

THE NATIONAL EVALUATION OF THE WELFARE-TO-WORK GRANTS PROGRAM

U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services, Office of the Asst. Sec. for Planning and Evaluation

October 1998 – September 2003

Project Summary: The Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996, and the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program it created, made moving people from welfare to work a primary goal of federal welfare policy. The Balanced Budget Act of 1997 furthered this goal, authorizing the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) to award \$3 billion in welfare-to-work grants to states and local communities to promote job opportunities and employment preparation for the hardest-to-employ recipients of TANF and for noncustodial parents of children on TANF. The law instructed the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) to evaluate the effectiveness of welfare-to-work (WtW) initiatives, including those undertaken by formula and competitive grantees and by American Indian and Alaska Native tribal organizations. In August 1998, DHHS awarded a contract for the evaluation to Mathematica Policy Research, Inc. (MPR) and its subcontractors, The Urban Institute and Support Services International, Inc. Capital Research Corporation, under a consulting agreement with the Urban Institute, concentrated on two aspects of this evaluation:

- *In-Depth Process and Implementation Study.* Project staff from Capital Research Corporation was involved in two rounds of site visits to four of the nine WtW sites included in the implementation study. These visits included discussions with staff of WtW programs and related agencies. This component of the study focused on identification of implementation issues and challenges, and provided program details that help explain how programs achieved desired impacts. Mr. Trutko, of Capital Research Corporation, co-authored an interim and a final implementation report produced under this project component.
- *Assessment of Tribal WtW Program Activities.* Project staff from Capital Research Corporation was involved in the implementation study that focused on documenting tribal welfare and employment systems, the supportive services they have provided, and how tribes have integrated funds from various sources to move their members from welfare to work. CRC staff conducted 3-day site visits at two American Indian reservations (the Navajo Nation and Three Affiliated Tribes).

Reports:

D. Nightingale, C. O'Brien, M. Egner, N. Pindus, and J. Trutko, *Welfare-to-Work Grants Program: Adjusting to Changing Circumstances*, The Urban Institute, prepared for Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2003.

D. Nightingale, N. Pindus, and J. Trutko, *The Implementation of Welfare-to-Work Grant Program*, The Urban Institute, prepared for Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2002.

W. Hillenbrand, M. Rhoades, N. Pindus, and J. Trutko, *The Evaluation of the Tribal Welfare-to-Work Grants Program: Initial Implementation Findings*, Mathematica Policy Research, prepared for the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2001.

D. Nightingale, J. Trutko, and B. Barnow, *The Status of the Welfare-to-Work (WtW) Grants Program After One Year*, The Urban Institute, prepared for the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 1999.

D. Nightingale, T. Thompson, N. Pindus, P. Holcomb, E. Lee, J. Valente, and J. Trutko, *Early Implementation of the Welfare-to-Work Grants Program: Findings from Exploratory Site Visits*, The Urban Institute, prepared for the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 1999.