

**ASSESSMENT OF THE EARLY IMPLEMENTATION OF THE
WELFARE-TO-WORK FORMULA GRANT PROGRAM**

U.S. Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration

September 1998 – July 1999

Project Summary: The Welfare-to-Work (WtW) Grant Program, authorized under the Budget Reconciliation Act of 1997, provided an important opportunity to create program models that encourage welfare recipients to combine work and training or education. The purpose of this quick response process study was to provide a status report on the early implementation of WtW formula grants program in eleven states that were among the earliest to receive formula funds under the WtW program: Hawaii, Illinois, Kansas, Louisiana, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Nebraska, Nevada, Oregon, and South Carolina.

The project team from the Urban Institute and CRC examined early implementation experiences at the state and local levels, including targeting and recruitment strategies, service delivery approaches, administrative issues/problems, and early results. The final report was intended to (1) assist the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) in reporting to Congress on first year implementation experiences of states and localities under the WtW formula grants program and (2) inform decision-making by Congress and DOL concerning the future of WtW program policies/regulations, design, and funding.

The assessments provided in this report were based on site visits conducted in five states -- Illinois, Massachusetts, Michigan, Oregon, and South Carolina. Each site visit involved interviews with state workforce development and welfare agencies' program administrators to understand the current status of WtW implementation in the state, variations in program strategies/approaches, and emerging implementation problems/issues. Interviews with state administrators were followed by site visits to one or two localities within each state to gain the perspectives of local workforce development and welfare agency staff and more in-depth understanding of the early implementation (e.g., recruitment strategies, service delivery approaches/strategies, early results, and implementation issues/problems). Nine local program sites were visited: Chicago and Moline (IL), Boston (MA), Detroit and Flint (MI), Salem (OR), and Aiken and Greenwood (SC). Telephone interviews were conducted with state workforce development and welfare agency administrators in the six other early implementing states -- Hawaii, Kansas, Louisiana, Minnesota, Nebraska, and Nevada.

Report: J. Trutko, N. Pindus, B. Barnow, and D. Nightingale, *Early Implementation of the Welfare-to-Work Grants Program*, The Urban Institute, prepared for the Employment and Training Administration, Department of Labor, 1999.