These samples were stratified by teen parent casehead dependent status and the results were weighted accordingly.

[b]Because the response rates for each stratum were similar, we have reported the combined rate. The total represents a weighted average for the 16 states.

[c]Our final samples were adjusted to eliminate teens who were not confirmed by caseworkers to be mothers receiving AFDC-Basic benefits during the selected month.

[d]This includes separate samples, one for New York City and one for New York State, excluding New York City.

Based on the responses to our questionnaires, we estimated the extent to which teen parents were enrolled in JOBS, received various services, and completed their high school educations. Because these estimates are based on a sample, each is subject to sampling error. We computed these sampling errors at the 95-percent confidence level. Therefore, the chances are 95 out of 100 that the actual number being estimated falls within the range defined by the estimate, plus or minus the sampling error. Sampling

errors based on our full sample and on various subgroups of our sample are shown in table I.3. Unless otherwise noted, these sampling errors apply to the estimated percentages reported for each group.

Table I.3: Estimated Size of Categories of AFDC Teen Parents in 16 States and Sampling Errors for Teen Parent Percentages by Category

Categories	Estimated number[a]	Sampling error at 95-percent confidence level to be applied to percentage within category[b]
All teen parents	144,000	No more than plus or minus 2 percentage points
Teen parents exempted from participating	90,000	No more than plus or minus 2 percentage points
Teen parents who were classified as mandatory	54,000	No more than plus or minus 4 percentage points
Teen parents who were classified as mandatory and not enrolled in JOBS	36,000	No more than plus or minus 4 percentage points
Teen parents enrolled in JOBS	34,000	No more than plus or minus 5 percentage points
Teen parent JOBS participants enrolled in high school or GED classes	23,000[c]	No more than plus or minus 6 percentage points

[a]Sampling errors at the 95-percent confidence level for these estimates are plus or minus 3,500.

[b]These sampling errors apply to the percentages for different categories of teen parents cited throughout the report. For example, on page 7, we report that 5 percent of the teen parents classified as mandatory and not enrolled in JOBS had been sanctioned. For a percentage (5 percent) reported for this category of teen parents (those mandatory and not enrolled), the sampling error is no more than plus or minus 4 percentage points.

[c]Teen parents enrolled in JOBS in New York City, estimated at 2,500, were excluded because data on their JOBS activities were unavailable.

To verify questionnaire responses related to teen parent exemptions from JOBS and to better understand the reasons for these exemptions, we drew a random sample (n=185) of teen parents for which questionnaires had been returned. Between July and November 1992, we conducted a computer-assisted telephone survey of welfare caseworkers responsible for these teens and obtained a 69-percent response rate. The sampling errors at the 95-percent confidence level for estimates based on this sample are no more than plus or minus 11 percentage points.

Identification and Analysis of State Approaches and Barriers to Serving Teen Parents in JOBS

To report on state approaches to serving teen parents in JOBS, we identified each of the 16 states' approaches and developed criteria by which to classify the extent to which each state emphasized teen parents in JOBS. Based on structured interviews with state-level JOBS and teen parent program directors and documentary materials, we examined state policies in the following three key areas and assessed whether states placed strong, moderate, or little emphasis on serving teen parents in JOBS.

- Did the state implement policies placing high priority on enrolling teen parents beyond their status as members of the federally designated JOBS target group? Were these policies in effect in more than a few areas of the state?
- Did the state encourage localities to implement programs of enriched services, such as educational alternatives to mainstream public high school or parenting classes, and special supportive services for teens?
- Did the state involve itself in the day-to-day administration of teen parent activities by directly administering, monitoring, or financially supporting teen parent activities or services?

The results of our classification are shown in table I.4.

Table I.4: Extent of State-Level Emphasis on Serving Teen Parents in JOBS in 16 States

Extent of special emphasis	State	Highlights of state approach to teen parents and JOBS
Strong	Florida	State agency operates a teen parent program that coordinates with other agencies to provide the services needed to help teen parent volunteers complete their educations. Funding is set aside especially for teen parents.
	Massachusetts	State agency directly operates program through performance-based payments to service providers helping teen parents complete their educations.
	North Carolina	State sets goals for teen parent participation in JOBS, provides counties lists of mandatory teen parents to encourage outreach, tracks counties' progress in meeting stated goals, and provides some incentive funding. JOBS coordinates with state-funded Adolescent Parenting Program serving 17 of 100 counties.
	Ohio	Statewide Learning, Earning and Parenting (LEAP) program uses monetary bonus system to encourage satisfactory school attendance and sanctions those not attending school. State pays for case managers.
	Wisconsin	Statewide Learnfare program requires all teens under 18 to stay in school or face sanctions. State funds special services to teen parents through Learnfare and JOBS on a request basis from counties.
Moderate	California	State law directs counties to give high priority to teen parents and to link them with services they need to complete their educations. However, state does not monitor teen parent activities or earmark funds for teen parent services in this county-administered program.
	New Jersey	State has recommended that counties accord highest priority for services to teen parents and has also recommended types of services. However, state does not earmark funds for teen parent services in this county-administered program.
Little or no	Georgia	No specific approach for teen parents in JOBS identified.
	Illinois	Special teen parent program operates in two offices in Chicago.
	Louisiana	No specific approach for teen parents in JOBS identified.
	Michigan	No specific approach for teen parents in JOBS identified.
	Mississippi	No specific approach for teen parents in JOBS identified.
	Missouri	No specific approach for teen parents in JOBS identified.
	New York	State plans to require counties to coordinate JOBS for teen parents with its state-legislated Teenage Services Act program. Under this act, younger AFDC teen parents must be offered special case management services to help them become self-sufficient. Participation is not mandated among teen parents. Coordination between this program and JOBS had not yet been formally implemented.
	Tennessee	No specific approach for teen parents in JOBS identified.
	Texas	No specific approach for teen parents in JOBS identified.

To identify barriers in serving teen parents, we conducted a literature review and interviews with program administrators. We then identified and grouped barriers into four categories: (1) JOBS rules and regulations; (2) program management and procedures; (3) availability, accessibility,

and funding of resources; and (4) characteristics of teen parents themselves. During our structured telephone interviews with state JOBS and teen parent program directors, we collected data on the extent of these barriers and asked respondents to rank the four categories as to their relative importance as barriers in serving teen parents.

Visits to States With Different Approaches to Serving Teen Parents in JOBS

To obtain more information on local programs and state approaches to serving teen parents in JOBS, we interviewed state and local welfare, JOBS agency, and public education officials and private service providers in three states that we identified as having different approaches to serving teen parents in JOBS. We spoke with state JOBS and other pertinent officials in each state capital and visited JOBS offices, teen parent programs, and some high schools in the following state and local areas: Stanislaus and Yolo Counties and San Francisco in California; Boston, Lowell, and New Bedford in Massachusetts; and Memphis in Tennessee.

Use of Logistic Regression to Identify Factors Related to Teen Parents' Enrollment in JOBS and Completion of High School

We used logistic regression, a multivariate statistical technique, to assess the effects of independent factors on the likelihood of teen parents being enrolled in JOBS and completing their secondary educations while in JOBS. The results of the logistic regression model examining factors related to enrollment in JOBS are shown in table I.5. In this table, version 1 examines state program and teen parents' characteristics in 16 states; version 2 examines additional personal characteristics, but for fewer teens in only 12 states, and excludes state program characteristics; and version 3 shows the effect of excluding state program characteristics when all teen parents in 16 states are included. In table I.6, we show factors related to teen parent JOBS participants enrolled in high school or GED completing their diplomas.

The effect a factor has on the likelihood of an occurrence or outcome is measured by an odds ratio. For example, in table I.5, the odds ratio shows the effect a factor, such as living in a state with a special emphasis on teen parents in JOBS, can have on the likelihood of an occurrence, such as enrollment in JOBS, while controlling for the effects of other factors. For each variable examined, the odds ratios were computed in relation to a

defined reference group.[9] In our example, a teen parent living in a state strongly emphasizing teen parents was 1.70 times more likely to be enrolled in JOBS than a teen living in a state with little emphasis. If there were no differences between the two groups, their odds would be equal, and the ratio of their odds would be one. The greater the odds ratio differs from one, in either direction, the larger the effect it represents.

We also conducted statistical tests to verify that selected factors in our models were independent of one another. When two variables have a joint effect over and above the effects of each factor separately, this effect is considered "interaction." However, none of the interactions we examined were statistically significant. In addition, we determined that the variables in each model were not strongly correlated, ruling out multicollinearity as a problem.[10]

[9]We used the odds ratio to assess whether a factor had a larger or smaller effect on the likelihood of enrollment and completion of secondary education. Determining what qualifies as larger or smaller is not entirely simple, although our use of solely categorical variables reduces the complexity of interpreting results to a great extent. With regard to categorical variables, the size of the effects depends to some extent on the choice of categories that define variables and reference groups. We dichotomized variables to the extent possible, yielding straightforward comparisons between two groups. However, as shown in table I.5, in two cases we used three categories. Had we used fewer, the differential effects of our original categories would not have been as apparent.

[10]The highest correlation was 0.5230, which was between two variables measuring characteristics of a teen parent's state—the extent of the state's financial commitment to JOBS and its early implementation date.

Table I.5: Selected Factors Affecting the Likelihood of AFDC Teen Parents Enrollment in JOBS: Logistic Regression Results

Variable	Odds ratio	Confidence interval[a]
Version 1 (n = 2,924 in 16 states) (includes state program characteristics)[b]		
Exemption status		
Exempted	Reference group	
Mandated	2.79	2.31 to 3.36
AFDC status		
Casehead	Reference group	
Dependent	0.47	0.29 to 0.78
State-level emphasis on teen parents		
Little	Reference group	
Moderate	[c]	
Strong	1.70	1.31 to 2.20
Fraction of available federal JOBS funds used[d]		
Less than one-third	Reference group	
One-third to two-thirds	1.47	1.11 to 1.97
Two-thirds or more	1.91	1.35 to 2.70
Version 2 (n = 1,830 in 12 states) (includes AFDC caseheads only and excludes state program characteristics)[e]		
Exemption status		
Exempted	Reference group	
Mandated	3.04	2.42 to 3.83
Age of youngest child[f]		
Less than 1 year	Reference group	
Equal to 1 or older	1.43	1.12 to 1.82
Version 3 (n = 2,924 in 16 states) (excludes state program characteristics)[g]		
Exemption status		
Exempted	Reference group	
Mandated	2.98	2.49 to 3.57
AFDC status		
Casehead	Reference group	
Dependent	0.51	0.31 to 0.83

(Table notes on next page)

Note: This table reports on all variables that were statistically significant at the 95-percent confidence level. The dependent variable was enrollment, measured by whether an AFDC teen parent had ever been enrolled in an approved JOBS activity beyond the required initial assessment of her skills, work experience, needs, and other attributes.

[a]This range of values was calculated at the 95-percent confidence level. This means that the chances are about 95 out of 100 that the actual odds ratio being estimated falls within this range.

[b]This version included the following variables that did not have significant effects on the likelihood of enrollment: teen parent age, the length of the teen parent's most recent AFDC stay, the JOBS implementation date of the teen parent's state, and a variable measuring whether the state AFDC program was state- or county-administered.

[c]Not statistically significant.

[d]Generally, federal JOBS dollars are allocated among the states according to each state's share of all adult AFDC recipients in the nation. To measure each state's financial commitment to JOBS, we calculated the share of their federal allocation used. For those states operating JOBS less than statewide, we adjusted the share of federal funds used in order to account for the lower coverage. JOBS-related child care funding was not included. Mississippi, Missouri, and Tennessee used less than one-third of the federal JOBS funds allocated to them for fiscal year 1991. Louisiana, Massachusetts, New Jersey, and Wisconsin used two-thirds or more of their funds. The other nine states used from one- to two-thirds of their funds.

[e]Version 2 added two variables—ethnicity and age of youngest child—to the model. However, because data for these variables were missing for teen parent caseheads in California, New York, Texas, and Wisconsin, and for teen parent dependents in all 16 states, the version excludes all teen parents in those 4 states and teen parent dependents in the remaining 12 states. The omission of cases from four states biased our results measuring the effects of state program characteristics. Therefore, we excluded state factors in the version presented here. The following variables were included but did not have significant effects on the likelihood of enrollment: teen parent age, length of most recent AFDC stay, and ethnicity.

[f]In those cases for which we were provided data on only one child in the teen parent's case and were unable to confirm that it was the only child in the case, we reported that child's age as the age of the youngest child.

[g]Version 3 includes both teen parent dependents and caseheads in all 16 states, as did version 1. However, in this version we omitted state program characteristics, demonstrating that such omission does not seriously affect our results. This version included the following variables that did not have significant effects on the likelihood of enrollment: teen parent age and length of most recent AFDC stay.

Table I.6: Selected Factors Affecting the Likelihood of Completing High School or GED for JOBS Teen Parents Enrolled in Secondary Education in 16 States: Logistic Regression Results

Variable	Odds ratio	Confidence interval[a]
Exemption status		
Mandated	Reference group	
Exempted volunteer	1.98	1.13 to 3.48
Education status at initial JOBS assessment		
Dropped out of high school and not involved in any educational activity	Reference group	
In high school or educational activity	1.79	1.00 to 3.23
Receipt of enriched JOBS services		
None	Reference group	
At least one of the following: Alternative education for high school or GED Parenting class Life skills class Nutrition class At-home tutoring Alcohol or drug treatment Mental health counseling Prenatal classes	1.84	1.06 to 3.19
Receipt of JOBS-related child care paid for with any public funds		
No	Reference group	
Yes	1.82[b]	0.92 to 3.59

Note: n = 373. This table reports on all variables that were statistically significant at the 95-percent confidence level, except for the results for receipt of child care, which was statistically significant at the 91-percent confidence level. The dependent variable measured whether a teen parent ever enrolled in high school or a GED program as a JOBS activity had completed her education while in JOBS. This model included the following variables that did not have significant effects on the likelihood of a teen parent's completion of her degree: age, receipt of publicly funded JOBS-related transportation assistance, scheduled attendance in a JOBS activity of 20 or more hours a week, extent of state-level emphasis on serving teen parents, and extent of state financial commitment to JOBS.

[a]This range of values was calculated at the 95-percent confidence level. This means that the chances are about 95 out of 100 that the actual odds ratio being estimated falls within this range.

[b]This variable was statistically significant at the 91-percent confidence level.

Our analysis did not establish a cause-and-effect relationship between the factors we examined, such as state actions or receipt of services, and teen parent enrollment in JOBS or completion of secondary education. Neither did it allow us to rule out certain other potentially important factors possibly contributing to the likelihood of a teen parent's enrollment in JOBS or her completion of a high school education while in JOBS. Differences in teen parents that we were unable to measure, such as their academic abilities, motivation, or home environment, may have contributed to the

outcomes. Also, differences in program administration and type of services, such as caseworker behaviors and program content and quality, were not measured. These factors also could affect the outcomes.

Selected Characteristics of AFDC Teen Parents Reviewed

This appendix provides summary data on selected characteristics of AFDC teen parents included in our review. The typical teen parent was 18-1/4 years old, headed her own AFDC case, cared for one child less than 2 years old, and had been receiving AFDC for at least a year.

Older Teen Parents Heading Their Own AFDC Cases Predominate

Almost half of the teen parents included in our review were 19 years old, and nearly all of the teen parents headed their own AFDC case, as shown in table II.1. A small portion, 4 percent, were dependents in others' AFDC cases and mothers of young children themselves. Based on ethnicity data available for 72 percent of the cases, 53 percent of the teen parents were black, 34 percent were white, and the remaining 13 percent were identified in an "other" category that included Hispanic, Asian American, and Native American.[1]

Table II.1: Age and Casehead Status of Teen Parents Receiving AFDC in 16 States

	Percent of group who are:[a]		
Age[b]	Teen parent caseheads	Teen parent dependents	All teen parents[c] (in percent)
16[d]	0	100	0
17	88	12	17
18	98	2	36
19	98	2	46
All ages	96	4	100

[a]Sampling errors at the 95-percent confidence level are as follows: for estimates for all teen parents by age or all ages by casehead status—no more than plus or minus 2 percentage points; for estimates within age groups—no more than plus or minus 3 percentage points.

[b]Age of teen parents as of September 30, 1991.

[c]This column does not add to 100 percent due to rounding.

[d]Because we only included 16 year-olds who turned 16 on the first day of fiscal year 1991, the number included in our review was limited—less than 100. See appendix I for a description of our sample.

A typical AFDC case headed by a teen parent in our review included one child under 2 years of age. Based on available data for about 80 percent of the cases headed by teen parents, 84 percent included one child, 13 percent two children, and the remaining 3 percent more than two children. About 45 percent of the cases headed by teen parents included at least one child under age 1, while 31 percent included at least one child

[1]Sampling errors for these percentages are no more than plus or minus 3 percentage points.

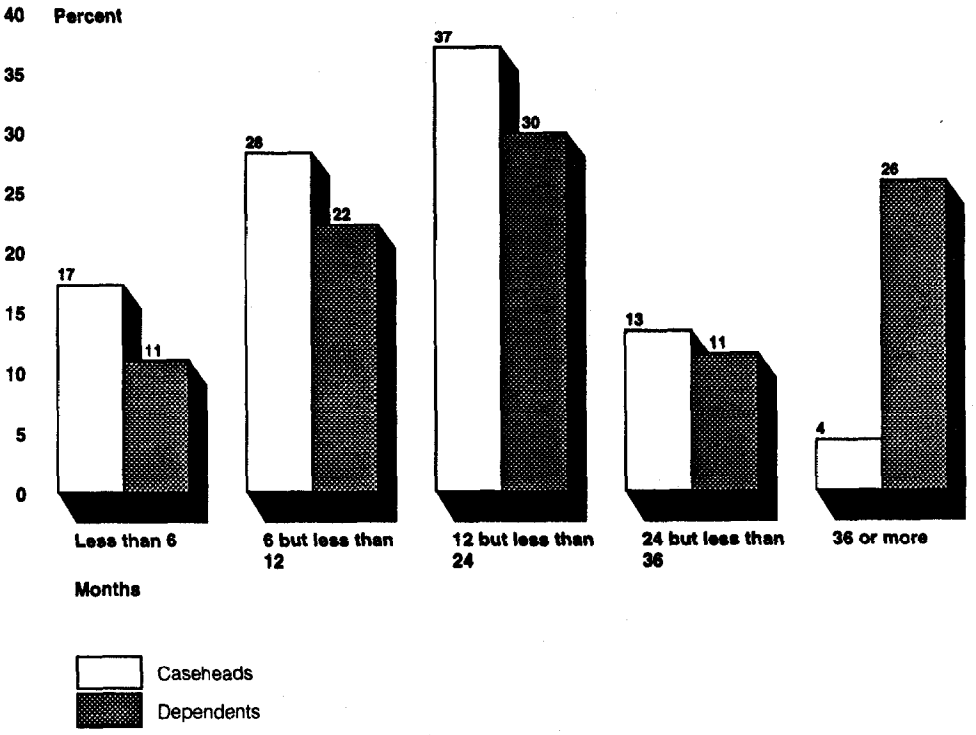
aged 1 but less than 2. In the remainder, the youngest child was 2 through 6 years old.[2]

A Majority on Welfare for at Least 1 Year

At the time of our review, 55 percent of the teen parents had been receiving AFDC for at least 1 year. These data reflect only the length of a teen's most recent welfare stay and, therefore, may understate teen parents' total time on AFDC by excluding data on any previous welfare spells. For example, a teen parent may have experienced a previous spell on welfare as either a casehead or a dependent. In addition, a teen parent who heads her own case may have spent time as a dependent in an AFDC household with her mother or another adult. As shown in figure II.1, 26 percent of the dependent teen parents had been receiving AFDC for 3 years or more.

[2]Sampling errors for these percentages are no more than plus or minus 3 percentage points.

Figure II.1: Length of Most Recent Welfare Spell for AFDC Teen Parents in 16 States



Note: Sampling errors for caseheads are plus or minus 3 percentage points or less. For dependents, from left to right, the sampling errors are plus or minus 7, 16, 15, 7, and 9 percentage points.

For about 18 percent of teen parents, data were unavailable.

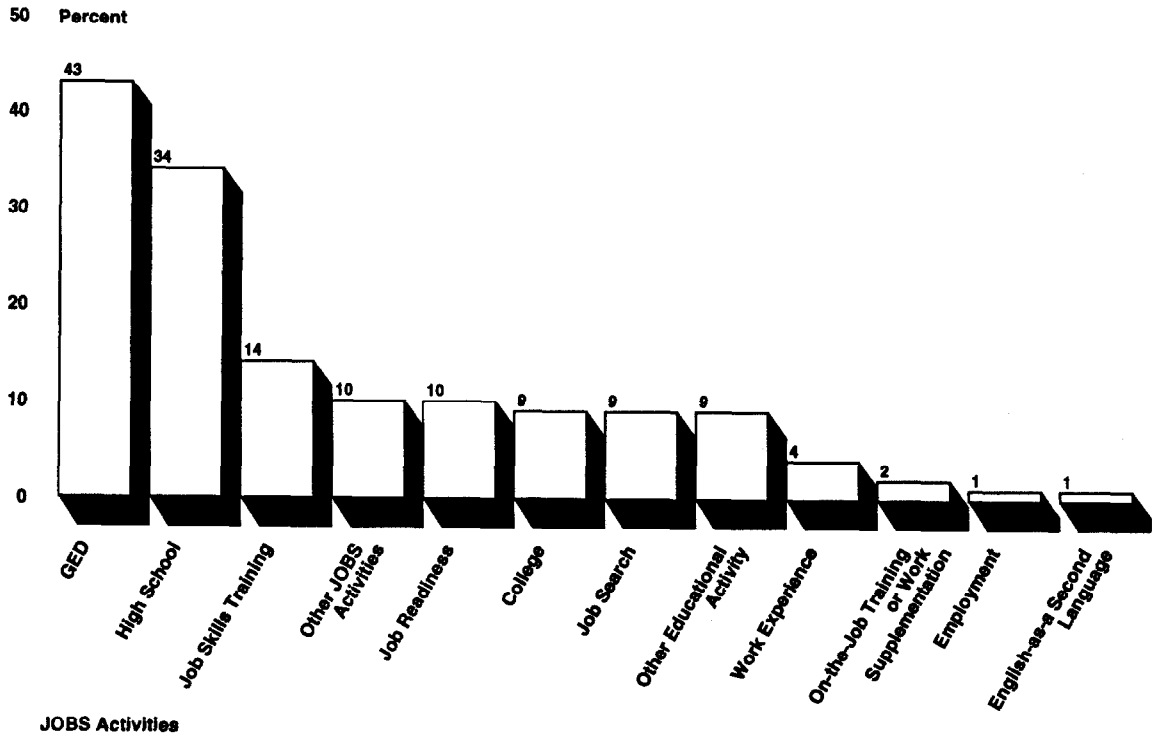
JOBS Services Received by Teen Parents Reviewed

In the 16 states reviewed, teen parents enrolled in JOBS participated in activities ranging from job search to college. About 38 percent of the teen parent JOBS participants received an enriched service—such as alternative education or life skills classes—similar to the types of services considered by experts to help teen parents overcome barriers to completing their high school educations and becoming self-sufficient. Also, more than one-third received case management services designed for young parents, and a majority received publicly funded assistance with child care or transportation costs.

Teen Parents Participate in a Range of JOBS Activities

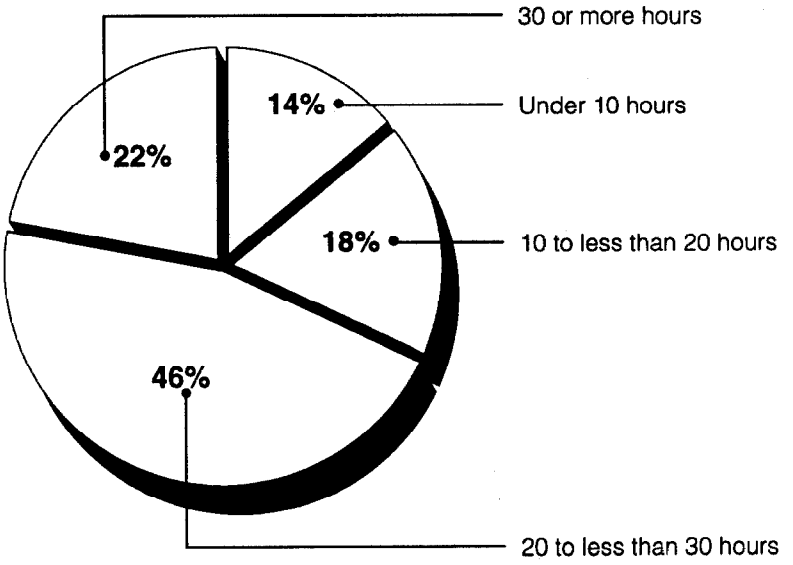
While a majority of the teen parents enrolled in JOBS participated in high school or GED programs, teen parents participated in a range of other activities as well, as shown in figure III.1. About 88 percent of the teen parent participants without high school or GED diplomas had been enrolled in activities geared towards completing their educations. Teen parents were scheduled for varying periods of time in activities while enrolled in JOBS, as shown in figure III.2.

Figure III.1: Type of JOBS Activities Attended by Enrolled AFDC Teen Parents in 16 States



Note: Teen parents enrolled in JOBS in New York City, estimated at 2,500, were excluded because data were unavailable.

Figure III.2: Weekly Scheduled Hours of JOBS Participation for AFDC Teen Parents in 16 States

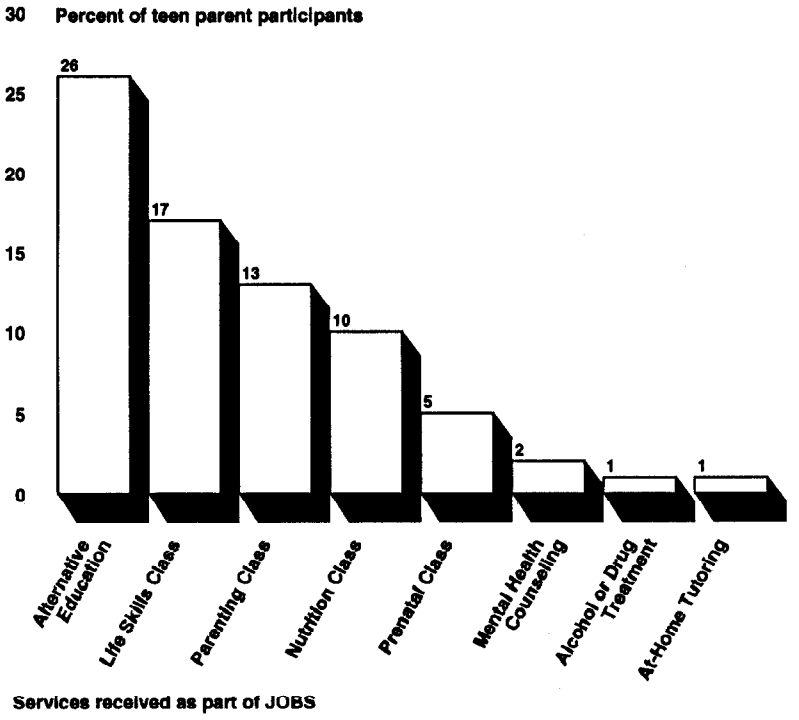


Note: Data were unavailable for 11 percent of the teen parent participants, including those enrolled in New York City.

Over One-Third of Teen Parents Enrolled in JOBS Had Received an Enriched Service

About 38 percent of the teen parents ever enrolled in JOBS had received at least one enriched service, such as those listed in figure III.3. In some instances, teen parents may have received one or more enriched services as part of a program tailored to the special needs of young mothers or mothers on AFDC. We visited examples of such programs in California, Massachusetts, and Tennessee.

Figure III.3: Percent of AFDC Teen Parent JOBS Participants Receiving Various Types of Enriched Services in 16 States



Note: Teen parents enrolled in JOBS in New York City, estimated at 2,500, were excluded because data were unavailable.

In San Francisco, California, we visited an alternative GED program for mothers on welfare called The Family School. This private, nonprofit community organization combines GED instruction, counseling, pre-employment training, and on-site child care funded through JOBS, the Job Training Partnership Act program, and private donations. The Family School's executive director credits the school's small enrollment, its staff's creativity and ability to help students overcome their problems, the presence of staff mirroring the students' ethnic makeup, and the provision of on-site child care as important factors to helping students succeed here while they had failed in other educational settings.

In New Bedford, Massachusetts, we visited the local office of the statewide Young Parent Program, which provides services to teen parents as part of JOBS. Designed to help teen parents complete high school

educations and, ultimately, become self-sufficient, this state-administered and state-financed program, begun before JOBS, now operates in conjunction with Massachusetts' JOBS program. Teen parent participants attend an alternative high school or GED program and receive special supportive services, including intensive personal counseling and career planning, lifeskills and parenting training, and on-site child care. JOBS funds support these programs and services, along with other state, local, and private-sector resources.

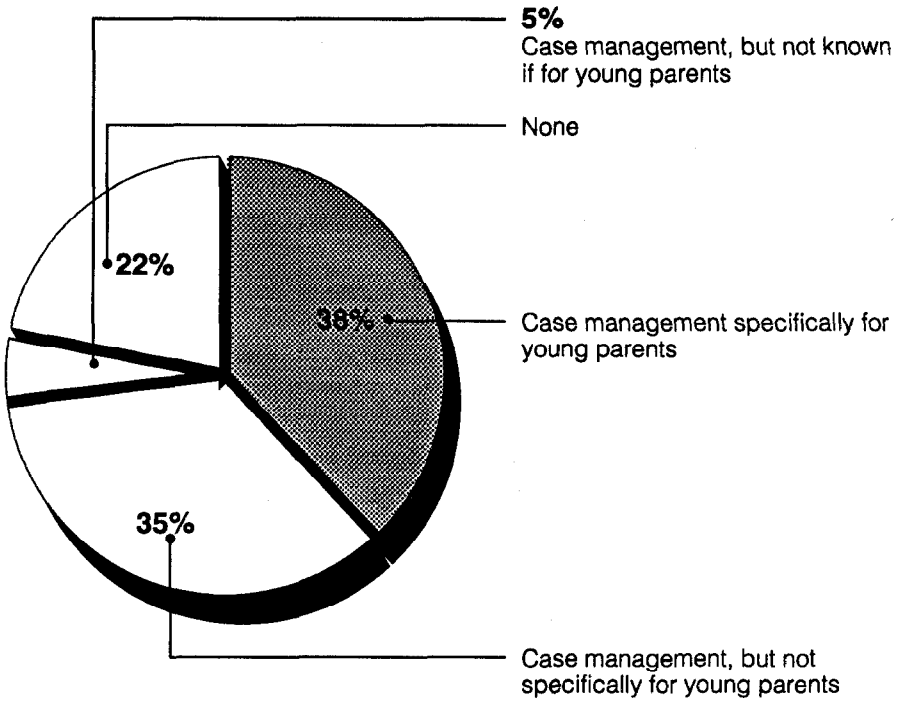
In Memphis, Tennessee, we visited an alternative high school program begun by nonprofit entrepreneurs using a combination of foundation and school district resources. According to the program director and the high school principal, their school was able to expand enrollments and services, in part, by using JOBS funds to offset certain program services, salaries of some professional and support staff, and child care operating expenses. The program provides JOBS participants and other non-JOBS teen parents with services, including counseling with a social worker and psychologist, remedial education, and parenting, nutrition, and life skills workshops. Child care is provided on site, and transportation assistance is also provided.

More Than One-Third of Teen Parent JOBS Participants Received Case Management Services Designed for Young Parents

Thirty-eight percent of teen parent participants received case management services designed specifically for young parents under age 24, as shown in figure III.4. Generally, with case management services, a case manager works with a client to determine the need for, coordinate, and arrange access to services linked to attaining self-sufficiency. However, sometimes such services are specifically designed to serve a particular group of clients. For example, California's Yolo and Stanislaus counties and San Francisco had specialized teen parent case managers who had smaller caseloads than other case managers, allowing them to routinely conduct home or school visits for their teen parent clients.[1] Another 35 percent received case management services similar to those received by other JOBS participants.

[1]California requires its counties, which administer JOBS in the state, to provide intensive case management services to AFDC teen parents who are under age 18 and in JOBS. The state also requires counties to allow case managers sufficient time to provide needed assistance to teen parents and acknowledges the importance of case manager expertise and training related to serving teen parents. Moreover, the state requires that a case manager act "as a counselor, colleague, and role model so that each teenage parent has someone to trust and to turn to for advice, guidance, and ideas."

Figure III.4: Percent of AFDC Teen Parent JOBS Participants Receiving Case Management Services in 16 States

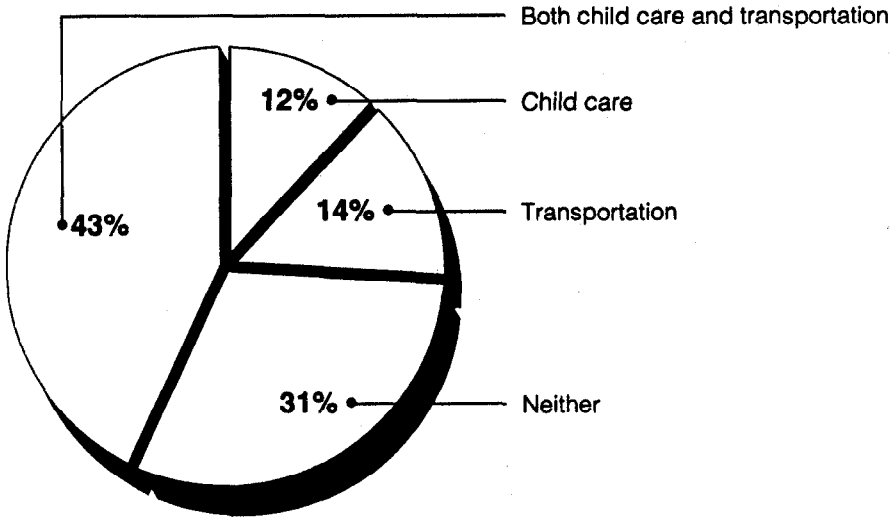


Note: Data were unavailable for 20 percent of the teen parent participants, including those enrolled in New York City.

Large Share of Teen Parent JOBS Participants Received Publicly Funded Child Care or Transportation

In our review, 69 percent of the teen parent JOBS participants received publicly funded assistance with their child care or transportation costs. The Congress intended that JOBS and other public funds be used to assist AFDC recipients with child care and transportation costs as necessary to enable them to participate in JOBS. About 55 percent of the teen parent participants received publicly funded child care assistance and 57 percent received publicly funded transportation assistance. As shown in figure III.5, 43 percent received both.

Figure III.5: Percent of AFDC Teen Parent JOBS Participants Receiving Publicly Funded Child Care and Transportation Assistance in 16 States



Note: Data were unavailable for 9 percent of the teen parent participants, including those enrolled in New York City.

GAO Questionnaires and Summaries of Responses

In this appendix, our questionnaires and summaries of the responses are presented. The first questionnaire, pages 47 to 49, was used to collect data on each teen's AFDC status; the second, pages 50 to 55, was used to collect data related to her enrollment in JOBS. Each question shows the unweighted actual number of respondents that answered each question and the weighted statistic for the 16 states combined. The percentages may not add to 100 due to rounding.

U.S. General Accounting Office

Questionnaire for Local Administrators about **AFDC** Teen Parents and JOBS

Answer questions contained in this booklet based on case file information about this person---->

At the request of the U.S. Congress, the U.S. General Accounting Office (GAO) is studying the implementation of the Job Opportunities and Basic Skills Training (JOBS) program with respect to AFDC teen parents. As part of this study, we are using this questionnaire to survey local administrators and caseworkers about the activities of a representative sample of these teens in a number of states. Through our survey, we want to determine the extent to which teen parents are served by JOBS and identify the types of services they receive.

Directions: This blue booklet contains questions about the background and current status of the AFDC client whose name and other information is printed on the label above. You may receive more than one booklet. Please complete each booklet you have been given and then return all of the booklets to the person who forwarded them to you for completion or as otherwise instructed.

Note: If you have any questions, please call Gale Harris or Margaret Wrightson, collect, at 202-512-7216.

Before answering any questions,

please provide the following information:

The name of the person completing this booklet

Position title

Telephone number

JOBS--Job Opportunities and Basic Skills Training-- is the program that replaced WIN. JOBS provides education, training and supportive services to AFDC recipients. The program in your state may not be named "JOBS." For example, it is called "GAIN" in California and "REACH" in New Jersey. We use "JOBS" as a general name for all such welfare-to-work programs.

1. Is the AFDC case indicated on the label on page 1 *open or closed? (Check one)* ***(N=3371)***

a. ***83%*** Open

b. ***12%*** Closed

c. ***4%*** Other *(Please describe:)*

d. ***1%*** Don't know

AFDC Teen parents and JOBS, 1992

2. Is the person named on the label on page 1 the head of this AFDC household or a dependent in this AFDC household? *(Check one)* ***(N=3318)***

a. ***88%*** Head of an AFDC household

b. ***7%*** Dependent in an AFDC household

c. ***5%*** Other *(Please describe:)* _____

_____

d. ***1%*** Don't know

3. Is the person named on the label the mother of one or more children in this AFDC household? *(Check one)* ***(N=3153)***

a. ***96%*** Yes

b. ***4%*** No--------->

c. ***<1%*** Don't know->

STOP. Return this booklet to the person from whom you received it.

4. On what date was this person's case most recently opened? *(Enter month and year)* ***(N=2620)***

Month: |_____|_____| Year: 19|_____|_____|
Earliest: 10/73 ***Most recent: 2/92***

5. Is this person currently exempted from participating in JOBS (**or, if this is a closed case**, was this person exempted from participating at the time the case was closed)? *(Check one)* ***(N=3002)***

a. ***62%*** Yes

b. ***38%*** No---> Go to question 7 on the next page.

6. Which, if any, of the following is the reason cited in the case file for exempting this person from participating in JOBS? *(Check all that apply)* ***(N=2025)***

a. ***1%*** No reason is cited in the case file

b. ***5%*** Attends high school on a full-time basis

c. ***<1%*** Is physically or mentally unable to participate

d. ***1%*** Lives in an area too remote from JOBS program or activities

e. ***<1%*** Must care for someone who has an illness or is incapacitated

f. ***1%*** Is working at least 30 hours per week

g. ***4%*** Is pregnant

h. ***85%*** Has a young child---> Check the box that includes the age of the youngest child at the time this person was exempted: *(Check one)* ***(N=1697)***

25% 0-6 months ***14%*** 25-36 months

27% 7-12 months ***2%*** 37-48 months

32% 13-24 months ***1%*** 49 months or older

i. ***<1%*** Does not have child care to be able to participate in JOBS

j. ***1%*** Does not have transportation to be able to participate in JOBS

k. ***0%*** Is participating in a drug or alcohol program

l. ***4%*** Was exempted for some other reason *(Please describe:)* _____

_____

m. ***1%*** Don't know

AFDC Teen parents and JOBS, 1992

7. Has this person ever been informed about JOBS? *(Check one)* ***(N=3002)***

a. ***71%*** Yes

b. ***7%*** No

c. ***23%*** Don't know

8. Has this person ever been sanctioned for failing to participate in JOBS? *(Check one)* ***(N=3002)***

a. ***3%*** Yes

b. ***88%*** No

c. ***8%*** Don't know

9. Please write, below, any additional information about this particular person that you believe is important for us to know about how JOBS has helped, hurt, or has had no effect on improving her ability to become self sufficient. ***(N=680)***

Thank you. By answering the questions in this booklet, you have completed the AFDC portion of our survey for the person identified on the label. As we explained in our directions on page 1, please return this and all blue booklets to the person who forwarded them to you. If you need to write to us, our address is:

Margaret Wrightson
US General Accounting Office
NGB/Income Security
441 G Street, NW
Washington, DC 20548

92.3.105483HRD.MJO

U.S. General Accounting Office

Questionnaire for Local Administrators about Teen Parent Activities in **JOBS**

Answer questions contained in this booklet based on case file information about this person---->

At the request of the U.S. Congress, the U.S. General Accounting Office (GAO) is studying the implementation of the Job Opportunities and Basic Skills Training (JOBS) program with respect to AFDC teen parents. As part of this study, we are using this questionnaire to survey local administrators and caseworkers about the activities of a representative sample of these teens in a number of states. Through our survey, we want to determine the extent to which teen parents are served by JOBS and identify the types of services they receive.

Directions: This yellow booklet contains questions about the background and current status of the AFDC client whose name and other information is printed on the label above. You may receive more than one booklet. Please complete each booklet you have been given and then return all of the booklets to the person who forwarded them to you for completion or as otherwise instructed.

Note: If you have any questions, please call Gale Harris or Margaret Wrightson, collect, at 202-512-7216.

Before answering any questions,

please provide the following information:

The name of the person completing this booklet

Position title

Telephone number

JOBS--Job Opportunities and Basic Skills Training-- is the program that replaced WIN. JOBS provides education, training and supportive services to AFDC recipients. The program in your state may not be named "JOBS." For example, it is called "GAIN" in California and "REACH" in New Jersey. We use "JOBS" as a general name for all such welfare-to-work programs.

1. Which one of the following best describes the status of the JOBS case file for the person named on the label above? *(Check one)* ***(N=2969)***

   a. ***19%*** Open or active JOBS file

   b. ***21%*** Closed or inactive JOBS file

   c. ***60%*** No JOBS file exists-->

   STOP. Return this booklet to the person from whom you received it.

2. Is the person named on the label the mother of one or more children in this AFDC household? *(Check one)* ***(N=1100)***

   a. ***94%*** Yes---> Go to question 3, page 2.

   b. ***1%*** Don't know-> Go to question 3, page 2.

   c. ***5%*** No-----> **STOP.** Return this booklet to the person from whom you received it.

AFDC teen parents and JOBS, 1992

3. Has this person been assessed at least once for JOBS? *(Check one)* ***(N=1092)***

   a. ***74%*** Yes

   b. ***27%*** No-----> **STOP.** Return this booklet to the person from whom you received it.

4. On what date was this person first assessed for JOBS? *(Print date)* ***(N=631)***

   Month: I_____I_____I Year: 19I_____I_____I
   Earliest: 8/89 ***Most recent: 7/92***

5. At the time of the first JOBS assessment, what was this person's educational status? *(Check one)* ***(N=624)***

   a. ***22%*** Was attending high school on a full time basis

   b. ***17%*** Had graduated from high school or had obtained a GED

   c. ***12%*** Had dropped out of high school but was involved in some educational activity

   d. ***46%*** Had dropped out of high school and was not involved in any educational activity

   e. ***3%*** Other *(Please describe:)*
   _____
   _____

6. Has this person ever had JOBS-related transportation paid for with any public funds? *(Check one)* ***(N=659)***

   a. ***55%*** Yes

   b. ***42%*** No

   c. ***3%*** Don't know

7. Has this person ever had JOBS-related child care paid for with any public funds? *(Check one)* ***(N=655)***

   a. ***54%*** Yes

   b. ***43%*** No

   c. ***3%*** Don't know

8. Listed below are a number of JOBS activities in which a JOBS participant might participate. Check each box to indicate that this person has ever (currently as well as ever in the past) participated in the activity as part of her JOBS program. *(Check all that apply)* ***(N=634)***

   a. ***43%*** GED preparation

   b. ***34%*** High school (for diploma, not GED)

   c. ***9%*** College (leading to a 2 or 4 year degree)

   d. ***1%*** English as a Second Language class or program

   e. ***9%*** Other educational activity not listed above

   f. ***14%*** Job skills training classes

   g. ***10%*** Job readiness

   h. ***9%*** Job search

   i. ***4%*** Work experience

   j. ***2%*** On-the-job training or work supplementation

   k. Other activity counted as JOBS participation *(Please specify or describe)*

   1% Employment
   10% Other, unrelated categories

AFDC teen parents and JOBS, 1992

9. Did this person graduate from high school or obtain her GED before she began participating in JOBS? *(Check one)* ***(N=626)***

   a. ***19%*** Yes---**>Go to** question 13.

   b. ***81%*** No--->Continue to question 10.

10. As of today, did this person graduate from high school or obtain her GED while participating in JOBS? *(Check one)* ***(N=417)***

    a. ***20%*** Yes---**>Go to** question 13.

    b. ***80%*** No--->Continue to question 11.

11. If she did not graduate from high school or obtain her GED while participating in JOBS, is she currently attending high school or GED classes? *(Check one)* ***(N=330)***

    a. ***54%*** Yes---**>Go to** question 13.

    b. ***46%*** No--->Continue to question 12.

12. If she did not graduate from high school or obtain her GED while participating in JOBS and she is not currently attending high school or GED classes, which of the following are the reasons why she has not completed her secondary education? *(Check all that apply)* ***(N=211)***

    a. ***4%*** Lacked child care

    b. ***3%*** Lacked transportation

    c. ***25%*** Became pregnant with another child

    d. ***3%*** Illness of another that required her care

    e. ***7%*** Reassigned to another JOBS activity

    f. ***1%*** Substance abuse

    g. ***4%*** Personal illness, disability or injury

    h. Some other reason *(Please describe)*--->

    i. ***33%*** Don't know; she dropped out without an explanation

13. During most of the period this person was participating in JOBS, which category includes the number of hours she was usually scheduled to participate per week? *(Check one)* ***(N=619)***

    a. ***14%*** Less than 10 hours

    b. ***18%*** 10 to less than 20 hours

    c. ***46%*** 20 to less than 30 hours

    d. ***22%*** 30 or more hours

14. During most of the period this person was participating in JOBS, was she an exempt volunteer? (An exempt volunteer is one who is not required to participate in JOBS) *(Check one)* ***(N=658)***

    a. ***36%*** Yes

    b. ***58%*** No

    c. ***6%*** Don't know

15. During most of the period this person was participating in JOBS, was she a member of a JOBS target group? *(Check one)* ***(N=658)***

    a. ***81%*** Yes

    b. ***16%*** No

    c. ***3%*** Don't know

Lack of motivation (5%)
Turned age 20 (4%)
Family conflict (2%)
Employed (2%)
Waiting for placement (2%)
Moved (2%)
Other, unrelated categories (14%)

AFDC teen parents and JOBS, 1992

16. Listed below are services this person may have been provided or referred to through JOBS. For each service in column A, provide the following information:

In Column B, check whether or not this person, as of today, ever received the service as part of JOBS. Do not include future services that are planned but have not been received.

In Column C, check whether or not the particular service you checked "Yes" in Column B was specifically designed to serve young custodial parents under the age of 24. The service may have been designed by either JOBS personnel or non-JOBS providers of the service.

Column A	Column B				Column C		
JOBS-connected services	As of today, has this person ever received this service as part of JOBS?				Is this activity specifically designed to serve young custodial parents under the age of 24?		
	Yes	No	Don't know		Yes	No	Don't know
Parenting class *(N=543)*	*14%*	*67%*	*19%*	*If yes--> (N=27)*	*96%*	*4%*	
Life skills class *(N=555)*	*18%*	*63%*	*19%*	*If yes--> (N=111)*	*58%*	*42%*	*<1%*
Case management *(N=617)*	*68%*	*19%*	*13%*	*If yes--> (N=409)*	*52%*	*48%*	*<1%*
Alcohol or drug treatment *(N=520)*	*2%*	*76%*	*22%*	*If yes--> (N=6)*	*1%*	*<1%*	*99%*
Mental health counseling *(N=520)*	*2%*	*75%*	*23%*	*If yes--> (N=11)*	*59%*	*41%*	
Nutrition classes *(N=534)*	*11%*	*67%*	*22%*	*If yes--> (N=58)*	*86%*	*14%*	*<1%*
Prenatal classes *(N=527)*	*6%*	*72%*	*23%*	*If yes--> (N=26)*	*95%*	*5%*	
At-home tutoring *(N=518)*	*1%*	*79%*	*19%*	*If yes--> (N=6)*	*84%*	*16%*	
Alternative site for GED preparation *(N=540)*	*25%*	*60%*	*15%*	*If yes--> (N=108)*	*44%*	*54%*	*2%*
Alternative classroom instruction for GED *(N=539)*	*22%*	*62%*	*16%*	*If yes--> (N=103)*	*40%*	*60%*	*<1%*
Alternative site for high school diploma *(N=527)*	*10%*	*74%*	*16%*	*If yes--> (N=42)*	*71%*	*25%*	*4%*
Alternative classroom instruction for high school diploma *(N=521)*	*9%*	*74%*	*17%*	*If yes--> (N=38)*	*70%*	*30%*	
Other *(Please specify:)* *(N=33)* _____	*100%*			*If yes--> (N=21)*	*60%*	*0%*	*40%*

AFDC teen parents and JOBS, 1992

17. Please write, below or on the next page, any additional information about this particular person that you believe is important for us to know about how JOBS has helped, hurt, or has had no effect on improving her ability to become self sufficient. *(N=257)*

AFDC teen parents and JOBS, 1992

Please make sure that you have completed pages 1 through 4 before you return the questionnaire.

Thank you. By answering the questions in this booklet, you have completed the JOBS portion of our survey for the person identified on the label. As we explained in our directions on page 1, please return this and all yellow booklets to the person who forwarded them to you or as otherwise directed. If you need to write to us, our address is:

Margaret Wrightson
US General Accounting Office
NGB/Income Security
441 G Street, NW
Washington, DC 20548

92.3.105483HRD.MJO

Comments From the Department of Health and Human Services

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

Office of Inspector General

Washington, D.C. 20201

MAY 19 1993

Mr. Joseph F. Delfico
Director, Income Security Issues
United States General
Accounting Office
Washington, D.C. 20548

Dear Mr. Delfico:

Enclosed are the Department's comments on your draft report, "Welfare to Work: States Move Unevenly to Serve Teen Parents in JOBS." The comments represent the tentative position of the Department and are subject to reevaluation when the final version of this report is received.

The Department appreciates the opportunity to comment on this draft report before its publication.

Sincerely yours,

Bryan Mitchell

Bryan B. Mitchell
Principal Deputy Inspector General

Enclosure

COMMENTS OF THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES ON THE U.S. GENERAL ACCOUNTING OFFICE'S DRAFT REPORT, "WELFARE TO WORK: STATES MOVE UNEVENLY TO SERVE TEEN PARENTS IN JOBS," REPORT NO. GAO/HRD-93-74

General Comments

The report confirms and supports information we have obtained with regard to States serving teen parents in JOBS. We agree that early intervention is especially important for teen parents because a significant proportion of teen parents are members of multi-generation welfare families. We believe the information contained in the report will be helpful to us and to States as we explore strategies for dealing with teen parents.

GAO Recommendation

Because some teen parents appear to be incorrectly exempted from JOBS, we recommend that the Secretary of Health and Human Services take action to determine the extent of the problem and work with the States to correct it, as appropriate.

Department Response

We concur. We plan to use the information in the report as a basis for providing States with technical assistance on correctly identifying teen parents for JOBS participation.

GAO Recommendation

Because there is some evidence that States may be overlooking dependent teen parents, we recommend that the Secretary take action to ensure that dependent teen parents are properly identified by States and informed of JOBS requirements.

Department Response

We concur. We will work with our Regional Offices to assist States in identifying eligible teen parents, informing such teens of their JOBS requirements, and in developing programs that are tailored to meet the special needs of teen custodial parents.

Major Contributors to This Report

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Related GAO Products

Welfare to Work: JOBS Participation Rate Data Unreliable for Assessing States' Performance (GAO/HRD-93-73, May 5, 1993).

Welfare to Work: States Serve Least Job-Ready While Meeting JOBS Participation Rates (GAO/HRD-93-2, Nov. 12, 1992).

Welfare to Work: Implementation and Evaluation of Transitional Benefits Need HHS Action (GAO/HRD-92-118, Sept. 29, 1992).

Poverty Trends, 1980-88: Changes in Family Composition and Income Sources Among the Poor (GAO/PEMD-92-34, Sept. 10, 1992).

Unemployed Parents: An Evaluation of the Effects of Welfare Benefits on Family Stability (GAO/PEMD-92-19BR, Apr. 29, 1992).

Welfare to Work: Effectiveness of Tribal JOBS Programs Unknown (GAO/HRD-92-67BR, Mar. 19, 1992).

Unemployed Parents: Initial Efforts to Expand State Assistance (GAO/PEMD-92-11, Jan. 14, 1992).

Welfare to Work: States Begin JOBS, but Fiscal and Other Problems May Impede Their Progress (GAO/HRD-91-106, Sept. 27, 1991).

Mother-Only Families: Low Earnings Will Keep Many Children in Poverty (GAO/HRD-91-62, Apr. 2, 1991).

Welfare: Expert Panels' Insights on Major Reform Proposals (GAO/HRD-88-59, Feb. 3, 1988).

Work and Welfare: Current AFDC Work Programs and Implications for Federal Policy (GAO/HRD-87-34, Jan. 29, 1987).

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