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# An Investigation of the Strategies used by Organizations Participating in the Welfare-to-Work Network Programs and Correlation of the Strategies with the Retention Data to Determine Best Practices for Job Retention among Former Welfare Recipients.


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FLORIDA INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY

Miami, Florida

AN INVESTIGATION OF THE STRATEGIES USED BY ORGANIZATIONS  
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CORRELATION OF THE STRATEGIES WITH THE RETENTION DATA TO  
DETERMINE BEST PRACTICES FOR JOB RETENTION AMONG FORMER  
WELFARE RECIPIENTS.

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

in

ADULT EDUCATION AND HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

by

Pauline Jennifer Smith

2010

To: Dean Delia C. Garcia  
College of Education

This dissertation, written by Pauline Jennifer Smith, and entitled An Investigation of the Strategies used by Organizations Participating in the Welfare-to-Work Network Program and Correlation of the Strategies with the Retention Data to Determine Best Practices for Job Retention among Former Welfare Recipients, having been approved in respect to style and intellectual content, is referred to you for judgment. We have read this dissertation and recommend that it be approved.

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The dissertation of Pauline Jennifer Smith is approved.

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Interim Dean Kevin O'Shea  
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Florida International University, 2010

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## DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation to my son Randy who sacrificed much for me to attain this goal, and to my mother Enid whose love, unyielding support and encouragement inspired me to continue during times of discouragement. Thanks to those family members whose unwavering love and support provided impetus to complete this dissertation. Special dedication to my grandmother Georgiana Theresa who envisioned this achievement long before the idea was even conceived. May you rest in peace.

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

AN INVESTIGATION OF THE STRATEGIES USED BY ORGANIZATIONS PARTICIPATING IN THE WELFARE-TO-WORK NETWORK PROGRAM AND CORRELATION OF THE STRATEGIES WITH THE RETENTION DATA TO DETERMINE BEST PRACTICES FOR JOB RETENTION AMONG FORMER WELFARE RECIPIENTS.

by

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This ex post facto study ( $N = 209$ ) examined the relationships between employer job strategies and job retention among organizations participating in Florida welfare-to-work network programs and associated the strategies with job retention data to determine best practices.

An internet-based self-report survey battery was administered to a heterogeneous sampling of organizations participating in the Florida welfare-to-work network program. Hypotheses were tested through correlational and hierarchical regression analytic procedures. The partial correlation results linked each of the job retention strategies to job retention. Wages, benefits, training and supervision, communication, job growth, work/life balance, fairness and respect were all significantly related to job retention.

Hierarchical regression results indicated that the training and supervision variable was the best predictor of job retention in the regression equation.

The size of the organization was also a significant predictor of job retention. Large organizations reported higher job retention rates than small organizations. There was no statistical difference between the types of organizations (profit-making and non-profit) and job retention. The standardized betas ranged from to .26 to .41 in the regression equation. Twenty percent of the variance in job retention was explained by the combination of demographic and job retention strategy predictors, supporting the theoretical, empirical, and practical relevance of understanding the association between employer job strategies and job retention outcomes. Implications for adult education and human resource development theory, research, and practice are highlighted as possible strategic leverage points for creating conditions that facilitate the development of job strategies as a means for improving former welfare workers' job retention.



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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this ex post facto study was to investigate the strategies used by organizations participating in welfare-to-work network program and correlate the strategies with the retention data to determine best practices for job retention among former welfare recipients. Chapter 1 presents the background to the study, problem statement, purpose, hypotheses, and theoretical framework. The study's significance, delimitations, assumptions, and the definition of terms are also included.

#### Background to the Study

In 1996, President Bill Clinton signed into law the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunities Reconciliation Act (PRWORA). PRWORA replaced the federal public cash assistance program, Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) with Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF). TANF was designed to reform the welfare system by providing time-limited cash assistance with mandatory work requirements for most recipients (Tinsley-Gooden & Bailey, 2001). Under the TANF cash assistance program, millions of recipients were moved off welfare and into employment (Deckop, Perlmutter, & Freely, 2006).

The TANF laws incorporated a *work-first* philosophy that reduced the emphasis on education and work training and mandated welfare recipients be placed in the first available jobs (Peterson, 2002; Rangajaran & Novak, 1999). Work-first imposed strict sanctions on recipients who failed to meet the new mandatory work requirements (e.g., cutting cash benefits for recipients who failed to complete at least 20 hours of work per week; Peterson, 2002). The ultimate success of this policy initiative also depends on the

actions of social service agencies, employers, and welfare recipients. Welfare agency workers must implement appropriate screening measures such as aptitude tests, skill assessments, behaviorally-based structured interviews, and job try-outs prior to making job referrals (Bolman & Deal, 1997). Employers must also be willing to hire former welfare recipients and implement job retention strategies (Tinsley-Gooden & Bailey, 2001). Welfare recipients must be responsible for reporting to daily work on time, and comply with all work-related instructions (Perlmutter, Deckop, & Freely, 2005). These mandates constitute some of the basic requirements of job retention which is the length of time the employee remains on the job during a specified time period (Tinsley-Gooden & Bailey, 2001). For this study, job retention is classified as having worked at least 12 consecutive months at the same organization (Holzer & Stoll, 2000). Job retention strategies are processes, tools, techniques, devices and resources used to bolster the employee's ability to remain employed or advance in his/her employment (Meisinger, 2006).

The main challenge for former welfare recipients is to find "good" entry-level jobs that are worth retaining. Many entry-level jobs offer low wages and few benefits, or part-time hours with no benefits (Tinsley-Gooden & Bailey, 2001). In 1999, the national median hourly salary was \$6.61 with only 23% of welfare recipients receiving employer-provided health benefits (Loprest, 1999). Fifteen percent of former welfare recipients earned \$7.50 per hour 5 years after exiting welfare rolls, while 51% earned less than that amount (Cancian & Meyer, 2000). This trend did not improve in subsequent years (Cancian & Meyer, 2000; Loprest, 1999). Likewise, Florida welfare transition reports showed among former welfare recipients, 50% of those employed within the last quarter

of 2006 earned less than \$6.90 per hour and only 30% earned more. The other 20% had part-time employment with earnings ranging from \$6.90 to \$10.25 per hour (Agency for Workforce Innovation, 2006). The goal of welfare reform is economic self-sufficiency; therefore adequate wages must be valued as priority. “The hiring of welfare recipients is paramount in realizing policy goals of federal welfare reform efforts because it provides an initial entry into the labor market to remove the employee from the welfare caseload” (Tinsley-Gooden & Bailey, 2001, p. 83). The ability of welfare recipients to retain their jobs after placement is equally important for promoting their long-term economic self-sufficiency. Unfortunately, for many welfare recipients, the lack of education, limited job skills and other work barriers, including the lack of child care assistance make this work requirement arguably an unrealistic goal (Holzer 2000; Ribar, 2005).

In addition to the disproportionately low wages, there exist many other fundamental employment barriers identified by former recipients and employers (Alfred, 2007, 2005a, 2005b). Employer practices such as workplace discrimination and stigmatism add to welfare recipients’ plight (Alfred, 2007, 2003). Many employers are reluctant to hire and train welfare recipients due to these employees’ “assumed” high levels of absenteeism, tardiness, and lack of work ethics (Deckop et al., 2006). Many are unaware of the myriad social and psychological challenges presented by former welfare recipients. To overcome these barriers, welfare agencies need to establish partnership relationships with organizations to encourage their participation (Relave, 2000b). These relationships are germane to familiarizing employers to the needs of welfare recipients, and can help to influence their hiring and retention decisions.



Hiring and training former welfare recipients can also help organizations meet their business and employment needs (Grossenbach, 1998). For example, funding and tax benefits are available to private sector organizations that are willing to hire and train former welfare recipients (Crandall, 2004). These benefits may persuade some employers to make investments in effective work strategies if those investments are matched by public funding (Crandall, 2004). Involving organizations in retention and advancement efforts will also result in decreased costs because fewer individuals will return to TANF (Crandall, 2004).

Employer job strategies would be effective in fostering job growth opportunities among former welfare recipients because a strong positive correlation exists between job retention and job retention strategies (Frincke, 2006; Lidman, 1995; Meisinger, 2006; Perlmutter, Deckop, & Freely, 2005). Organizations that offer work compensation and benefits, provide opportunities for professional growth and development, foster work/life balance, and promote improved communication with employees are more successful in retaining their employees than organizations that do not utilize these strategies (Meisinger, 2006). Additional successful job retention strategies are increased supervision and career advancement opportunities (Griffeth, Hom, & Gaertner, 2000) and equitable treatment of employees (Piper, 2006; See Table 4 and Figure 8 for direct linkages between employer strategies and job retention).

Other variables affecting employment strategies relate to organizational size and type (Lane & Stevens, 2001a). Large organizations are more likely than small organizations to report implementing special job retention strategies (Lane & Stevens, 1995) and more likely to provide a greater array of benefits to entry-level employees

(Frincke, 2006). Government and nonprofit organizations also report higher job retention among welfare recipients (Perlmutter, Deckop & Freely, 2005). This could be attributed to their investing and committing to the advancement of their employees, in particular, former welfare recipients. Notwithstanding, few empirical studies (Lane & Stevens, 2001a, 2001b) have investigated how organizational strategies are related to welfare job retention, even though several studies report a positive relationship between job strategies and length of employment (Lane & Stevens, 2001a, 2001b). Long-term employment is particularly related to firm size (larger organizations have more resources), industry type (non-profits are more accommodating) and “the use of” employment strategies in general (Lane & Stevens, 2001b). However, there remains insufficient research supporting how these strategy variables are associated with the job retention of former welfare recipients.

#### Problem Statement

TANF’s goals tout economic self-sufficiency for former welfare recipients, but its policies arguably undermine its goals (Peterson, 2002). The work-first approach to job retention has been ineffective in helping recipients attain long-term economic self-sufficiency because it minimizes education and work training, and imposes strict work requirements solely to reduce welfare agency case loads (Peterson, 2002; Rangajaran & Novak, 1999).

The policies and practices of the reform program, compounded by the personal, (e.g. financial, social, & psychological) barriers create conditions that perpetuate the cycle of welfare dependency (Alfred, 2007). Developing a greater focus on employer participation can help welfare agencies better serve the supply and demand sides of the labor market (Tinsley-Gooden & Bailey, 2001). Employers tend to have general

misconceptions about welfare recipients. Most view welfare recipients as having challenges that present barriers to positive work outcomes (Alfred, 2007; Cancian & Meyer, 2000, 2005; Relave, 2004). These misconceptions negatively impact hiring decisions among this population.

Given proper training and supervision, the job performance of former welfare recipients may equal or exceed their counterparts (Deckop et al., 2006). Encouragingly, “some employers are willing to expand their hiring practices and are interested in participating in programs and services that address workforce issues and needs” (Relave, 2001, p.2). These practices would include the implementation of work strategies to promote job retention. Paradoxically, the effects of employer practices on either the short- or long-term job retention of former welfare recipients have received little research attention (Deckop et al., 2006).

Preliminary research showed strong positive relationships between employer job retention strategies and job retention improvement at organizations (e.g., Frincke, 2006). Frincke (2006) did not provide the correlational coefficient and the *n size*; therefore more empirical research was needed to test, support and extend this nascent research. Further, there was even less research investigating the degree to which employer job strategies could predict job retention as job strategies vary by organizational size and type (Lane & Stevens, 2001a, 2001b). Research investigating what employment strategies is most beneficial in predicting former welfare recipients’ job retention and economic self-sufficiency are useful for guiding theory and practice.

## Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this ex post facto study was to investigate the strategies used by organizations participating in welfare-to-work network programs and correlate the strategies with the retention data to determine best practices for job retention among former welfare recipients.

Employer-based job strategies are integral to job retention (Holzer, Stoll & Wissoker, 2001) but relatively few studies have investigated “the relationships between organizational job strategies and welfare job retention” (Leonard, 1998; Permlutter, Deckop, & Freely, 2005). More empirical research was needed to closely examine the types of job strategies being provided by employers, and needed to investigate how employer-based strategies translate into job retention for former welfare recipients.

## Research Hypotheses

The following research hypotheses guided the study:

- H<sub>1</sub>. There is a significant relationship between employer job retention strategies and job retention of former welfare recipients.
- H<sub>2</sub>. There is a significant relationship between organizational type, organizational size, and job title, and job retention of former welfare recipients.
- H<sub>3</sub>. After controlling for salient background variables (i.e., organizational type, organizational size, and job title), job retention strategies will be significantly related to the job retention of former welfare recipients.

## Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework central to the issues of welfare job retention is the 3-M Model of Job Retention (Roessler & Rubin, 1998). The 3-M model utilizes *match*, *maturity*, and *mastery* as predictors of job retention. In the context of this study, job match is defined as the pairing of the worker's skills with the right employer to fulfill the worker's needs and to achieve the goals of the employer. Maturity is the ability to learn and develop skills techniques to adjust and adapt to the work environment (Roessler & Rubin, 1998); while mastery is the possession the skills for work-related problem-solving (Chapter 2 provides further description).

The three major factors to consider in the implementation of welfare-to-work policy are welfare recipients, employers, and the match between the two (Lane & Stevens, 2001b). The 3-M model of Job Retention, though originally used with employees with disabilities (Kramer, 1999), was applicable to welfare recipients as both groups experience similar work-related barriers (Lane & Stevens, 2001a, 2001b). Among the common barriers to welfare job retention are educational and work experience deficits, employer stigmatism, and workplace discrimination in a competitive workforce.

The 3-M model of job retention purports a high correlation between (a) long-term employment and quality of life (Roessler & Rubin, 1998); (b) life satisfaction, productivity, income levels and long-term employment (Mehnert, Krauss, Nadler, & Boyd, 1990; Salkever, 2000), and (c) adaptability to on-the-job barriers and challenges and job retention (Cochran, 1990). In summary, the goal of TANF is economic self-sufficiency; therefore, applying the 3-M model serves manifold purposes. Not only is it

useful in helping the welfare worker retain his or her job, but the feeling of productivity gained by being able to better provide for his or her family without reliance on welfare assistance helps to decrease stigmatism and elevates the individual's esteem.

Using the 3-model in the long-term will ultimately meet the goals of the welfare reform program by permanently reducing welfare caseloads.

The model uses counseling strategies as integral to implementing these constructs. The appropriate partnership or job-person match is a prerequisite to improving job retention outcomes (Buys & Rennie, 2001). Matching is utilized during needs assessment and is used for pairing the worker's needs and skills with the requirements of the employers. Maturity involves the acquisition and development of skills-learning techniques such as soft skills and technical skills to satisfy the job demands. Maturity is demonstrated by employee's ability to "exercise personal initiative, use good judgment and have good listening skills" (Alfred & Martin, 2007, p. 10). Mature workers, who skillfully meet the challenges of their job demands, not only retain their jobs but are also selected for advancement and promotion (Super, Savickas, & Super, 1996). Finally, mastery involves workers' abilities to adjust to inevitable and sometimes unpredictable problems on the job. Being able to resolve unexpected problems on the job requires the ability to define problems accurately, generate feasible options, select the most practical option, and implement the steps required to solve the problem. Acquiring these problem solving skills will ultimately promote job retention (Gulick, 1992).

## Significance of the Study

The results of this study are useful in terms of policy, practice, and its contribution to the fields of adult education and human resource development. The results are useful in informing policies at the federal, state, and local levels that might stimulate changes in the current delivery of job retention services among welfare recipients. The “work-first” approach to job retention has been ineffective in meeting the goals of economic self-sufficiency among former welfare recipients (DeParle, 2002; Gais & Weaver, 2002) because of the political, socioeconomic, and psychological (personal) barriers imposing on the participants' progress (Alfred, 2007; Alfred & Martin, 2007).

Work-first creates significant obstacles to fulfilling the expectations of economic self-sufficiency by its insistence on work as a primary objective of welfare reform, among participants who lack basic social, education, and job skills to succeed in a competitive workforce (Alfred, 2007). This discriminatory practice towards minority groups, especially Black and Hispanic recipients, have kept them on welfare longer; thus, these groups are more likely to be affected by time limits (Savner, 2000; Soss, Schram, Vartanian, & O'Brien, 2003). Discriminatory practices by employers also help prolong welfare dependency. Minorities are less likely to find employment (Carroll 2001; Gordon, 2001), and are more likely to be sanctioned off welfare (Savner, 2000) than their white counterparts.

Amid reports of increased workplace participation among, for example, Wisconsin's former welfare recipients, there is further evidence that suggests personal and structural barriers such as the stigma of being on welfare, hinder participants' economic development within the new culture of welfare reform (Mead, 2002). This is

due largely to former welfare recipients' not having the social and educational skills required to participate in social networks to enhance their opportunities in the employment marketplace (Alfred, 2007). Additional personal barriers such as housing, child-care, transportation, domestic violence and substance abuse limit their opportunities for economic development; therefore policies are currently being implemented to revamp the system. Among the policy changes are the inclusion of organizational partnerships and participation for increased job opportunities and job retention (Cancian & Meyer, 2000; Deparle, 2002). Hence, the results of this study may stimulate research in the field of welfare work development that further inform policymakers about the benefits of increasing employer participation and the use of job strategies to promote job retention.

This study is useful also for informing the job referral practices of welfare agencies, as well as informing the hiring, and retention practices of employers. Currently, under work-first, the emphasis remains more with case-load reduction than with proper job placement. Many recipients are stigmatized for not being qualified for higher-paying jobs and are therefore placed into the first available (usually low-paying) jobs. By linking former welfare recipients to employers utilizing effective retention strategies, long-term job retention will likely improve (Buys & Rennie, 2001). Therefore, the results of this study dispel possible negative biases toward former welfare recipients, and reinforce the need to implement strategies that will promote job retention.

Finally, the study informs and expands the practice of adult education and human resource development (HRD; Rothwell, 1995). Inadequate training is an important factor contributing to high unemployment especially among lower-skilled workers. To counter these challenges, prescriptions for optimal organizational learning conditions have been



proffered (Gagne & Medsker, 1996). HRD specialists must cooperate with welfare reform agency staffs to design and deliver job service programs for a more competent and resilient workforce (Alfred, 2003). Adult educators can become key players in welfare-reform efforts by assuming important roles in designing and implementing programs that will help employers understand the needs of welfare recipients. Providing these services could yield higher job retention rates.

### Delimitations

While it may be ideal to include the entire population of former welfare recipients in this study (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2001), the population was limited to only the State of Florida. Policies are inconsistent among states and therefore different states have legislated different welfare policies to meet the demographic needs of their perspective states. For example, some states have higher concentration of immigrant populations with language barriers; some states have more welfare recipients living in inner cities where job access is more challenging, while other states might have a larger population of former welfare recipients living in rural areas where transportation and social networking might present challenges to job retention. Subsequently, the results of this study cannot be generalized to the national level because of the differences in policy and economic environments among the states.

In Florida for example, the preponderance of jobs available to former welfare recipients is primarily in the service industry. Oftentimes these are low paying jobs with little opportunities for upward mobility; therefore in Florida the emphasis is on education training and job training for job retention. As such, this study focuses on the job

strategies that are being provided by organizations participating in the welfare-to-work in the State of Florida to ensure job retention for former welfare recipients.

### Assumptions

It was assumed that the participants understood the research measures' questions and completed the instruments honestly and accurately. It was also assumed that the sample was representative of the population of interest and that the revised instrument was valid and reliable (See Appendix A: Employer Job Retention Strategy Survey).

### Definitions of Terms

The following definitions refer to terms unique to this study and used extensively for the purpose of this study. Other terms generally used in this study were defined as they were introduced.

*Aid to Families with Dependent Children* (AFDC) is a federal public cash assistance program whereby money was automatically guaranteed to every qualified person after a 6-month re-certification period. Work accountability was not required (Deckop, Perlmutter, & Freely, 2006).

*Job retention rates* are the number of welfare recipients who maintain stable, consecutive employment with one employer or multiple employers for at least 1 year after job placement (Lurie, 2001).

*Job retention strategies* are processes, tools, techniques, devices and resources used to bolster the employee's ability to remain employed or advance in his/her employment (Meisinger, 2006).

*Job training* is the required set of skills and attitudes prescribed by specific organizations to accomplish specific organizational goals (Holzer & Stoll, 2001; Jacobsen & Green, 2000). This variable was measured by the Employer Job Retention Strategy Survey (Deckop et al., 2006; Spector, 1998).

*Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunities Reconciliation Act (PRWORA)* is the welfare reform act signed in 1996 by President Clinton, replacing AFDC. This act requires all able-bodied welfare recipients under age 65 be removed from welfare rolls and placed in long-term jobs (Peterson, 2002).

*Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF)* is a program designed to move welfare recipients permanently from the welfare rolls into meaningful long-term employment (Tinsley-Gooden & Bailey, 2001).

*Welfare agency/ welfare programs* are nationwide government- subsidized programs established to assist poor single parents, children, elderly and the disabled (Gais & Weaver, 2002).

*Welfare recipients* are the population or groups of people currently receiving welfare assistance (i.e., cash assistance, food stamps, child-care, transportation or medical benefits; Cancian & Meyer, 2002).

*Welfare transients* are former welfare recipients who have left the welfare rolls but are still participating in the welfare programs to obtain employment and other support services (Peterson, 2002).

*Work barriers* are any lack of educational skills, employment skills, support services, or intrinsic motivation that present obstacles to gainful long-term employment (Rangajaran, 1998).

*Work-first approach* is the welfare philosophy mandating clients to be placed in first available jobs to reduce welfare case-loads (Brown, Buck, & Skinner, 1998; Rangajaran & Novak, 1999).

### Summary

This chapter provided an overview of the study including the background of the study, the problem statement, the purpose, and the research hypotheses. The theoretical framework, definition of terms, and significance of the study were also discussed. Chapter 2 presents a chronology of welfare program policies, analyzes the previous studies of the impact of employer strategies on welfare job retention, and reviews other literature that supports this study. Chapter 3 presents the research design and explains the chosen methodology. The sample population, hypotheses, sources of data, processes for data collection and data analysis are also included. Chapter 4 describes and summarizes the findings of the study. Chapter 5 concludes the findings, recommendations, and implications for further research.

## CHAPTER II

### LITERATURE REVIEW

Chapter 2 begins with an historical overview of welfare prior to and during the New Deal Era, leading up to modern welfare reform. The chapter discusses the major work barriers identified within the literature and the challenges they pose for job retention. Next, preliminary discussions on the role of intermediary strategies (welfare case management) are followed by discussions on the role of employer participation in supporting job retention. The chapter further discusses the job retention theory and identifies the strategies used by participating organizations in the welfare-to-work network in Florida. Other factors relating to job retentions such as organizational size and type are also discussed in this chapter. The chapter concludes with the summary.

#### History of Welfare

Historically, welfare served as one of the nation's most basic safety nets for families in need. The systematic national welfare program began in the U.S. with the introduction of the New Deal in the wake of the 1930s Depression during the presidency of Franklin D. Roosevelt. However, government assistance programs were available long before the 1930s (Burg, 1996). Relief efforts for the poor traditionally have been maintained at the local and county levels throughout most of the U.S. since the early 1900s to assist the aged and disabled, and to give financial aid to single mothers to preserve their families. However, later welfare was conceived as weakening the moral fortitude of its recipients (Mead, 2002).

### *Early History*

In 1909, President Theodore Roosevelt called a White House conference on how to best deal with the problem of poor single mothers and their children. The conference declared that preserving the family in the home was preferable to placing the poor in institutions, which were widely criticized as costly failures (Moffitt, 2003).

In 1911, the "mother's pension" movement sought to provide state aid for poor fatherless children who remained in their own homes while being cared for by their mothers. In effect, poor single mothers would be excused from working outside the home. Welfare reformers argued that the state pensions would also prevent juvenile delinquency since mothers would be able to supervise their children full-time (Burg, 1996).

In 1933, the mother's pension programs were operating in all but two states, and in 1934, the average state grant per child was \$11 a month (Burg, 1996). These programs, that varied greatly from state to state, and even county to county, were administered in most cases by state juvenile courts and mainly benefited families headed by White widows. Unfortunately these programs excluded large numbers of divorced, deserted, and minority mothers and their children (Burg, 1996).

Few private and government retirement pensions existed in the United States before the Great Depression. The prevailing view was that individuals should save for their old age or be supported by their children. However about 30 states provided some welfare aid to poor elderly persons without any source of income. The decision on who should qualify for old-age assistance generally remained with the local officials (Burg, 1996).

The New Deal Era began during the Great Depression. The emphasis during the first 2 years of President Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal was to provide work relief for the millions of unemployed Americans (Handler, 1991). Federal money flowed to the states to pay for public works projects, which employed the jobless. Some federal aid also directly assisted needy victims of the Depression (Burg, 1996; Handler, 1991). The states, however, remained mainly responsible for taking care of the so-called "unemployables" (i. e., widows, poor children, the elderly poor, and the disabled; Handler, 1991). This endeavor eventually overwhelmed states and private charities, as they were unable to continue maintaining these supports at a time when tax collections and personal giving were declining steeply.

In 1935, then Secretary of Labor, Francis Perkins championed many aspects of the New Deal, including the Civilian Conservation Corps, the Public Works Administration, its successor the Federal Works Agency, and the labor portion of the National Industrial Recovery Act (Handler, 1991). In 1935, she helped to create the Social Security Act, a national welfare system (Moffitt, 2008) along with other government programs to provide relief from the Depression. The federal unemployment and old-age insurance programs signed into law, Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) guaranteeing benefits for poor single mothers and their children, along with other dependent persons (Moffitt, 2008). With The Social Security Act the U.S. established unemployment benefits, pensions for the many uncovered elderly Americans, and welfare for the poorest Americans. Signing of the federal old-age pensions together with employer-paid unemployment insurance (also a part of the Social Security Act) were designed to provide economic security (Moffitt, 2003).

The federal government guaranteed one-third of the total amount spent by states for assistance to needy and dependent children under age 16 (Burg, 1996). Francis spearheaded additional federal programs that provided aid to destitute elderly people, the needy blind, and children with physical disabilities (Moffitt, 2003). Although financed partly by federal tax money, the states could still set their own eligibility requirements and benefit levels. This part of the law was pushed by Southern states so they could control the coverage made available to their African-American population (Burg, 1996; Handler, 1991). This explains the origin of welfare as a federal government assistance program, although the program was never intended to be permanent.

President Roosevelt and the members of Congress who wrote the welfare provisions into the Social Security Act believed that the need for federal aid to dependent children and poor old people would gradually decline as employment improved and those over 65 began to collect Social Security pensions (Handler, 1991). However, since 1935, increasing divorce and father desertion rates have dramatically multiplied the number of poor single mothers with dependent children (Burg, 1996; Handler, 1991).

Since the Great Depression, the national welfare system expanded both in coverage and federal regulations (Moffitt, 2008). Eligibility rules under the Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) program were designed to provide assistance to any family with earnings low enough to qualify. Individuals with few earnings and those who became unemployed were automatically eligible for benefits, and as unemployment rose, so did caseloads. The cyclical nature of AFDC was a key component of the program's ability to respond to periods of economic crisis for families who were unable to find work and in need of assistance; but over time its intent was rendered



counter-productive due to the rapid growth of the number of recipients who come to view the program as a permanent income entitlement, rather than being a temporary assistance (Corcoran, et al., 2000). From its inception, the system drew critics. Some complained that the system was not effective enough in getting people to work. Others simply believed the federal government should not administer a welfare system (Corcoran et al., 2000). Some of the social ills developed from welfare, occurred as a result of how early welfare policies were written. Instead of viewing welfare as a temporary assistance for the poor and disabled, many recipients come to view it as an entitlement that has been bequeathed from one generation to the next.

### *Modern Welfare Reform*

The public burden theory of welfare blamed the government for assuming responsibilities that should rest with individuals, which resulted in perverse effects of work disincentives and non-marital childbearing (Pratt 1997). The theory posited that in the U. S., once given welfare assistance, recipients will cease to work, creating unnecessary burdens for the taxpaying public (Mead, 2002). Some opponents of welfare reform argued that welfare undermined families by discouraging work, compromising family stability, and encouraging negative behaviors toward work (Zuckerman & Kalil, 2000), and encouraging teen-out-of wedlock while discouraging employment (Mead, 1992). Others were concerned that the economic progress of the poor, and particularly of poor Blacks, had been halted, while welfare rolls vastly expanded and family dissolution became a virtual plague (Cancian & Meyer, 1999; Harris, 1996). These pervasive beliefs led to early forms of government welfare being tightly restricted and narrowly targeted. In short, welfare was still viewed only as a temporary solution.

In 1988, The Family Support Act initiated the JOBS program for education and skills training, but this program did little to improve the welfare system. The criticisms intensified, especially in the 1980s and 1990s. In 1992, then President Bill Clinton was compelled to make a promise to end welfare. Shortly thereafter, a Republican Congress passed and President Clinton signed a reform law that returned most control of welfare back to the states, thus ending 61 years of federal responsibility (Moffitt, 2008).

In 1996, The Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA) replaced the old Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) with the Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) program. TANF is a work-first based program that requires recipients to participate in work or work-based activities in order to receive cash assistance. The program was created in part out of a response to concerns that AFDC encouraged joblessness (Mead, 1992) and that it encouraged out-of-wedlock childbearing (Murray, 1993). However, the driving force behind the legislation was the notion that cash assistance should be a temporary stop toward employment (Bane & Ellwood, 1994).

Under the traditional AFDC program, the federal government automatically provided cash assistance to every qualified family. Individual entitlement to public cash assistance was guaranteed after a 6-month recertification without any work accountability. That is, current employment or active job search were not required to remain eligible for the program (Kane & Lichter, 2006). Under current TANF policies, the federal government devolved welfare responsibilities to states and local government, giving them more autonomy in designing job retention programs (Crandall, 2004). TANF established a 5-year lifetime eligibility limit for receipt of federally subsidized funds for

adults (with few exceptions). In most states, recipients must work a minimum of two consecutive years during the 5-year period to become eligible for cash assistance (Crandall, 2004).

In contrast to the AFDC program, the federal government devolved welfare responsibilities to states (and localities, at each state's discretion) giving them broad flexibility to decide how TANF funds should be used. The primary constraint being that the funding must be used to achieve one of the purposes of TANF specified in PRWORA (Pavetti, 2000). The devolution of welfare services includes a *block grant* (a large sum of money allocated for welfare training) designed to attract organizational participation in providing job retention services and lower employment barriers (Gais & Weaver, 2002). The block grant which functions for non-profit and for-profit organizations (Peterson, 2002), allows states to discretionarily outsource job service and creates more incentives to employers willing to provide effective job services (Peterson, 2002). It functions for private non-profit and for-profit organizations (Peterson, 2002). This resource was also designed to develop training programs and employment strategies to help former welfare recipients keep and master their jobs (Dix & Savickas, 1995).

Under TANF rules, a state can spend its block grant on cash or non-cash assistance, support services, and administrative costs in connection with providing assistance to needy families with children (Pavetti, 2000). TANF allows states to discretionarily use funds, with few restrictions, as long as they adhere to the underlying provisions of moving parents into employment as quickly as possible by expanding welfare-to-work programs (Schott, Lazere, Goldberg, & Sweeney, 1999), sanctioning those who refuse to work, and encouraging all who apply for assistance to look for work

first. Assistance to immigrants was severely curtailed, and restrictions over teen parents were implemented. The services and/or cash grants that are intended to help families achieve economic self-sufficiency, reduce dependency, promote family stability and the formation of two-parent families, and reduce out-of-wedlock births must all be consistent with the purposes of TANF (Greenberg, 2000).

Since federal policymakers transferred welfare fiscal and regulatory responsibilities to state and local agencies, the devolution increasingly directed resources to decrease welfare caseloads, and designed policies to lower barriers to work (Gais & Weaver, 2002). After TANF was implemented, 28 states had policies that imposed immediate work requirements upon recertification (Council of Economic Advisers, 2001). Under the federal law, education and training activities count towards the work participation (Greenberg, 2000; Greenberg & Laracy, 2000), but welfare agencies in many states have been haphazard in linking clients to essential services such as counseling services, and help with childcare, housing and transportation, particularly where state policy gives them little or no support (Gais & Weaver, 2002). Instead of implementing these policies, many state agencies continued to practice ideologies inherent in the philosophy of work-first that create barriers to employment and job retention (Alfred, 2005a, 2005b). Such barriers include up to 5-year lifetime limit on welfare, stringent work requirements and penalties for non-compliance.

Florida's welfare reform program, the Work and Gain Economic Self-Sufficiency (WAGES), for example, went beyond federal law by imposing a relatively short, 2-or 3-year time limit on benefit receipt and by eliminating all cash assistance when adults failed to comply with work requirements or other rules (Brock et al., 2004). However, to

encourage work, recipients are quickly assigned to individual or group job search activities through Community Work Experience Programs (CWEPs) while retaining welfare eligibility (Brock et al., 2004).

Some Florida reforms allowed welfare recipients to keep more of their earnings without losing welfare eligibility. Miami-Dade County, located in Southeastern Florida, enforced the work requirements strictly, despite recurring problems in managing and delivering services to help people become employed. In October of 2000, the Florida Workforce Innovation Act, Senate Bill 2050, was passed. It substantially redefined Florida's welfare delivery system by replacing WAGES program with the Welfare Transition (WT) program. This legislation also consolidated and streamlined the state workforce and TANF programs under one board, Workforce Florida, Inc. (WFI). The Act created the Agency for Workforce Innovation (AWI), which provides administrative and program guidance for workforce programs.

In 1997 Congress passed legislation for the Welfare-to-Work program (WtW; Anderson, Miller & Bos, 2002 ). This is funded by a block grant administered by the Department of Labor to provide employment and retention services to welfare recipients (Anderson et al., 2002). "With the passage of legislation creating the WtW program in 1997, the workforce development system assumed a greater role in providing employment services to recipients both nationally and locally" (Anderson et al., 2002 p.20).

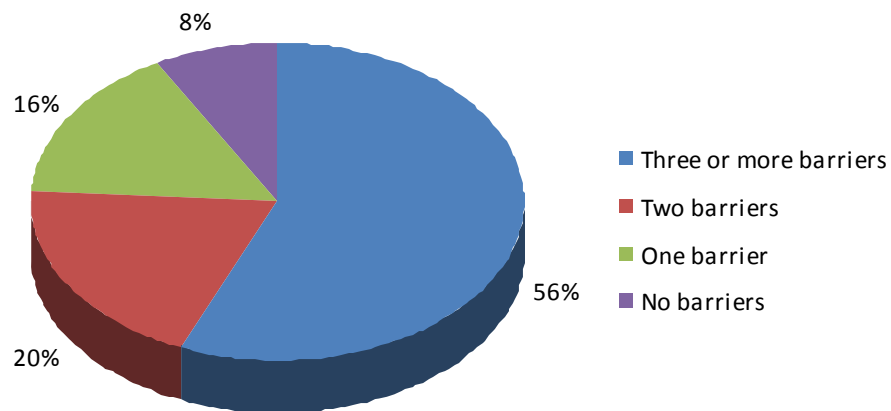
In 1998 the Job Training and Partnership Act (JTPA) was funded, but was quickly repealed due to limited employer participation (Batt & Osterman, 2008). JTPA was replaced with the Work Investment Act (WIA). WIA requires that localities replace their

Private Industry Councils with Workforce Investment Boards (WIBs) comprised of government and private-sector entity representatives. It mandates the establishment of “One Stop Centers” for all clients to access full range services irrespective of whether or not they meet income criteria. Like TANF, WIA takes a work-first approach to service delivery (Anderson et al., 2002 ) When Congress and President Clinton approved the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Act (PRWORA) in 1996, benefits to needy families were no longer guaranteed (Burg, 1996; Handler, 1991). Therefore, since PRWORA was enacted, states have been trying to develop their own programs to assist recipients find and keep jobs, but such efforts have been thwarted by the major work barriers inherent in the TANF system (Burg, 1996; Handler, 1991).

#### Welfare Work Barriers and Assistance under TANF

Haskins, Sawhill, and Weaver, (2001) contend there are at least four compelling reasons to invest in improving the employment prospects of those who face serious barriers to steady work. First, from a taxpayer’s perspective, it is costly to support individuals who, with assistance, could work. In fact, Americans have demonstrated that they are typically willing to spend more in the short run to increase self-sufficiency in the long run. Second, there may be benefits for society when hard-to-employ people are able to work steadily, for example, beneficial effects on public safety, family structure, and child well-being. Third, many believe that the retirement of the baby boom generation will produce tighter labor markets in the not-too-distant future, making it critical to take the best advantage possible of our nation’s human resources. Finally, many of the hard-to-employ want to work, and most Americans strongly believe that all individuals deserve the opportunity to make the most of their skills and ambitions (Spielgelman &

Norris, 2005). This holds true also for welfare recipients, especially female recipients who face many employment barriers and for whom the inherent barriers within TANF work-first philosophy are stacked against, making employment and job retention almost impossible. The statistical reports on welfare barriers predict a gloomy outlook on the prospects for future employment among poor single women, who are typically welfare recipients. In 2000, 56% reported having three or more barriers, 20 % two barriers, 16 % one barrier and only 8% reported no barriers to employment (Spielgelman & Norris, 2005; see Figure 1).



*Figure 1.* Percentages of welfare recipients with work barriers.

These statistics show structural barriers inherent within TANF's policies and practices as well as personal, (for example financial, social, and psychological barriers) exacerbate the conditions of welfare dependency (Alfred, 2007). Therefore measures must be taken to provide assistance to ensure job retention instead of placement in the first available job to decrease welfare case-load.

### *Work-First Barriers*

When the Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) replaced Aid to Family with Dependent Children (AFDC), thousands of low-income families lost a crucial safety net. It instituted a punitive “*work-first*” approach that has done little to help them move out of poverty. The “work first” approach, adopted by most states was built on the belief that “any job is a good job” (Pavetti 2000, p. 46). In these programs, the goal is the rapid placement of recipients into jobs for which they are currently qualified, but the barriers they face present serious challenges to making a living wage (Campbell, Baumohl, & Hunt, 2003).

Work First programs use a labor force attachment model that assumes that finding a job and developing work skills through direct experience, rather than participating in education and training, is the best way to move recipients off the rolls (Corcoran et al., 2000). However, as seen in the present economic climate the “work first” culture of welfare reform made little sense even in the best of times, because it fails to put families on a path out of poverty; instead it creates added pressures and barriers to employment (Rangarajan, 1998).

In most states, recipients must work before the end of the 2- year period. In 1999, for example, 28 states had policies that imposed immediate work requirements (Council of Economic Advisers, 2001). In the federal law, education and training activities counted toward the work participation requirements to a very limited extent (Greenberg, 2000; Greenberg & Laracy, 2000). Under “work first” a majority of families were cut off welfare because of non-compliance with work rules rather than because of expired time limits (Greenberg, 2000; Greenberg & Savener, 1999). The seemingly non-



compliance was not due necessarily to an unwillingness to participate, but due largely to unrealistic work requirements that are inherent within the TANF work-first program (Greenberg & Laracy, 2000).

#### *Work Requirements*

Recipients must engage in work activities within 24 months of receiving assistance or at the time they are deemed "work ready" (Golonka, 1998). States can set a shorter time period, and more than half have taken this option, with many requiring immediate engagement in work or work-related activities (Nam, 2005).

#### *Time Limits*

Nearly two-fifths of states have chosen to follow the federal lifetime limit of 60 months of receipt of cash assistance (Gallagher, Perese, Schreiber, & Watson, 1998; Golonka, 1998). Another 10 states also terminated benefits at this point, but other state provisions limited assistance before the 5-year mark. For example, while Illinois maintained a 5-year cap of receipt of benefits, the state also terminated benefits after 24 months of receipt, not allowing families to reapply for assistance until another 24 months had passed (Golonka, 1998). The adult portion of an Arizona family's grant is eliminated after 24 months, and then the entire grant stopped after 60 months. Another group of 21 states set time limits shorter than 60 months, ranging from 21 months in Connecticut to 48 months in Delaware, Florida, and Georgia. Three states did not establish strict lifetime limits, and some states had variable time limits for recipients based on their characteristics (such as education level) or the region of the state in which they reside (Gallagher et al., 1998; Golonka, 1998).

### *Sanctions*

Like JOBS, PRWORA stipulates that states must sanction recipients who fail to comply with program requirements (Gallagher et al., 1998). Many states have increased the severity of these sanctions: Thirty-six states terminate benefits entirely, either at the initial point of noncompliance or after a period of noncompliance. Seven states use "lifetime" sanctions against recipients who are in continued non-compliance (Golonka, 1998; see Table 1).

Table 1

#### *State Sanction Policies*

State sanction policy for non-compliance	Number of states
Terminate benefits entirely, either at the initial point of noncompliance or after a period of noncompliance	36
Use "lifetime" sanctions against recipients who are in continued noncompliance	7

In effect, such sanctions function no differently from the time limit, but recipients may face them much sooner and the consequences may be more severe than time limits (Gallagher et al., 1998; Golonka, 1998). Many clients were granted extensions to time limits (Gueron & Pauly, 1991). Despite this, caseloads fell rapidly by 38% since PRWORA was passed (Fein & Wang, 1999).

While in many localities caseloads began to decline, in 1994 much of the post-reform decline resulted from strict enforcement of sanctions. The severity of sanctioning varied significantly across states and local offices; some severe enough to draw criticism

from opponents who argued that sanctioning produced the opposite effects (Corcoran et al., 2000; Danziger, 1999).

Florida, for example adopted some of the strictest time limits and work requirements in the nation and broadened the pool of clients subject to sanctions by creating few possibilities for exemptions” (Botsko et al., 2001). The sanctions themselves also fell at the strong end of the continuum, resulting in an immediate, full-family loss of TANF benefits and a reduction of Food Stamp benefits to the fullest extent permitted by federal law (Botsko et al., 2001). The welfare caseload in Florida has dropped faster than the national average under welfare reform, declining 78% between September 1996 and June 2004 (based on the total number of people receiving cash, over two fifths of the caseload had received at least one sanction (Fording, Schram, & Soss, 2005).

Advocates of welfare reform voiced concerns that the sanctions imposed on families for noncompliance with work requirements may increase financial strain among families, thereby potentially increasing child abuse and neglect (Zuckerman & Kalil, 2000). Similar concerns have also been expressed that increased employment without adequate child-care arrangements could lead to decreased supervision and charges of neglect (Kalil et al., 1998). Results of a 2000 national telephone survey conducted with state Child Protection Services (CPS) directors suggested that caseloads have increased in the wake of welfare reform (Romero, Chavkin, & Wise, 2000). While TANF imposed sanctions for violating all its work requirements, CPS only investigates the more serious violations relating to maternal drug use, children’s school absenteeism, and teen-parent school and living arrangement mandates (Kalil et al., 1998). The Romero et al. (2000) survey reported the conflicting administrative goals of the two social programs (TANF &

CPS) could affect the well-being of welfare parents and their children (Kalil et al, 1998; Zuckerman & Kalil, 2000).

### *Diversion*

Some states have intensified efforts to divert applicants from receiving cash assistance (Maloy, Pavetti, Shin, Darnell, & Scarpulla-Nolan, 1998). This practice, called diversion, may be accomplished through: (a) providing one-time financial assistance, (b) requiring mandatory job search as a condition of eligibility, and/or (c) linking applicants to other services or resources. Three fifths of states use diversion activities, with lump sum payments and/or mandatory upfront job search being the most common. If an applicant accepts a lump sum payment, he or she faces a subsequent period of ineligibility (Maloy et al., 1998). Mandatory job search prior to eligibility seeks to divert more job-ready applicants directly into the labor market. Referring applicants to other services in lieu of cash benefits were driven by beliefs that cash assistance should be a last resort and that services provide a better way of promoting work. The use of diversion in New York City's "Jobs Centers" reduced enrollment rates of welfare applicants from about 50% to 30% (Besharov, 1999).

How diversion policies are implemented remains unclear since clients may be discouraged, rather than diverted, from applying for assistance (Seefeldt, Sandfort, & Danziger, 1998). Research on the former system indicates that not all welfare staff is able to take on these functions since they were trained primarily to perform eligibility determination and income maintenance work (Meyers, Glaser, & McDonald, 1998; Seefeldt et al., 1998). While it is possible to achieve successful caseload reduction through the implementation of time limits and sanctions, this does not necessarily

translate into increased economic self-sufficiency on the part of families who are the targets of these policies.

In fact, families that are timed off the welfare rolls may instead be experiencing even deeper poverty and deprivation (Bloom & Winstead, 2002). Time limits and sanctions do not appear to be significant motivators for employment. This may in part be related to the fact that the labor market environment for most welfare recipients consists of unstable low-paying, geographically inaccessible positions without benefits that do not significantly improve social or economic circumstances of these families (Bloom & Winstead, 2002). Effective services need to build on the strengths of families and to address the many structural, as well as human capital barriers that hinder them from achieving financial independence through employment rather than exacting punitive measures by individual attempts to shape complex family outcomes. Table 2 provides an overview of 5 states with strict diversion policies and the services they provide to assist former welfare recipients from being sanctioned off welfare.

#### *Earned Income Disregards*

A redeeming aspect of the new reform program is the “*Earned Income Disregards*” which helps to offset some of the welfare barriers and can be used for two separate but related purposes. They can be used to encourage work efforts among welfare recipients and as means to supplement the income of low-wage employees. (Cohen, 1997). Prior to PROWRA, only a small portion of recipients' earnings were not counted, or "disregarded," when calculating benefits (Gallagher et al., 1998). After 4 months of work, recipients could expect a nearly dollar-for-dollar reduction in benefits.

Table 2

*State Diversion Programs*

Services	Iowa (Family Independence Program)	Maryland (Welfare Avoidance Grants)	Montana (Lump Sum Payment)	N. Carolina (Benefit Diversion Program)	Washington (Diversion Cash Assistance)
Emergency basis cash assistance	x			x	x
Lump sum cash assistance			x		
Child care	x	x		x	x
Transport aid	x				x
Food stamps				x	x
Payment vouchers	x				
Family self-sufficiency grant	x				
Shelter/housing	x				
Utilities	x				
Employment expenses	x		x		x
Transitional Medicaid		x	x		
Medicaid medical assistance			x	x	x
Employment crisis				x	

*Note:* From “Sanctions and welfare reform” by Bloom & Winstead, 2002. Brookings Institute Policy Brief No. 12. Washington, DC: Brookings Institute.

To promote work, a number of states expanded this "earned income disregard," allowing recipients to keep more of their earnings without it affecting their grant amounts. For example, Oregon and Pennsylvania disregarded 50% of all earnings, and Connecticut disregarded earnings below the poverty level (Gallagher et al., 1998). PRWORA allows states to set their own policy in this area (Gallagher et al., 1998). A few have maintained the old policy (Brock et al., 2004), but most have implemented more generous policies.

A work-first approach to placing people in the first available job doubtfully fails to prepare and match clients with good jobs (Relave, 2000a). Placement in good jobs requires in-depth understanding of clients' needs and abilities as well as knowledge of local labor market conditions (Relave, 2000a, 2000b). However in spite of the positively significant relationship between job readiness and earnings (Dworsky & Courtney, 2007), only recently have some agencies made job training and retention a "high priority" in their service delivery (Lurie, 2006.) On the contrary, most welfare agency workers continue to implement policies inherent in the work-first philosophy that create barriers for recipients to find and retain jobs. The overwhelming work barriers among welfare recipients are not limited to work-first rule barriers. Other personal (Alfred, 2005a, 2005b; 2007), social (Cancian & Meyer, 2000; Sawhill & Haskins, 2002), and employment barriers (Martin & Alfred, 2001a, 2001b; Dworsky & Courtney, 2007) inhibit job placement and job retention among former welfare recipients.

### *Personal Barriers*

Some of the personal barriers associated with job instability including, though not limited to the following: childcare expenses (Gueron & Pauly, 1999; Sawhill & Haskins, 2002), lack of transportation (Kaplan, 1998), and lack of housing (Holzer & Stoll, 2000).

Domestic violence, substance abuse, mental health, emotional health and physical disabilities constitute some of the most difficult personal barriers (Holzer & Stoll, 2001; Jayakody, Danziger, & Kessler, 1998; Morgenstern, Blanchard, McVeigh, Riordan & Irwin, 2003).

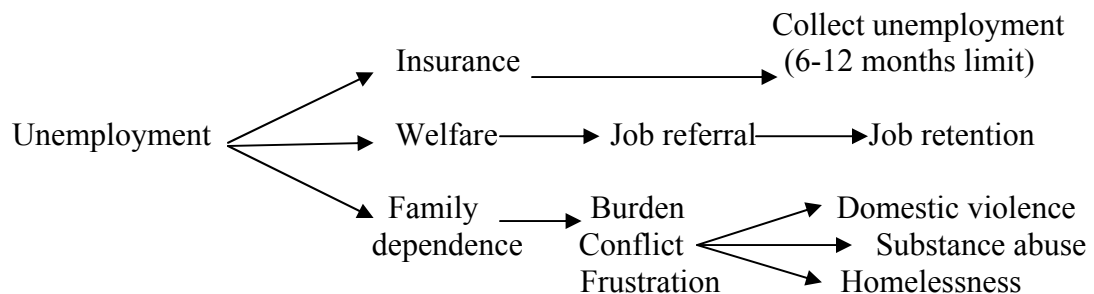
### *Child Care Barriers*

Former welfare recipients who have fewer children and/or more child care support report higher job retention rates (Harris, 1993) than those recipients with more children and less supports. The barriers presented among those without child care supports make job retention even more unattainable (Danziger, 1999). Labor market poverty is perpetuated by unemployment and low wages, but also by time caring for children at home. Typically, women's employment have been more variable than men's, as women often moved in and out of the job market for marriage, childbearing, family members' caretaking, and accommodating their partner's career changes (Bittman & Pixley, 1997). Before welfare reform, child care subsidies were limited to some recipients through federal Title IV-A funding sources for child care (AFDC/JOBS, At-Risk, Transitional Child Care) and through the Child Care Development Block Grant (Bittman & Pixley, 1997). These federal funds often came with matching state or federal funding requirements.

The Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 (PRWORA) consolidated all these funds into state block grants, thereby permitting the states to design their own child care assistance schemes (Connolly & Kimmel, 2003). States may supplement federal child care block grants with state dollars, but there is no longer a required state match. Thus, while the total federal dollar amount allocated to



child care in Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) exceeds former federal Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) child care commitments, it is unclear what will happen to total child care expenditures under TANF because states are not obligated to meet matching expenditures (Connolly & Kimmel, 2003). The drastic cutback in federal and state child care assistance dealt a further blow to those low wage welfare workers already mired in financial setbacks caused by underemployment or lack of employment (Edin & Lein, 1997), forcing them to seek alternative means of supplementing child care expenses. Single mothers receiving welfare are more likely to rely on relative care than on center-based care, but are also more likely to work part-time (Connolly & Kimmel, 2003). The diagram in Figure 2 shows the dilemmas and choices faced by single mothers who are unemployed, with welfare assistance being the most viable of the three options.



*Figure 2.* Dilemmas faced by unemployed single mothers.

Although most women can find jobs, their wages are insufficient to cover their expenses, and those who manage, can have only accomplished it with the help of free child care, or regular child support (Edin & Lein, 1997). Providing on-site or near-site daycare programs, sick childcare options, or childcare referral options were designed to

help overcome one of the major barriers to employment among former welfare recipients (Perlmutter, 1997).

### *Transportation Barriers*

There is a high negative correlation between lack of transportation and job retention (Ong & Blumenberg, 1998). Though the child care and housing remain some of the major barriers, according to Pugh (1998) the lack of transportation remains the most pervasive barrier. As such, federal funds are being provided to assist urbanized recipients easier access to work transport. Lack of geographical proximity between home and work makes job-search difficult and imposes high commuting costs on low-wage workers who are least able to afford these expenses (Haber Kern, 2002). Many welfare recipients live in “job-poor” neighborhoods far from employment locations for which they are qualified (Ong & Blumenberg, 1998). Sixty percent of potential jobs are in the suburbs while most welfare recipients live in cities (Holzer, 1996). This lack of geographical proximity makes it highly unlikely that welfare workers will be able to afford the daily round-trip commute from home to work. Yet in spite of such difficulties, the expectations of the TANF remain. If these work requirements are not fulfilled, former welfare recipients are likely to face severe sanctions. In Florida the largest concentration of welfare recipients (77%) reside in 16 of the 68 counties, and a little more than half (53.1%) of all recipients live in Miami-Dade, Broward, Hillsborough, Palm Beach, Pinellas and Orange counties (see Appendix B), where there’s easier access to public transportation. Florida, along with five other states (California, New York, Ohio, & Texas) allows local officials to determine the amount of reimbursement for public transit use. Florida, California, New York, and Ohio require local administrators of public welfare funds to develop and

submit plans to address transportation barriers to work (Waller & Huges, 1999), but only California and Florida permit local officials to provide up to one year of assistance to former welfare recipients.

Few states, including Florida, help people get driver's licenses, driver education and assistance with fine payments even though many local welfare-to-work agencies have indicated that the lack of a driver's license is a barrier to employment, primarily because employers use it to screen employees. On the positive side, Florida, New York, and California permit the use of TANF funds for car repairs (Waller & Hughes, 1999), and Florida has new state legislation allowing local TANF agencies to spend up to \$8,500 for a car needed for "transitional transportation" (Waller & Hughes, 1999).

### *Housing Barriers*

Homelessness remains a persistent problem for former welfare recipients and constitutes a major barrier to welfare job retention (Brown, 2001). The Emergency Shelter Grant (ESG) program was established in 1989 to assist with the needs of homelessness but reports from the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) reported only 5% of the 30 ESG projects were using the grant money to fund activities for homeless prevention. This is because the demand for homeless prevention services often exceeds the availability of funding. As a result, ESG program recipients have to prioritize assistance among those deemed eligible. This is sometimes accomplished with a "first come, first served" policy.

Between 1997 and 2001, the number of low-income working households with critical housing needs (paying more than half of their earnings for housing and/or living in seriously inadequate housing) rose by 14 % (Puckett, Renner, & Slack, 2002). These

findings demonstrate that having a job does not ensure that families with children can afford to have decent housing (Zedlewski, 1999). Initiatives that address individuals' poor credit and eviction histories, as well as landlord-tenant eviction mediation services are being initiated to reduce the incidence of homelessness (Brown, 2001). At least 34 states provide housing-related benefits as part of their TANF programs to families meeting state-established emergency criteria. Table 3 shows varying types of housing assistance (in percentages) offered by seven states to homeless welfare recipients.

Table 3

*Housing Status of Current TANF Recipients in Welfare Reform Studies*

State	Percent in public or subsidized housing	Percent in emergency or temporary housing
Connecticut	34	1.2
Los Angeles, CA	15	.4
Florida	30	NA
Illinois	19	NA
Indiana	32	NA
Massachusetts	51	11
Washington	39	NA

*Note.* NA= indicate the participants were not asked or their responses were not included in study. Source: "The effects of welfare reform on housing stability and homelessness: Current research findings, legislation, and programs", by L. Nichols and B. Gault, (1999). *Welfare Reform Network News*, 2(2), 1-13.

A comprehensive approach to prevent homelessness requires a variety of strategies that include emergency responses, the creation of new housing stock,

expanded-financial subsidies, the development of transitional programs and services to prevent homelessness (Mullenix, 1999). A study in Florida of 603 welfare recipients indicated that 55% to 58 % of the study participants had moved at least once in just over 2 years (Bloom, Farrell, Kemple, & Verma, 1998). It was suggested that benefit loss and inability to pay rent may have contributed to the increased rates of moving (Nichols & Gault, 2003).

### *Domestic Violence*

Domestic violence constitutes violence by a spouse or a domestic partner that contributes to inappropriate behaviors. Under Florida law, domestic violence is defined as any assault, aggravated assault, battery, aggravated battery, sexual assault, sexual battery, stalking, aggravated stalking, kidnapping, false imprisonment or any criminal offense resulting in physical injury or death of one family household member by another (Florida Domestic Violence Ordinance, 1999). Florida law provides protection against violence in the form of temporary or permanent injunctions, also commonly known as restraining orders. Domestic family violence can sometimes cause some mothers to experience emotional problems from marriage breakdown and prolonged disputes with the children's fathers. This in turn can lead to their children manifesting behavioral problems that could interfere with their own finding and keeping paid work (Pryor & Rodgers, 2001).

Domestic violence affects women from all sectors of society but the percentage of welfare recipients who are victims of domestic violence is much higher than among the general population (Sachs, 1999). Poor women are more likely to experience domestic

violence and the odds are even higher for women who receive welfare (Ganow, 2001). Among welfare recipients, it is estimated that 50 % to 60 % have experienced domestic violence over their lifetimes, and 20 % to 30 % of welfare recipients report being recent or current victims of abuse (Tolman & Raphael, 2000). These rates of domestic violence are three times higher than those reported for all low-income women (Johnson & Meckstroth, 1998).

Increases in domestic violence among female welfare recipients have prompted federal and state government to enact ordinances to protect them from spousal abuse. The Family Violence Option (FVO) allows states to exempt up to 20% of the state's caseload from the 60-month time limit in receiving benefits (Kaplan, 1997). Temporary waivers were put in place to allow victims of domestic violence the time needed for a successful transition off of welfare by allowing flexibility in complying with work and job training requirements (Sachs, 1999). As of September 1996, the federal government instituted criminal laws prohibiting spouses from crossing state lines with the intent to injure or harass another person (Groban, n.d.). PRWORA provides a hardship exception to include those who are "battered or subjected to extreme cruelty" because in most cases the woman has to leave her house to find other domicile for her and her children. Other waivers also allow victims to receive TANF benefits, without having to identify the father of their children or supply child support enforcement agencies with other pertinent information (Sachs, 1999).

In Florida, there are legislations prohibiting a woman from losing her job because of domestic abuse. In Miami- Dade and Broward Counties, Florida "When a person files for a divorce or paternity action, many times a lawyer will also be required to represent

him or her in a concurrent domestic violence action. A court can issue an injunction for protection against domestic violence when a party is a victim of domestic violence or has reasonable cause to believe that he or she may become a victim of domestic violence. The court must consider current allegations, behavior during the relationship and the entire history of the relationship” (Fox, 2010, p.1). Florida’s laws also state that anyone served with a petition for an injunction against domestic violence for repeat violence, will in most cases have a permanent injunction filed against him or her. If a permanent injunction is entered by the court, it becomes the permanent part of a person's criminal record and can never be sealed or expunged. If an injunction is entered by the court, the respondent will also be required to enroll and successfully complete a domestic violence intervention program lasting approximately 26 weeks. Future violation of the injunction can subject a person to criminal prosecution under the laws of the State of Florida (Trontz, 2010).

### *Substance Abuse*

Substance abuse and mental health issues are among the many problems that can interfere with employment and job retention. There is a consistently higher rate of unemployment among substance-abuse welfare recipients (Morgenstern et al., 2003). Their problems are often more complex and numerous than those of non-substance-abusing welfare clients (Kaplan, 2002). “Substance dependent women reported significantly higher rates of domestic violence, mental health problems, legal problems, child welfare investigations and fewer job skills” (Morgenstern et al. 2003, p.1).

Addressing substance abuse and mental health problems presents states and localities with unique challenges regarding screening and assessment, service

coordination, treatment capacity, and funding for services (Relave, 1999). Identifying and assessing clients with substance abuse and mental health problems are first steps in dealing with these potential barriers to employment (Relave, 1999). As such, state welfare agencies are increasingly coordinating and integrating services that will enable welfare and substance abuse agencies to maximize resources, reduce duplication, and create new services that can enable them to address the co-occurring problems of substance-abusing welfare clients (Kaplan, 2002).

### *Mental Health and Learning Disabilities*

There is considerable evidence to suggest that psychiatric disorders are associated with lower rates of employment and lower socioeconomic status in the general population (Jayakody, Danziger, & Kessler, 1998). Research has demonstrated a higher prevalence of depression among low-income individuals and recipients of Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) than among the general population (Sherman, 2003).

Approximately 25% to 40% of TANF recipients suffer mental health problems and learning disabilities (Nightingale, 2001). Depression can be a significant barrier to employment, which affects an individual's ability to comply with TANF requirements, and can affect how an individual addresses other barriers to work and self-sufficiency (Sherman, 2003).

Jayakody and Stauffer (2000) used national data to examine the prevalence of psychiatric disorders among low-income single mothers. The findings suggest that former welfare recipients are significantly more likely to suffer from several major psychiatric disorders, including major depression, than low-income single mothers who are not welfare recipients. Moreover, the likelihood of job retention is 25% lower for those with



a psychiatric disorder. This report is consistent with the findings of Kalil et al, (1998) who also argued the effects of mental issues on welfare unemployment. Their research concluded that “many policymakers, and until recently, many researchers, have ignored factors such as depression, substance abuse, criminal backgrounds and victims of domestic violence that are problems experienced by many welfare families and can hinder long-term employment prospects” (p.4). Data used to examine the prevalence of psychiatric disorders among low-income single mothers found depression to be the major cause of unemployment among 25% of low- income single women (Khalil et al., 1998).

“Poor mental health leads to poor physical health for employees, and higher health care costs to both employers and employees” (Bond & Galinsky, 2006, p. 5). Poor mental health negatively impacts employees’ job performance, the general work environment and job retention. For example, in Florida, 24% of mentally ill people are usually homeless and out of jobs. However the number of former welfare recipients within this population was not reported. Welfare recipients with learning disabilities often cite their disabilities as major barriers to employment retention that need to be addressed within the ideology of the TANF work-first philosophy (Jayakody, Danziger, & Kessler, 1998; Nightingale, 2001). Current welfare policies, however, generally do not recognize these associations and instead assume that welfare recipients are similar to the general population in their psychological status and functioning.

#### *Physical Health and Emotional Disabilities*

Poor physical health and disabilities present employment barriers to job retention among former welfare recipients. This affects about one third of the participants of a California welfare-to-work program (Riccio & Freedman, 1995). Like others on low

incomes, sole mothers and their children are more likely than partnered mothers and their children to encounter physical health and emotional health problems (Curtis, 2001; Dorsett & Marsh, 1998; Hobcraft & Kiernan, 2001; Sarfati & Scott, 2001; Whitehead, Bourstrom, & Diderichsen, 2000).

The increasing reports of physical and behavioral health problems affecting many welfare transients have prompted states to begin spearheading service programs that offer more intensive assistance than the typical "work first" approach that emphasizes rapid labor force attachment (Brown, 2001; Chandler & Meisel, 2000; Danziger et al., 2000). Developmental theory suggests that educational accomplishments, the completion of a training program, and enhanced employment prospects for welfare mothers would improve their self-esteem, motivation, and sense of personal control (Menaghan & Parcel, 1995; Moore & Driscoll, 1997). These achievements could lead to better parenting and concomitant improvements in the social, cognitive, and emotional adjustment of their children (Moore & Driscoll, 1997). Conversely, lacking these achievements could cause stress, increase financial strain, or result in poor child care arrangements (Menaghan & Parcel, 1995). Without these suggested accomplishments many welfare recipients could face discrimination from some employers even after job placement (Danziger et al., 2000). This may be due to the employers' lack of sensitivity to the special needs of welfare transients (Menaghan & Parcel, 1995; Moore & Driscoll, 1997). These factors create tremendous economic, social, and situational barriers for former welfare recipients who have no formal education or work experience (Strawn, & Martison, 2000).

### *Social Barriers*

Social barriers pose serious threats to job retention (Baider, & Frank, 2006), because many former welfare recipients present histories that stigmatize them from integrating into mainstream work force. Many recipients are stigmatized just for being on welfare and/ or from being a member of a social ethnic or socioeconomic background. (e.g., welfare has long been perceived as being a “*hand-out*” program, i.e., giving benefits that are not earned particularly to poor whites and minorities, and for being burdensome to tax payers; Mead, 2002). Most pervasive among the social barriers are language barriers (where English is not the primary language), lack of family support and lack of community support.

### *Language Barriers*

Language limitations remain a prevailing barrier for former welfare recipients. The problem is more severe in those states than others where there is a larger influx of non-English speaking immigrants. In California, for example, 30% of migrant residents in four counties lack English proficiency, while only 2% of migrants in Illinois reported language difficulties (Spielgelman & Norris, 2005). Thirteen percent of those whose native language is English and those who spoke a secondary language at home reported literacy problems (Spielgelman & Norris, 2005). The inability to read or write English proficiently reportedly prevented them from obtaining and keeping a job. Welfare is a culture of poverty and certain language styles usually develop from cultures of the poor. Ebonics, for example is a slang language spoken mainly by some poor Blacks that may not be appropriate for mainstream White work cultures. However by not providing

adequate education and job training, welfare promotes that culture which is seen as a self-fulfilling prophecy that perpetuates the cycle of welfare dependency.

In 2006 the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) issued regulations regarding the TANF program (Center for Law and Social Policy, 2006). These regulations were required as part of the Deficit Reduction Act of 2005 which mandated a substantial increase in the proportion of TANF recipients who can participate in federally countable work activities for a specified number of hours each week. These regulations did not explicitly include English as a Second Language (ESL) as a necessary part of vocational educational training (Center for Law and Social Policy, 2006). However this exclusion might not be deliberate because states acknowledge the importance of ESL as a necessary work requirement (Spielgelman & Norris, 2005). It was recommended by program educators that DHHS should include ESL in its vocational educational training program to assist welfare recipients prepare for the labor market.

#### *Lack of Family and Community Support*

Outreach to community resources, enhanced communication, and staff availability are among the community support services that welfare agencies can use to facilitate job retention among welfare clients. Place-based programs can utilize their connection to community in ways not often available to programs operating in more institutional settings (Kramer, 2000b). Such program designs can utilize informal relationships with key individuals and community-based organizations to explore access to local services. Support groups are other valuable sources of encouragement, advice, and recognition that agencies can sponsor (Relave, 2000a, 2000b). However many welfare clients are not aware of the availability of these services; some of those who are aware, are impeded by

other barriers (such as lack of child care and/or transportation etc.) to access these services and attend the support group meetings (Relave, 2000a).

Certain family practices such as encouraging teen pregnancy occur as a result of lack of positive role modeling and positive supports. Murray (1993) described illegitimacy as the single most important social problem of our time, and tends to keep family members in poverty and on welfare. A 2005 report by the United States Congress Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Subcommittee on Children and Families shows high rates of out-of-wedlock and teen marriages being linked to pathologies such as crime and welfare dependency. The report suggested half of the 34 million Americans covered by Medicaid are children born to teen out-of wedlock mothers who are welfare dependent. This report prompted government proposals to increased funding for marriage education services as part of the TANF reauthorization to help mitigate teen, out-of wedlock pregnancy.

The association between high crime rate and illegitimacy fosters the cycle of welfare dependency (Tanner, 1995). Children from single-parent families are more likely to become involved in criminal activity. Children raised in single-parent households are one-third more likely to exhibit anti-social behavior (Tanner, 1995). Black children from single- parent households are twice as likely to commit crimes as Black children from a family where the father is present. Studies show welfare leads to increased crime by contributing to the marginalization of young Black men in society (Tanner, 1995). Nearly 70 % of juveniles in state reform institutions come from fatherless homes, as do 43 % of prison inmates (Tanner, 1995).

## *Employment Barriers*

Among the major employment barriers are lack of education, lack of training, and work experience (Holzer & Stoll, 2000), labor market changes, reduced or nonstandard work week, low wages (Rangajaran, 1998), and employer discrimination, due to, for example, having criminal records or bad work histories (Holzer, 1999). These infractions may prevent some recipients from being even hired.

### *Lack of Education*

Notably the most poignant factor impacting welfare employment, educational barriers present formidable challenges to welfare recipients who lack the basic high school requirements for job entry (Bane & Ellwood 1994; Blank 1995; Harris 1993; Pavetti 1993). Most welfare recipients lack basic academic skills for job readiness (Martin & Alfred, 2002; Scott, 2000). Nationally 64% of single welfare mothers lacked high school diplomas (Spalter-Roth, 1995).

A study conducted in Philadelphia with a group of welfare recipients showed 67% having less than a high school education, 17% having a high school diploma, 11% having a GED and about 6% completing some tertiary education (Alfred, 2007). TANF regulations stipulate that basic skills education can only be counted as basic skills education as long as it is of limited duration and is a necessary or regular part of the vocational education training (Center for Law and Social Policy, 2006). However basic skills education should be a mandatory part of the vocational training program since it is an employment requirement. Figure 3 shows percentages of highest level of educational achievement among single welfare mothers in that study.

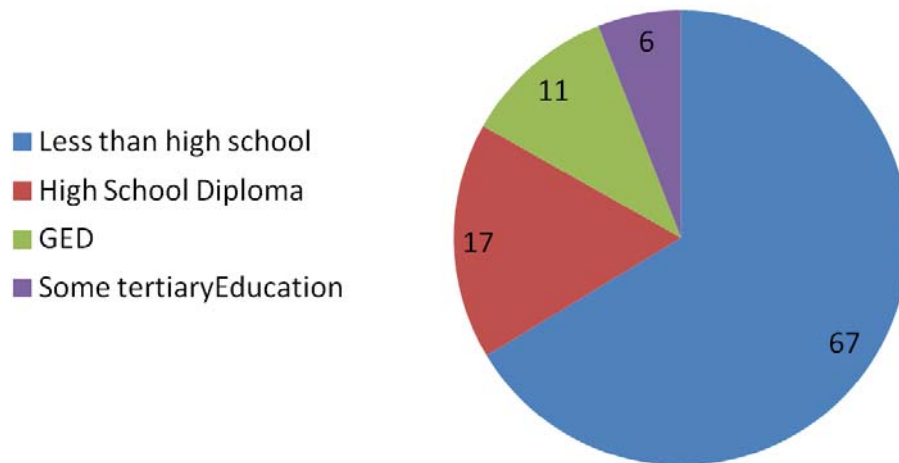


Figure 3. Percentages of educational achievement among single welfare mothers.

#### *Lack of Training and Work Experience*

The lack of training and work experience present major barriers to welfare employment as cited throughout the literature (Holzer, 2000; Holzer & Stoll, 2000, Relave, 2000a, 2000b; 2002), yet there is a lack of statistical data to support the success of skills training (Relave, 2002). The lack of interpersonal and other soft skills for employment present barriers that employers do not believe they can address on their own (Welfare-to-Work Partnership, 2000). Soft skills are the non-technical skills, abilities, attitudes, and traits that workers need to function in a specific employment environment (Relave, 2000b). They include four sets of workplace competencies: problem-solving and other cognitive skills, oral communication skills, personal qualities and work ethic, and interpersonal and teamwork skills (Leigh, Lee, & Lindquist, 1999). Positive attitude and reliability are the two qualities rated most important among employers when hiring for entry-level positions (Regenstein, Meyer, & Hicks, 1998).

However the frustrations experienced by those recipients lacking the necessary skills training and work experience force many to view employment negatively (Relave, 1999).

Low-income individuals with limited exposure to the world of work may lack the "soft skills" needed to get a job, stay employed, and advance. Faced with the problems of low-paid, menial employment, many recipients either leave their jobs or get terminated because they are unable to compete in the mainstream competitive job market. Many of them either go back on welfare, or end up making a living through solicitations (prostitution), drug trafficking or the underground economy (Holzer, 2000). Some experience states of depression or other mental health problems (Relave, 2000a, 2001).

#### *Changes in the Labor Market*

Working conditions in industrialized countries have altered significantly in the past two decades, and mainly for new workers and re-entrants in low-level positions. Former welfare recipients especially, constitute a large percentage of this population in the U. S. (Webb, Martin, & Millar, 1996). These former recipients sometimes are classified as the "working poor", a pool of casualized [sic], "flexible" and exploitable workers who often can obtain only part time or temporary jobs that lack union protection, regular working hours and employment benefits (Webb et al., 1996, p. 4). These employees are the least likely to get hired and the most likely to get fired. Both men and women have been affected by these changes, and employment patterns of former recipient men increasingly resemble those more typical of women. This phenomenon is not unique to the U.S. As such, nations across the globe have embarked on welfare-to-work programs similar to the U.S. to deal with this issue.



Canada's welfare program, the Canada Assistance Plan (CAP) allows welfare recipients to receive income support, while participating in job search and job placement. However, unlike the U. S., mandatory work programs are forbidden in Canadian provinces that received federal support for their welfare programs (Herd, 2002). In Australia welfare reform has adopted a three levers approach to economic self-sufficiency (Wilson, 2000). This approach is based on the premise that increasing self-reliance through workplace participation and reducing long-term receipt of social security benefits requires assistance, incentives and requirements participation (Wilson, 2000). Reform goals cannot be sustainable with the operation of only one lever (Alfred & Martin, 2007).

Sweden, Finland, the United Kingdom and New Zealand, have undertaken welfare reforms programs similar to those of the U. S., Canada and Australia. These countries have designed policies and programs that emphasize a welfare-to-work philosophy, particularly among the youth and single parents (Alfred & Martin, 2007). Finland, for example, has now succeeded in adopting an approach that encourages more part-time work, whereas, in the past, such approach was resisted by recipients for fear of reduction in governmental support (Kalisch, Tetsuya & Buchele, 1998). Overall, reform efforts across nations seek to minimize or eradicate altogether family dependency on governmental support. These developments suggest that policy makers across nations are taking similar steps to reduce their welfare budgets by promoting economic independency through workplace participation. The premise, therefore, is that former welfare recipients can develop economic independence by attaching themselves to the workplace.

Global recession and the changing U.S. economy have contributed to economic dependence (Alfred, 2007). Such changes foster the growth in low-wage service sector jobs, the erosion of the minimum wage, and the relocation of jobs from urban to suburban communities (Wilson, 2000). Changes in the U.S. labor market have not only led to the elimination of jobs for low-skilled workers but also to the reconfiguration of those jobs into lower-paid positions that provide few opportunities for advancement (Blank, 1995). In the U.S. corporate outsourcing and the movement of skilled jobs to other parts of the globe leaves nothing but fast food and service economy jobs. The manufacturing sector, especially, the garment and textile industry have outsourced many of their jobs to foreign countries. This has exacerbated the problems for low skill workers as most of the remaining jobs are part-time and most offer low wages and few employment benefits such as health insurance, sick leave or paid vacation (Vosko, 2000). The de-skilling of jobs “dumbs down” an illiterate population because service industry jobs do not encourage the development of intellectual skills, hence do not prepare workers for retention promotions.

Before the recession the Florida Education and Training Placement Information Program (FETPIP) conducted a longitudinal study, to determine the percentage of welfare recipients who were employed longer than one year (2004). The study reported 53% of welfare recipients who were employed in 1996 retained their jobs for more than one year. The report also indicated that 75% of those employed within the last year were still employed with earnings ranging from \$5.65 per hour to more \$9.00 per hour (Agency for Workforce Innovation, 2006). The report however did not state whether those with higher earnings remained in entry level positions, nor did it state the

differences in employees' education levels. Similar studies conducted since the recession were not available for this study.

#### *Reduced or Non-standard Work Week*

Many low-wage employers are reducing or extending work hours to suit their work needs (Baker & Trippin, 2002). Therefore an abundant supply of low-wage workers makes them more unwilling to offer standard work hours to their employees or to extend flexibility in their job requirements. Where labor pools are large, many employers are also unwilling to hire welfare mothers with young children, especially if there is any hint of unreliability or inability to cope (Webb, Martin, & Millar, 1996). The fierce competition oftentimes causes mothers to find themselves in situations where they are forced to choose between working non-standard hours and staying at home with their children (Webb et al., 1996). These mothers realize that privileging their children's needs and interests are more important although it may disadvantage them in employment (Baker & Trippin, 2002). In the U.S. some federal and state administrators are embarking on measures to address these issues as they are brought to the fore.

#### *Low Wages*

Low wage is defined as wages below \$7.73 (Holzer, 2004) which appears considerably lower than the average living wage. The earning capacity of the average single mother leaving welfare remains below the minimum wage guidelines and rises slowly only with age (Burtless, 1995). Welfare recipients generally join the workforce at entry-level positions with the lowest paid salaries (Cancian & Meyer, 2000; Johnson & Corcoran, 2003). In the U.S. female and African American welfare recipients occupy the majority of positions in house-keeping, retail sales, clerical, cleaning, maintenance and

manufacturing (Loprest, 1999), with commensurably low wages. Their salaries average from \$6-\$8 per hour and they rarely receive health benefits, sick leave or paid vacations (Alfred, 2007). The earning capacity of mothers leaving welfare is low and rises only slowly with age (Burtless, 1995). Low-income working parents often find that earnings from their jobs alone leave their families not much better off than they would be if they were receiving welfare benefits (Holzer, 1999). This situation has led policymakers to search for new strategies that “make work pay” by lifting these families out of poverty while continuing to support parents’ efforts to remain employed, in effect building a safety net around work (Brock, et al., 2006).

As an example, in the U.S. the policies of the living wage laws mandate employers to pay workers on the basis of their needs and not according to their productivity (McPherson, 2002). In 2001, living wage laws dictate a typical family of four needs to earn \$17,650, which translates into an hourly wage of approximately \$8.50 (Brenner, 2002) to remain above the federal poverty line. Three of Florida’s local governments were among 82 others nationwide that have passed such living wage laws. Florida’s, living wage campaigns launched by advocate Bruce Nissen of Florida International University urged the state to pass a \$6.00 minimum living wage applicable to all employers, and to require the state to pay even higher wages for state government employees and contractors. Yet in spite of initial positive reviews it was later determined that:

minimum wages would result in approximately 131,000 to 222,000 workers losing their jobs, Florida employers would see their wage costs skyrocket in the range of \$4.9 to \$8.8 billion, and many of the projected wage gains would go to low-wage workers in higher income families rather than to

those most in need. For example, about one-third of the wage gains would go to families with incomes over \$40,000. Finally, compared with living wage mandates, targeted employment tax credits are a better policy to assist poor families because they reward work, do not cause workers to lose jobs, and also reduce costs by providing assistance only to those in need. (McPherson, 2002, p. 3)

The latest report issued by the Department of Labor in July 2010 stated the minimum wages in Florida to be \$7.25 an hour with an annual rate increase based upon a cost of living formula.

Predictions made by proponents of welfare reform that women's wages were converging on men's, and they therefore were able to achieve economic self-sufficiency at a faster rate have proven false (Brock et al., 2006). Low-skilled women's abilities to earn enough to be economically self-sufficient have declined since 1980, though their wages have converged with men's (Waldfogel & Mayer, 1999). This is due to the number of children impacting the standard of living for low-wage female workers. Many welfare families are headed by single females with more than one child, therefore the living standards of low-wage women and their children have declined due to single income and higher expenditures (Waldfogel & Mayer, 1999).

#### *Employer Discrimination*

One definition of culture is "the way in which a group of people choose to behave." This not only applies to the characteristics and behaviors of former welfare recipients but holds true also for the characteristics, attitudes, and behaviors of employers who may or may not hire and invest in them (Relave, 2001). The success of work-centered welfare programs depends on clients connecting to the workforce and sustaining employment (Relave, 2000a), but successful long-term placement of the welfare

employees is also largely dependent on the organizational practices of the employers (Crandall, 2004). Discriminatory practices by many employers toward welfare transients contribute to serious barriers for welfare employment.

Employer participation and support is integral to the welfare reform effort (Brown, Buck, & Skinner 1998) but efforts to forge employer partnerships in the welfare-to-work network are often stymied by employers' negative perceptions of former welfare recipients. While many employers are willing to promote and offer benefits to highly paid employees, they are less willing to make similar investments in low-wage, entry-level employees (Bond & Galinsky, 2006) because low-wage workers are generally perceived as lacking the skills for upward mobility (Holzer, 2002). Many employers require "new hires" to have a high school diploma and recent job experience (Holzer, 1999), but 60% of potential jobs locate in the suburbs while most welfare recipients live in cities (Holzer, 1996). Half of these jobs are part-time and most offer low wages and few employment benefits such as health insurance, sick leave or paid vacation (Vosko, 2000).

Welfare agency and employer partnership is crucial to long-term job retention for former welfare recipients (Relave, 2004). In attempting to understand the dynamics of these partnerships, it is important to understand employers' views of welfare recipients, especially their views of recipients with very poor work skills or lacking work experience; and the extent to which they have hired them and expect to do so in the future. Employers generally view welfare recipients as presenting work barriers and challenges that make work difficult (Cancian & Meyer, 2000; Relave, 2004). These views negatively impact their hiring decisions among the welfare population. However,

given proper training and supervision, the job performance of former welfare recipients may equal or exceed their counterparts (Deckop, Permuter, & Freely, 2006).

Ensuring employer participation and support is construed as being essential to their investments in the welfare reform effort (Brown, Buck & Skinner 1998). Whereas employer efforts appear to have positive impacts on recruitment, morale, productivity, commitment, and retention among highly paid salaried employees (Bond & Galinsky, 2006; Holzer, 2000), very little efforts are made to recruit and retain low-wage workers (mainly former welfare recipients). If the same efforts were invested in lower paid, entry level welfare employees they would undoubtedly yield the same positive results (Bond & Galinsky, 2006). Some employers indicate their willingness and capacity to make such investments in welfare employees if they were more aware of their employment needs (Crandall, 2004). Therefore the key to successful welfare reform and similar efforts lies not only in partnerships with employers in the business community, but in educating them to the needs of the welfare employees and in encouraging them to practice less discrimination (Harvey, 1993).

#### Job Retention Theory

The statistics on unemployment and job loss rates for people with disabilities clearly indicate the need for job retention services (Roessler, 2002). The statistics on welfare employment vary according to states, however nationally less than 50% of former welfare recipients sustain jobs for more than 12 months (Holzer, 2000). Job tenure is a major concern among for welfare recipients for several compelling reasons. Former welfare recipients are still unemployed at rates far exceeding those of the general population (Salkever, 2000). Mehnert, Krauss, Nadler, and Boyd, (1990), and Salkever,

(2000) posited that life satisfaction and self-perceived productivity are correlated to employment and income level. Therefore job retention services are important because of the direct relationship between employment and quality of life (Roessler & Rubin, 1998). Improving the job retention rates of “hard to serve” welfare employees require the use of the types of interventions espoused in the 3-M model of Job Retention (Roessler, 2002). The 3-M model utilizes the match, maturity, and mastery constructs to illustrate the relationships between employers, employees and the match between the two for job retention outcomes (Rubin, 2004). Figure 4 shows how the job referral and job placement and job retention processes fit into the constructs of the 3-M model.

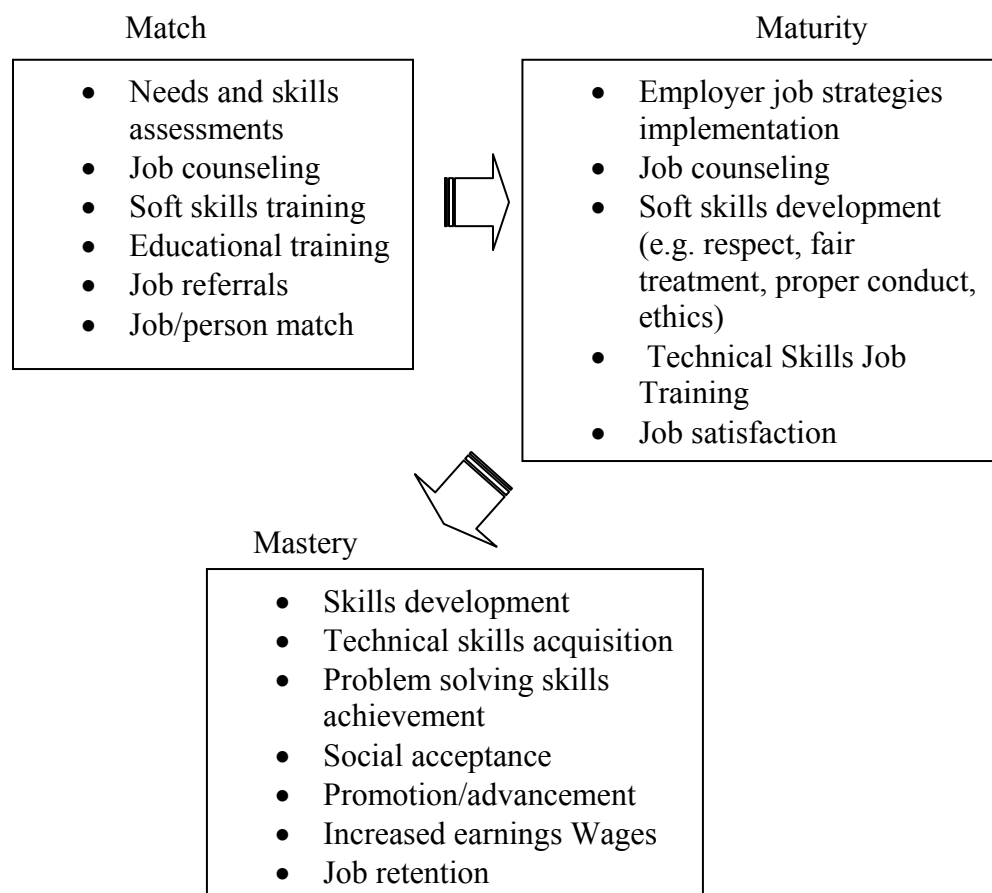


Figure 4. The 3-M model of job retention.



### *Match*

Employers who have experience with former welfare recipients are likely to have more successful match rates than those who do not (Lane & Stevens, 2001a). In the initial phases of the employment process, welfare programs use match strategies to improve job retention rates, by helping former welfare recipients identify and acquire positions that correspond to their needs, activities and skills requirements (Kramer, 1998a). Satisfaction occurs when the job provides the types of activities and job benefits that gratifies and reinforces the employee (Mehnert et al, 1990; Salkever, 2000). Thus, employees who stay with jobs generally tend to be good at what they do and like what they are doing (satisfied). Job-person match, as described in the 3-M model of job retention, is therefore a necessary element of career adaptability and a prerequisite to job tenure. In making job referrals welfare program intermediaries need to pay close attention to job/skill matches for their recipients. Improper job/skill matches may cost even more than many "work first" designs, both in front-end assessment and in more cautious placement choices, but the right matches, (i.e. needs and skills assessment, employer requirements, referrals, placements, etc.) may pay off in longer lasting and better long-term job placements (Kramer, 1998b).

### *Maturity*

The 3-M model of job retention uses maturity strategies for improving job retention outcomes among former welfare recipients. This requires welfare programs to help recipients develop skills learning techniques such as soft skills and technical skills to satisfy the expectable challenges of the career development stage (Dix & Savickas,

1995). Welfare programs may involve recipients in employer-sponsored employee development programs such as career coaching or mentoring to develop such skills. Soft skills and technical training are reportedly major predictors of job retention (Moss & Tilly, 2001). Soft skills training is rated the most important predictor of job retention because it helps to increase social acceptance and reduces workplace harassment (Abt Associates, 2003). Because there is a high correlation between soft skills and job retention (Holzer, 2004), it is therefore theoretically sound to suggest that assistance and training in this area be given priority.

Whereas soft skills training may be useful to sustain the employee on the job for the first few months, technical skills training is also important for former recipients to gain maturity and advance in their jobs (Holzer, 1998). The very high correlation between technical skills and earnings suggests the need for more technical skills training (Holzer, 2004). Welfare recipients with moderate or little technical skills (approximately one-third of the AFDC caseload) might find steady employment, but primarily in low-wage or part-time jobs, and are likely to need additional cash and support services to continue working and remain above poverty (Pavetti, 1997). Without advanced training few with extremely low skills will make the transition to steady employment that is necessary for economic self-sufficiency (Pavetti, 1997).

### *Mastery*

The mastery component of the 3-M Model concentrates on the acquisition of problem-solving skills. Problem-solving training (PST) is an approach that teaches individuals how to cope effectively with on-the-job challenges and stressors (D'Zurilla & Nezu, 1999). "PST program addresses four primary problem-solving functions: (a)

problem definition and formulation, (b) generation of alternative solutions, (c) decision making, and (d) solution implementation and verification” (D’Zurilla & Nezu, 1999, p. 5). This technique is effective in teaching welfare employees how to resolve problems and adjust to inevitable but unpredictable problems on the job that often result from the daily routines. Examples of task demands that may exceed personal resources include the specific requirements of getting into, around, and out of the workplace; performing essential functions of the job itself; and satisfying company policies regarding work schedules, sick leave, or time off for medical appointments (D’Zurilla & Nezu, 1999).

As clients cycle in and out of jobs, they need help to understand what they have learned on the job and how to master and apply that knowledge to get promoted, to change employers and to transfer those skills across occupations (Kramer, 1998a, 1998b). Via employer staff-development programs or counselor-directed support groups, program counselors can help employees develop the problem-solving skills they need to master (i.e., reduce or remove) barriers to job retention. Long-term on-the-job supports would help employees meet the challenges and solve the problems related to job retention before those situations cause the person to lose hope of being able to work (Rumrill & Roessler, 1999). The flexibility offered in Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA) by contracting out services have led a number of states to increasingly privatize parts of the welfare system to initiate employment programs that will respond to needs of former welfare recipients (Osborne & Gaebler, 1992). Many are adopting the 3-M model of job retention to offer supports and to develop job training programs that will increase job retention among former welfare recipients. Some states have expanded the involvement of private agencies even in the welfare applications

process and other activities traditionally performed by state employees (Pindus, Dyer, Ratcliffe, Trutko, & Kellie, 1997).

The state of Washington, for example introduced a welfare-to-work program whereby governors have worked with business leaders and educators to convert TANF into a program to not just purge the welfare rolls, but also to help the entire working poor exit poverty (Kuttner, 2000). Approximately \$129 million was allocated to job training. Unlike many states, where former welfare recipients are simply pushed into low-wage work and punished if they choose instead to go to school, Washington gives free tuition to people who sign up for a “career ladders” program at community colleges that combines work and learning (Kuttner, 2000). The state’s job training program adopted the 3-M model approach to offer job support services, make the right job-match referrals, ensure proper training so that recipients can master their job and advance their careers. In other words, good policies lead to positive outcomes. Though Florida’s policies might be good, other states like Arizona, Minnesota and Wisconsin have better social safety net. Therefore Florida could consider implementing some of these job placement measures to yield higher job retention outcomes.

Other state welfare programs have adopted job partnerships and job training approaches similar to Washington State. One such example is the Wakanyeya Un Wowasi, a welfare transition program on an Indian Reservation in Arizona (Allen, 2001). Their philosophy is that ‘getting a job is only the beginning, the first step in rebuilding a sense of well-being, hope, and power over one's own life’ (Allen, 2001). The mission is to build a circle of support that assists people who are currently unemployed or are hindered by personal and systemic barriers to attain and maintain self-sufficiency (Allen,

2001). Consistent with the 3-M model of job retention (Rumrill & Roessler, 1999), the program provides job readiness, job match, and basic skills training prior to job placement (Allen, 2001).

### Welfare Job Retention

Increased employer (organizational) participation in the welfare-to-work network has been linked to fostering job growth and job retention among former welfare recipients (Grossenbach & Hein, 1998). As part of the broader welfare-to-work reform, TANF programs are increasingly forging partnerships with local employers to provide job opportunities and job retention for former welfare recipients (Greenberg & Patel, 2006). Nonetheless, there remains little empirical data on the effect of these collaborations on the job retention among welfare recipients (Moffit, 1992).

The intent of welfare agency and employer partnership is to develop relationships between the states and local chambers of commerce or other local business associations to give achieve the goal of welfare reform (Relave, 2001). Partnering with employers provides opportunities to reach clients in the workplace and to develop work-based strategies for job retention (Grossenbach & Hein, 1998). For example, a Chicago-based training program developed relationships with employers such as JP Morgan to place welfare clients in entry-level positions with the potential for advancement (Greenberg & Patel, 2006). Similar work-based partnerships also provide opportunities to educate employers on the challenges facing low-wage workers and to encourage their participation in welfare-to-work efforts.

The most successful partnership models are (a) those that involve an investment of public funds and are managed by public sector institutions, (b) those that give

businesses a role in job training and paths to career advancements for their employees, and (c) those that provide job training through public, non-profit and for profit institutions, sometimes at the work-site (Duke, Martinson, & Strawn, 2006). Transitional employment, on-the-job training, job subsidies, apprenticeships, and even community work experience, can also be used to build relationships with employers and gain access to higher wage jobs for which TANF recipients might be otherwise unqualified (Kramer, 1998a, 1998b).

Working with employers can give agencies up-to-date labor market information that is vital for preparing clients for local employment opportunities and for conducting effective job matching. Employers can also bring business perspectives, private-sector connections, financial and in-kind resources, and other assets (Kramer, 2000a, 2000b). Employer involvement can lend credibility to welfare-to-work efforts in the business community. Employment and training providers can use employers' input to make programs more responsive to the needs of clients and businesses (Relave, 2004).

To engage employers in retention efforts, agencies should understand and respond to the needs of employers (Relave, 2000a). "Government institutions, in particular the departments of social services, should concentrate their attention and resources on delivering entitlements (the grants and support services) as efficiently as possible and utilize the non-profit sector to provide case management, training and placement services" (Harvey, 1993, p. 6). Since the entitlements under AFDC were discontinued and replaced by the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA), there is great urgency to engage nonprofit sector in providing jobs under

this new system to offset the high levels of unemployment among former welfare recipients.

As an example, “In Miami-Dade and in other counties throughout Florida and across the country, the number of families receiving TANF dropped precipitously: from an average of roughly 44,000 in 1996/97 to nearly 14,000 in 2001/02” (Brock, et al., 2004, p. 34). Since the recession, the available reports show most Florida welfare families are able to maintain subsistence through government-assisted supports (\$194.00 monthly). Each welfare family gets additional subsidy up to 50% assistance with housing costs through Section 8 Housing, food stamps benefits and other nutritional supplemental benefits (Pierce, 2007), but the rate of unemployment remains dismal.

Employer partnerships also depend on the extent to which some businesses (i.e., those in smaller establishments or those located far from metropolitan areas) are accessible to recipients residing in poor inner-city neighborhoods and how well recipients meet the needs of employers in the jobs that they fill (Harvey, 1993). The challenge for employers (and organizational leaders) is to find ways to ensure that the company culture, that is, the way their people prefer to behave, is supportive of what is needed to successfully deliver the company strategy (Relave, 2004). Another important factor to consider is the extent to which organizations want their worksites to be sheltered from interaction with the outside world. Organizations will need to decide how much public exposure is appropriate to the business, and how to configure the work site to be able to respond to client issues while balancing customer service (Gregory, 2007). It requires maintaining complex missions and a self image related both to business development and operation and to social service (Kramer, 2000b).

High turnover is also a costly problem for employers, insomuch that the welfare program has recognized this problem and has implemented benefits for organizations under the new system. Organizations will benefit from this process as it will help to meet their business and employment needs (Grossenbach & Hein, 1998). For example, funding and tax benefits are available to employers who are willing to hire and train former welfare recipients (Crandall, 2004). The tax benefits offered to participating organizations also serve as incentives for hiring and training former welfare recipients. Companies that hire employees off the welfare rolls are eligible for federal wage subsidies. For instance, the Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC) is designed to encourage businesses to make jobs available to people on welfare, as well as to benefit from any tax incentives in place at the state level (Peterson, 1998). WOTC and the Welfare-to-Work (WtW) tax credit programs reimburse employers (in the form of federal tax credits) up to 50% of the wages of welfare workers with employment barriers (Moffitt, 2008).

The Targeted Jobs Tax Credit (TJTC) Program offer comparable incentives, allowing employers to claim subsidies for workers including former welfare recipients. The program provides tax credit of 40% up to a maximum of \$2,400 on condition that the employee works at least 400 total hours at the firm (Moffitt, 2008). The 1998 Assets for Independence Act authorized federal funding for a series of state and local IDA programs (Greenberg & Savener, 1999). The act authorized grants up to one million dollars to qualified non-profit organizations, states, local, and government agencies to conduct 5-year training projects (Greenberg & Patel, 2006). These benefits may incite some employers to make bigger investments in effective workplace strategies particularly if



those investments are matched by public funding (Crandall, 2004). One such example, the city of Rochester's Employer Assisted program rewards employers who recruit and retain employees (Relave, 2005).

Participating employers offer an Employer Assisted Health (EAH) benefit plan to their employees. The city matches employer contributions up to a maximum of \$3,000 to companies that offer a financial EAH benefit to qualified applicants (Relave, 2005). Organizations can also attract additional government funding by marketing new or unique products (Kramer, 2000b). Different products will also generate different funding interest. Offering a product or service that is not inherently attractive to free market ventures could prove a useful strategy. For example, green environmental ventures, such as lead abatement (particularly in public or subsidized housing), Brownfield or abandoned building cleanup, and building deconstruction (potentially a major activity for public housing and military installations), might not easily attract private capital, but might be very attractive to public agencies and serve to generate jobs for a long time (Kramer, 2000a). Many factors will determine what kind of return on investment a business can expect and whether it will need continued subsidy. To further illustrate, businesses that rely heavily on trainees for production will often not produce income that breaks even with cost, and will need some subsidy for the long term (Emerson, 1997; Kramer, 2000b).

Involving employers in retention and advancement efforts can substantially decrease costs for welfare agencies as a result of fewer individuals returning to TANF (Crandall, 2004). The Welfare-to-Work Partnership launched Retention and Career Advancement 2000 (RCA, 2000), an educational campaign, to assist its business partners

with retention and career advancement strategies. During the past three years, the Partnership has learned that promoting job retention and career advancement are critical investment strategies for a successful welfare-to-work program. Through the Partnership's web site, publications, and events across the nation, RCA 2000 helps businesses reduce turnover costs and improve performance by keeping new workers on the job (Crandall, 2004). Focusing on a different issue every month, RCA 2000 provides strategies and information to help businesses hire and retain individuals leaving welfare. Firms even within quite narrowly defined industries, have different and persistent workforce composition, productivity and turnover patterns. Within the retail industry, Starbucks, as an example, has chosen a relatively high-wage, high-benefit, low-turnover strategy to market its coffee, whereas other shops will produce a different type of product with a different personnel strategy (Crandall, 2004).

#### Job Retention Strategies

Much is known about how to help unemployed welfare recipients find jobs but little is known about how to help them and other low-wage workers keep jobs or advance in the labor market (Molina, Cheng, & Hendra, 2008), because few employers provide jobs with successful outcomes for former welfare recipients (Lane & Stevens, 2001a). Career advancement ought to be the foremost job retention strategy when working with welfare clients before and after placement (Kramer, 1998a, 1998b). Therefore strategies to assist the private sector with welfare recipients' employment need to put emphasis on different ways to encourage employers to hire recipients (Tweedie & Vasquez, 2008).

The study's primary focus is on the job retention strategies offered by employers and the relationship of these strategies to job retention. Therefore, it will be necessary to

preface some pre-employment strategies that best support post-employment job strategies. These include: (a) soliciting industry partnerships to help develop sector-based work preparation and training programs, (b) contracting with individual employers to develop and manage their own training programs with the support of public training funds working with private staffing or temporary employment agencies to serve welfare recipients, (c) asking employers to help govern and operate welfare-to-work efforts, (d) using education and training providers to prepare recipients for employment in high-demand, entry-level positions, and (e), contracting with private, for-profit firms and community-based nonprofits to prepare and place recipients in jobs (Tweedie & Vasquez, 2008). Welfare intermediaries (welfare agency counselors and case managers) play an instrumental role in providing most of these pre-employment strategies, whereas post-employment strategies such as wages and compensation, benefits, training, supervision, communication, career advancement opportunities (job growth), communication, respect, and fairness were cited among the most effective job strategies are best provided by employers .

There are direct linkages between these strategies and the 3-M model of job retention. Proper needs-based and skill-based assessments help to determine the right job placement referrals (Job Match). Proper job matches with companies that offer good wages, benefits, and provide training and supervision help to increase job learning and improve job skills (Maturity). Fair and respectful treatment and communication with employees to involve them the decision-making processes (problem solve [Mastery]) leads to increased self esteem and the ability to master more complex skills for further career advancement (see Table 4).

Table 4

*Relationships Between Job Retention Strategies and the 3-M model of Job Retention*

Match	Maturity	Mastery
Welfare Agency Strategies		
*Screening		
*Skills and needs-based		
*Assessments		
*Case management		
*Life Skills/Job readiness training		
*Job placement		
*Job referral		
*Liaison		
*Counseling		
*Mentoring		
*Job Coaching		
*Facilitate family/		
*Community Support		
*Networking		
Employer Strategies		
	*Wages and Compensation	*Communication
	*Benefits	*Fairness
	*Training	*Respect
	*Supervision (skills *development)	*Job Growth
	*Work/Life Balance	

*Pre-Employment Job Retention Strategies*

Pre-employment strategies refer to the array of services provided by welfare intermediaries (welfare counselors and case managers) in preparation for job referral and job placement. Many of these services include not only liaison with employers but linking former welfare recipients to community support services and social networks.

### *Welfare Intermediary Strategies*

Most welfare recipients leave welfare for work within a year and have work histories, but as many as 40% return within the year; two-thirds within 5 years because of the lack of work support (Pavetti, 1993). Around 60% lose their first job after Aid for Families with Dependent Children (AFDC; Hershey & Pavetti, 1997). Some leave because of low wages, lack of benefits or the ability to maintain child care, and others because of the difficulty of holding family responsibilities together or maintaining health coverage for their families (Kramer, 1998a). Such reports prompt further investigations into when retention services should begin and who should offer such preliminary services?

Retention efforts should begin before employment (Kramer, 1998a). Most research on effective work strategies have focused on large corporations and on higher-wage employees (Bond & Galinsky, 2006), but welfare agencies can build a retention focus into their employment preparation and placement programs. Agencies that provide employment-related services can structure programs to simulate the workplace (Relave, 2000a, 2000 b). Such services are usually implemented by the welfare case managers otherwise called welfare intermediaries. The value of welfare intermediaries has become increasingly evident since the enactment of PRWORA in 1996 because low-income recipients rarely possess the information needed to take advantage of variations in the labor market (Coombs-Taylor & Rubin, 2005). Welfare intermediaries are instrumental in representing a potentially powerful strategy for connecting former welfare recipients to opportunities in the labor market (Coombs-Taylor & Rubin, 2005). Welfare intermediaries play important roles in screening, assessing, referring and providing other

pre-employment services, and in liaising with employers to conduct post-employment follow-up services (Kramer, 1998a). Past histories of alcohol or drug abuse, criminal records, or bad work histories (Holzer & Stoll, 2001) may put some recipients in continuing jeopardy that may require additional work with prospective employers to secure a job and continued monitoring once employed. Therefore before placement, intermediary screenings and assessments are necessary to identify job skills and educational deficits so that recipients can be better directed to set realistic employment goals (Kramer, 1998b).

Intermediary services also include interventions for the harder to serve such as legal assistance, interventions for domestic violence, services for persistent mental health and other chronic health issues and complex child and family caretaker responsibilities (Kramer, 1998a). Such assistances often require upgrading worker training, upgrading their referral capacity with better source references (e.g., infant, school-age and special needs child care providers, transportation routes and providers), and liaising with service providers to adjust policies that control the duration and intensity of monitoring.

Effective intermediary strategies include investigating the types of employers who are open and ready to do business with welfare workforce and determine the extent to which prospective employers are willing to offer job supports (Rumrill & Roessler, 1999). For example, some employers may be prepared to modify their human resource policies to make adjustments for welfare workers (Giloith, 2004). Intermediary post-employment services, such as case management, support groups, mentoring, and job coaching, can create opportunities to work on soft skills based on the recipients' work-related experiences (Relave, 2000a). Effective intermediary strategies examine the factors

that constrain and promote employers' decisions regarding hiring and retaining former welfare recipients (Giloith, 2004). In so doing intermediaries prepare the job applicants by screening them to meet the employers' standard. These procedures involve skills and needs assessments to properly match the worker with the needs and requirements of the employer. These assistances run the gamut from completing job applications to assistance with basic life skills such as proper dressing, grooming, and personal hygiene, to ensuring compliance with employers' standard code of ethics (e.g., decorum, mannerism, interacting appropriately with fellow employees, etc.). Preparation for entry-level employment, extended case management, transitional benefits, and other services are valuable assets offered by intermediaries to help TANF recipients keep their jobs (Kramer, 1998a). Welfare intermediaries must also ensure that employers hire, provide training and benefits and implement promotional policies for entry-level welfare recipients with low skills (Abt Associates, 2003). Applying the 3-M match strategy procedures may be useful to help intermediaries better assess recipients' skills, assets, and deficits in order to make appropriate work referrals and may be useful to improve their case management approaches (Rumrill & Roessler, 1999).

Welfare intermediaries can assist former recipients in job preparation by providing help with life skills and job readiness training (such as adhering to workplace norms) within the framework of the 3-M model (Rumrill & Roessler, 1999). They must implement work-focused case management to help participants address problems that could negatively impact their ability to sustain employment and connect to other social services (such as substance abuse treatment; Holzer, 2004). Intermediaries need to inform welfare clients about post-employment services and benefits during pre-employment and

placement activities. Clients at risk of job loss should be targeted for more intensive support services (Crandall, 2004). Additionally, intermediaries can help to explore multi-service delivery strategies in residential neighborhoods and work closely with public housing authorities to develop programs that ease access to child care and extend services to other family members (Kramer, 1998a). However, policies must be in place to ensure that such services are not interrupted after recipients leave the rolls, and that they continue for as long as needed (Pindus et al., 1997). This may require changes in internal procedures, greater interaction with service providers, and more funding. Policies that maintain housing stability, through increased subsidies or income disregards for housing, or other means, may be as important as other services in creating the environment in which TANF families can sustain employment (Kramer, 1998b).

Intermediaries are especially valued by employers for their distinctive roll in reducing the risks of hiring former welfare recipients. Welfare recipients are generally perceived as potential business risks on account of variable attendance, inadequate customer service and lack of skills training, particularly soft skills (Relave, 2000b; Rubin, 2004), therefore intermediaries are appreciated for reducing the possibility of risk substantially (Relave, 2004). To meet these expectations, welfare intermediaries need to market their retention services and supports to employers. This will in turn enable intermediaries to learn about employers' needs and local labor market conditions.

Welfare-employer partnerships provide an opportunity for intermediaries to educate employers about the needs of low-wage workers, the economics of job turnover, and the retention services and supports the agency can provide (Relave, 2001a, 2001b; 2002). Further, intermediaries can work with employers to modify or develop programs,



such as employee assistance programs, mentoring, job coaching, and supervisor training, that provide workplace solutions to some of the challenges facing new workers and low-wage workers (Rangarajan & Novak, 1999). Agency intermediaries can also intervene directly to address workplace issues but should be mindful that many current and former TANF recipients do not want to be associated with the welfare system (Rangarajan, 1998).

Developing workplace programs that serve all entry-level workers avoids this stigma. When working with employers, agency intermediaries need to provide easy access to information and services, for example, by having a single point of contact and simplified administrative procedures (Rangarajan, Meckstroth, & Novak, 1998). Welfare intermediaries must be aware that employers are more apt to hire welfare employees who provide good customer service by listening to and responding to employer concerns, and understand that different industries have different standards for judging applicants and evaluating new workers (Rangarajan et al., 1998). Welfare intermediaries must also realize that employers “view recipients through the lens of risk, the risk associated with hiring non-traditional workers” (Coombs-Taylor & Rubin, 2005. p. 3). Hence, the ability of the intermediaries to reduce that risk to an acceptable level and address these concerns ought to be a prerequisite. To address these concerns welfare intermediaries should use pre-placement assessments to identify welfare work barriers, develop short and long-term employment and career goals, and match participants to work assignments that fit their interests, needs and circumstances.

Welfare intermediaries need to target industries and occupations where wages and benefits are improving or that offer the chance for advancement. They should work with unions or employers to structure training and benefit packages (Kramer, 1998b).

Intermediaries are obligated to work to ensure that employers provide better pay, better working environment and collaborate with employers to provide better working conditions (Holzer, 2004). Giloth (2004) recommends intermediaries ensure that former welfare recipients learn basic skills, and develop good work habits for the right job match. They must also ensure recipients get relevant training to mature in their jobs to advance and contribute to their employers. These services are essential because former welfare recipients, especially 'welfare mothers' who move into paid work, are more likely to remain employed and less likely to return to welfare if they have prior work experience and more training and education (Cancian et al., 1999; Harris, 1996). Additionally, intermediaries' assistance with connections to work supports such as child care and transportation subsidies is critical to job retention (Bittman and Pixley, 1997). Intermediaries also can help to support unsubsidized job search and job placement activities (Baider & Frank, 2006).

#### *Post-Employment Job Retention Strategies*

Post employment strategies refer to those job services provided by the employers once the worker is hired. Such strategies may also include ongoing counseling and support services provided by the welfare agency intermediaries.

The way to determine whether particular work strategies support career advancement is to demonstrate their impact on employee attitudes and behaviors that affect important business outcomes (Pindus & Nightingale, 1995) "Of 24, 631 jobs

offered by 4,871 employers, only 276 employers offered 2,432 jobs with successful transition from welfare to work. Merely 1,785 employers offered a total of 4,662 jobs that lasted more than four quarters” (Lane & Stevens, 2001a, p.1015).

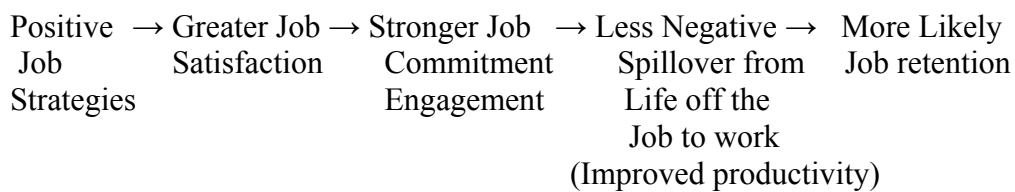
A review of the hiring trends among participating organizations in the welfare-to-work network showed a larger concentration of welfare employees in 10 clusters: general merchandise stores, food establishments, hotels and lodgings, personal services, business services, health services, social services, wholesale trade, manufacturing, and public administration (Lane & Stevens, 2001b). Further reports also showed business services provided 28% of the jobs; health services 14% and food establishments provided 11% (Lane, Burgess, & Theeuwes, 1998), but there is not enough empirical evidence showing what types of strategies these organizations use for welfare job retention (Moffitt, 1992).

Job retention strategies differ among business models (Kramer, 2000b). However, businesses that offer worksite training to employees with multiple challenges are more successful in integrating “needed services” directly at the worksite (Kramer, 2000b). This means “configuring worksite designs to accommodate special needs and establishing good institutional and personal connections to service providers, both on-site and through community and network providers” (Kramer, 2000b, p. 2). Worksites may need to be designed to accommodate physical limitations of participants as well as addressing some of their psychological needs (Isbell, Trutko, Barnow, Nightingale, & Pindus, 1995).

Organizations that understand the needs of welfare recipients and their role as employers and market producers may be more able to develop a viable social purpose enterprise than those who have only provided social services, only trained, or only been employers in the regular labor market (Gregory, 2007). Fostering an effective work

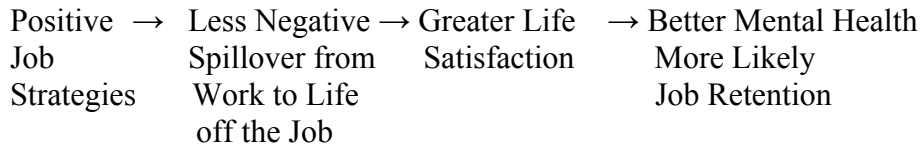
environment is a win-win situation because it benefits both the employers the employees. Employers benefit from this process because it helps employees to be more engaged, committed and satisfied with their jobs in order to achieve bottom-line results for the company (Bond & Galinsky, 2006).

The 3-M model approach to job retention may prove useful in helping employers to configure job retention strategies (Roessler & Rubin, 1998), but applying the model may also yield different outcomes for employees as demonstrated in Figures 5 and 6.



*Figure 5.* Job strategy outcomes of greatest importance to employers.

From the employer’s viewpoint job satisfaction is more narrowly work related (Lewis, Collins, & Amsden, 2005). Once job strategies are enforced, employers believe employees will be more satisfied, will demonstrate more commitment and will more likely remain on the job for longer periods. However, as Figure 6 illustrates, employees view job satisfaction more personally and globally (Lewis et al., 2005). Whereas employer perception of job satisfaction is more narrowly job related, employees view job satisfaction in terms of his or her lifestyle (Lewis et al., 2005). Employees gain from working in a positive work environment, as it helps them become more effective at work and achieve a better quality of life off the job.



*Figure 6.* Job strategy outcomes of greatest importance to employees.

Relative to the findings of Mehnert et al., 1990), job satisfaction determines not only the employee’s job retention but his or her outlook on life. Employee job satisfaction positively correlates with the quality of his or her mental being, the quality of his or her job performance, the quality of relationships, and overall quality of lifestyles (Lewis et al., 2005).

“Engaging employers in welfare and workforce development policies and programs are critical in achieving positive labor market outcomes for both employers and employees” (Relave, 2001a, p.1). This process however will require more than mere organizational participation; it will require their unyielding commitment to implement work-related strategies that will foster job retention. A 2001 study conducted with global business leaders showed 59% reported that their companies have made adjustments to their recruiting and retention strategies in the past 3 years (Pekala, 2001). These investments (a) created structures to help new workers acclimate to their jobs and work environment, (b) provided equal access to training and advancement opportunities, and (c) provided training for supervisors, which often included bilingual skills and diversity training (Crandall, 2004). Other studies indicated “high job-retention firms are more likely to make such accommodations and investments in their entry-level workforce” (Crandall, 2004, p. 13), but “most research on effective workplace strategies remain

focused on higher-wage employees” working in larger corporations (Bond & Galinsky, 2006, p. 4).

Employer perquisites are generally unlikely to be offered to low-wage welfare workers who often lack both the proximity to expanding job markets and the social networks that might afford them upward job mobility (Kramer, 1998a). One strategy to overcome these odds is to use employers themselves to create the linkages between so-called secondary labor markets, that is, low skill, low wage, uncovered, unstable jobs, and the primary labor markets where better jobs may be found (Kramer, 1998b). Workforce development boards, particularly those with a regional focus, are well situated to build these consortia (Newman, 1995). Employers in these secondary labor markets could negotiate agreements on behalf of their low-wage workers with employers in primary labor markets to provide compensation packages that include promotional opportunities in their next higher-paying job (Kramer, 2000a). Such agreements could increase worker commitment in sectors plagued by high turnover because of the low-wage, dead-end nature of their jobs (Kramer, 1998a; 2000b). Through them employers in primary labor markets would find workers with job-ready skills and well documented work histories (Newman, 1995). Similarly, small and mid-size employers in related businesses, with workforce intermediary help, could form consortia to support joint industry-specific training. Otherwise, “their small numbers of workers or cost constraints would preclude customized training to upgrade their workers’ skills” (Isbell et al., 1996, p. 31).

Efforts to create effective workplaces recognize that people are the employers’ greatest assets; that people make the critical difference between profit and loss, and

between just meeting routine requirements and business success (Holzer, 2002). Therefore effective workplace strategies should not be seen just as an accommodation to employees' needs and preferences, but as a strategic management tool that can produce business results (Bond & Galinsky, 2006). The outsourcing of skilled labor in today's job market has impacted these efforts. These efforts are thwarted as the economy moves more and more to a service industry and de-skilling of jobs. The exodus of large corporations leaves room for mid-sized and small companies whose concern is more about hiring cheap labor for maximum capital gains rather than ensuring job growth for the worker. Most of these mid-sized and small companies lack the resources to provide job strategies that the large organizations can afford. Welfare workers who lack educational and job skills are particularly vulnerable to these types of work situations as they are usually targeted for cheap labors and can easily be dispensed especially during tough economic times.

Overall, employer demand for workers leaving welfare remain strong, especially among retail and minority-owned businesses, but earnings are reportedly weak (Holzer, 2002). A survey of employers in Los Angeles conducted in 1998 and 1999, reported approximately 30% to 40% hired former welfare recipients on a full-time basis (Joint Center for Poverty Research, 2008). The survey reported weak earnings (\$7.83 hourly) in a time of economic prosperity. Results of this survey suggested that hiring is sensitive to job vacancy, and economic climate. The survey indicates that should there be a downturn in the economy low-wage welfare employees would be the first to go. This is evidenced in a recent survey published by the Brookings Institute on the increases in poverty in urban and metropolitan cities since the recession. The statistical report shown in Table 5

indicates continuous increases in urban poverty due to the downturn in the job market and increased unemployment across the nation.

Table 5

*Changes in City and Suburban Poverty Trends 1999 - 2009*

Areas	Poverty Rate (%)			Number of Poor		
	1999	2009	Percentage Point Change	2000	2009	% change
Nation	12.4	14.3	2.0	33,99,812	42,868, 163	26.5%
Metro	11.6	13.3	1.7	20,378,841	25,849,934	26.8%
Cities	18	19.5	1.5	10,387,549	12,121,247	16.7%
Suburbs	8.5	10.4	1.9	9 991,292	13,728,687	37.4%

\*Five of the top 100 metro areas are excluded from this analysis due to data limitations.

*Note:* All change estimates are significant at the 90 % confidence level.

*Source:* Brookings Institution analysis of Census 2000 and 2009 American Community Survey data.

Low wage earners in Florida, in particular, African Americans and females have fared worse since the recession began in 2007. While wages for the top 20% of earners increased by 1.6% in 2009, wages for African American workers dropped by \$0.51 per hour (3.85%) during that same period (Eisenhauer, Oseguera, & Sanchez, 2010). Women’s wages also decreased from \$15.16 per hour in 2008 to \$14.25 in 2009 while men’s wages remained close to \$17.00 per hour. There were no significant changes in the wages reported by Hispanics but in 2010 the accelerated rate of unemployment among all income levels seem to have narrowed the gap between the highest earners and the lowest earners (Eisenhauer, Oseguera, & Sanchez, 2010); an indicator that does not bode well



for early economic recovery and employment for especially low income former welfare recipients.

The current recession has already shown to have dire consequences for welfare recipients living in poverty; thus the urgent need to explore job retention variables to prevent further job losses. In 2008, 13.2 % of the population, or roughly 1 in 8 people in Florida lived in poverty; a significant increase from the previous year due to the recession (Eisenhauer, Oseguera, & Sanchez, 2010). With the reduction in public budgets, public sector workers are in danger of being laid off which would be a further blow to the economy and should be avoided at all cost. Therefore job creation programs should be targeted to those hardest hit by the recession, and job strategies should be geared towards retention of workers, in particular, low-wage workers to ensure that the state experiences a full recovery.

#### *Employer Job Retention Strategies*

While the literature provides voluminous descriptive studies of welfare job programs, (Cancian & Meyer, 2000, 2005; Corcoran et al., 2000; Danziger, 1999; DeParle, 2002; Holzer, 1999, 2000, 2001; 2002; Loprest, 2001; Pavetti, 2000; Rangajaran, 1998; Rangajaran & Novak, 1999), only scant reports provide effective job retention strategies. The few reported empirical studies identified wages and compensation (Meisinger, 2006), benefits (Johnson & Corcoran, 2003; Leonard, 1998), work/life balance (Pekala, 2001; Withers, 2001), training and supervision (Perlmutter, 1997; Holtzer & Stoll, 2002), job growth opportunities (Lane & Stevens, 2001a, 2001b), communication, (Piper, 2006), fairness and respect (Thomas & Ganster, 1995) as being among the most effective employer job strategies.

### *Wages and Compensation*

Wages and compensation are significantly related to job retention (Meisinger, 2006). Placing clients at firms that pay higher wages than their competitors decreases the likelihood of job turnover and puts clients on a faster track toward economic self-sufficiency (Bond & Galinsky, 2006). Compensation strategies that link pay to performance, such as performance bonuses, profit-sharing, and employee stock ownership plans, keep employees motivated and provide more opportunities to learn new skills retention (Meisinger, 2006). Merit increases for extraordinary effort is one way that companies are structuring their employee compensation packages (Pekala, 2001). Pay-for-skills rewards employees for learning new job-related skills. CVS, for example, partners with community and faith-based centers to offer life skills training (Casey, 2007). The company incorporates the advanced earned income tax credits in the financial planning component of the training program. This venture proved to be highly successful in attracting and retaining their welfare employees. Some employers provide financial incentives to employees for participating in job-related training that leads to advancement (Crandall, 2004). Table 6 gives a comparison of wages that were predominantly earned by entry-level welfare employees between 1999 and 2003 before the recession.

As was earlier discussed, one contributing factor to wage increases was the Living Wage Campaign in states like California, Maryland, Louisiana and Florida among others. Living wage laws states “that the government should require employers to pay workers according to their needs, not according to their productivity” (Macpherson, 2002, p.1).

Table 6

*Wages of Jobs by Occupation*

Job Categories	1999-2000 ( <i>ns</i> = 18-94)	2003 ( <i>ns</i> = 17-107)
Personal care and service	\$6.17	\$8.12
Office and administrative support	\$8.47	\$9.96
Sales and related occupations	\$6.71	\$7.36
Production	\$7.71	\$8.88
Building and grounds cleaning and maintenance	\$7.02	\$8.02
Food preparation and serving	\$5.56	\$7.84
Healthcare support	\$9.07	\$9.71
Education, training and library	\$9.53	\$11.19
Protective service	\$7.18	\$9.07
Management	\$7.71	\$11.29

*Source: "Who gets ahead? Work profiles of former welfare recipients in Illinois" by D. A. Lewis, E. Collins, & L.B. Amsden (2005). Institute for Policy Research. Northwestern University. Evanston, Ill.*

Employers who provide benefits are required to pay wages higher than the current minimum wage, while those who do not offer benefits are required to pay even higher remittances. Florida's Miami-Dade County passed a living wage ordinance that required the county and contractors to pay their employees \$8.81 with benefits, or \$10.09 without benefits (Macpherson, 2002). Critics of the ordinance argued that its long-term consequences could result in many employers' reluctance to hiring low-wage workers for

fear of being forced out of businesses due to increased expenditures especially during this protracted recession.

The current economic downturn since the recession paints a very bleak picture when compared to earlier economic reports. In Florida, job losses have been reported in all sectors of the job market except Education and Health Services. The construction industry has reported historical job losses of more than 48% while massive losses in the business and professional services, manufacturing, retail service, and leisure and hospitality services were reported. The educational and health services were the only areas that reported positive job growths (33,900 or 3.3%). Figure 7 describes the job losses that occurred in Florida since the recession between 2006 and 2010.



Figure 7. Florida job losses 2006-2010.

## *Benefits*

Employer benefits are perceived as powerful and effective job retention strategies (Holzer, 2000). Most employees of large companies, particularly higher-wage employees, receive generous fringe benefit packages, for example, health insurance coverage, paid vacations, and paid time off for personal illness (Pekala, 2001). Among the smaller employers and low wage workers, there are substantial variations in fringe benefits (Bond & Galinsky, 2006).

Former welfare recipients, who are primarily low-wage workers living in low income families, have very limited financial resources. Therefore, benefits such as health insurance coverage, paid vacations, and paid time off for personal illness, employer-supported pension/retirement plans, financial assistance for child-care and financial assistance for education/training can make a big difference in their financial, personal and family well-being (Bond & Galinsky, 2006). However, all of these fringe benefits impose direct costs on employers. Between 1999 and 2000, employers offered work-related benefits to a third or less of former welfare recipients (Holzer, 2005). During this period, the majority did not receive any employer benefits at all. Those working as care-givers and working in the service industry received benefits at lower rates than workers employed in other occupations (Holzer, 2005). Overall, only one-third of former welfare recipients received employer benefits in 2003. Nevertheless, the fact that many employers do provide some benefits to their low-wage employees suggests that they view the investments as worthwhile for purposes of improving recruitment, productivity and retention (Bond & Galinsky, 2006).

Temporary welfare workers receive even less employer benefits. Among temporary welfare workers, approximately 8% received fully or partially paid medical insurance (Lewis et al., 2005), which is consistent with Cohen's (1998) finding that only 7% have health insurance compared to 61% of permanent workers. A mere 8% received vacation or holiday pay, while few reported receiving other types of benefits (Lewis et al., 2005). In light of this report there is still a noticeable increase in fringe benefits offered to temporary welfare workers over recent years. Most of this increase occurred in health insurance and retirement benefits which increased by 16% in 2003, dental insurance which increased by 6%, retirement program, paid sick leave, and unpaid sick days or personal leave days (Lewis et al., 2005).

Some employers compensate their former welfare employees with paid time off, paid sick days, and personal time off. There is also an increase in the tuition reimbursement benefits offered especially by government and non-profit organizations (Greenberg & Patel, 2006). Employers who offer tuition reimbursement are more likely to retain workers, particularly younger, non-management women who are at lower education levels. Table 7 shows employer benefits received at current job among entry-level welfare recipients which is more compared to benefits received by temporary workers (Lewis et al., 2005). If employers aren't providing benefits this could create further setbacks for low wage recipient workers.

#### *Training.*

Employment training and job retention are positively correlated. As such, organizations that provide training and use innovative workplace practices report higher job retention (Frazis, Gittleman, & Joyce, 2000). A Gallup survey showed that employees

demonstrate greater job satisfaction when training opportunities are made available to them (Pekala, 2001). Training and work experiences fulfill long-term employment objectives (Kramer, 2000b). Over the past two decades, the emphasis has shifted from rapid job placement to focus more on education and/or training (Bloom, 1999).

Table 7

*Employee Entry-level Job Benefits Provided by Employers*

Benefits	1999-2000 ( <i>ns</i> = 466-478)	2003 ( <i>ns</i> = 455-459)
Health Insurance for self	16%	30%
Dental Insurance for self	23%	29%
Retirement Program	14%	24%
Paid Sick Days	28%	31%
Unpaid sick days or personal leave days	22%	30%

*Source: "Who gets ahead? Work profiles of former welfare recipients in Illinois" by D. A. Lewis, E. Collins, & L.B. Amsden (2005). Institute for Policy Research. Northwestern University. Evanston, Ill.*

Almost all states require adult welfare recipients to work or prepare for work, but there is much debate about the best way to proceed (Cohen, 1998). Programs using training strategies may vary their services to meet clients' needs, by providing short or long-term training courses, targeting specific subgroups of TANF participants, or focusing training to prepare for better paying jobs (Greenberg & Patel, 2006). Nonetheless, irrespective of the type of training and employment, the participant's

long-term employment needs to be primary consideration in business design and individual employment planning” (Kramer, 2000a, p.3).

Training designs need to focus more attention on transitioning into permanent employment those who can go on to other work, and on developing skills that are transferable (Kramer, 2000a). Formal classroom training can be combined with on-the-job learning to increase transfer of learning to the job (Crandall, 2004). Vocational educational training may count as a work activity for only 12 months, but only 30% of those TANF recipients that a state counts as engaged in work activities can be in vocational educational training (Cohen, 1998).

Engaging employers will enable more low-income workers to access training and advancement opportunities (Crandall, 2004). Utilizing employers’ expertise in developing job training curriculum is an effective job retention strategy (Bloom, 1999). Employers can play a vital role in welfare organizational job training to help clarify the structure and goals of their job training programs (Bloom & Butler, 1995). Employers can help to identify the specific types of hard and soft skills that an industry-specific training curriculum should include (Bloom, Hill & Riccio, 2003). As such, increasing employer participation in welfare-training initiatives requires joint efforts between business enterprises and government (Brown, Bloom & Butler, 1997). For instance, the San Francisco Chamber of Commerce and the United Way spearheaded a job retention program, i.e., San Francisco Works. The program initiated a coalition between businesses and community-based welfare organizations to provide training and employment for former welfare recipients (Bliss, 2000). The contract provided funding for two different types of training wherein one group was funded 180 hours of classroom training and 36



hours of on-the-job training per employee. The other required funding for 270 hours of structured on the job training and 16 hours of classroom training (Quint et al., 1999).

Various local industries medical, retail and service industries joined the initiative and participated in the program (Bliss, 2000). Bank of America used the 3-M model approach to offer computer skills training and teller training for full-time employment. United Airlines adopted a similar training approach with their customer service employees during the pilot phase of the program (Bliss, 2000). Other program partnerships used the 3-M model to offer training. Walgreen has adopted concepts of the 3-M model to provide training and job opportunities for welfare-to-work participants since 1997 (The Tennessee Tribune, 2000). The overall goal aims at training and employing 100 residents in local communities to master and retain their jobs so that they can achieve economic self-sufficiency. The 3-M model can also apply to provide soft skills training for those individuals moving into the workforce. It includes a job readiness curriculum that emphasizes employability skills as a skills training technique. This soft skills training can also be extrapolated into vocational training and other program activities (Relave, 2000a, 2000b).

The 3-M model of job retention is also used in the medical field to provide training to former welfare recipients. In Philadelphia, TANF clients placed in local hospitals to participate in the organization's 4-month nurse's aide training program were compensated while being trained and later hired as permanent staff (Greenberg & Patel, 2006). At the John Hopkins Skills Enhancement Program in Baltimore, TANF clients are hired as janitors while being trained for entry-level positions health care positions (Greenberg & Patel, 2006). Consistent with the 3-M model of job retention, similar

training programs in Montana provide training in commercial truck driving, construction, clerical and accounting occupations. Some programs consult with employers to develop training curricula that are structured to the 3-M model. The Center for Employment Training (CET) in San Jose for example, is a non-profit organization in San Jose, California, which collaborates with employers to develop training curricula tailored to meet labor market requirements, and gather information related to the employer needs (Greenberg & Patel, 2006). Another program, the Individual Development Account (IDA) provides cash incentives to women to start their own businesses, while other collaborative measures offer training in non-traditional fields for female welfare recipients, such as, in truck-driving and highway construction (Cohany, 1998). Once they completed and mastered the training they were promoted to positions where they were able to earn competitive salaries.

To remain competitive and offer the best training programs employers need be economically viable (Kramer, 2000b). This requires having well-planned and well-executed business and social objectives. One way of assuring both long-term economic viability and flexible training and placement options is to control a market niche (Kramer, 2000b). Producing a unique product or service of uniquely high quality, or partnering with a member of the corporate community to gain exclusive control of their outsourcing are ways to control a market niche. Such partnerships, it has been noted, can also afford access to managerial expertise to assist in business planning and operations (Emerson, 1997). Another way to control a market niche is with aggressive marketing strategies using traditional direct sales appeals and advancing ideas that indirectly create a market for the product (Kramer, 2000a, 2000b).

Education and training efforts for welfare recipients will likely cost more than the trainees' output will generate in revenue from product sales (Wallack, 1999). However, if the return on investment is measured in its larger social context, the efforts may well be worth the cause. Four kinds of returns on which to assess social purpose ventures are (1) financial returns to the employees or trainees (a function of the number of jobs directly created, the number of outside placements, and the wages earned), (2) public cost savings through increased tax revenues and reduced service costs, (3) quality of life returns (e.g., improved sense of self-efficacy and quality of life), and (4) financial returns to the owners (Wallack, 1999). While some of these may be difficult to measure, this perspective broadens the traditional measures of profit on which to hold projects accountable. It may also guide the design of evaluations necessary for program training, monitoring and quality improvement (Kramer, 2000a, 2000b).

### *Supervision*

Employee job satisfaction and job retention are highly correlated with job supervision (Buckingham & Coffman, 1999; Holzer, 2001). Poor leadership, conflict with others, including immediate supervisors, lack of potential to advance, boredom with the responsibilities, or lack of recognition from management are cited as primary reasons for voluntary termination of employment (Gregory, 2007). A Gallup poll survey of some 2 million workers at 700 companies showed that poor supervisory behavior was the main reason people quit (Pekala, 2001). Supervisory style plays an important role in retaining top quality employees (Holzer, 2001). Good supervision should be based on employees' needs that can be categorized into three basic stages: (1) among early career employees (30 and under), career advancement is very significant to the retention of this group.

Their ability to influence the organization and their satisfaction with their professional work environment also helps build their commitment to the company. Being part of an innovative organization is important both for retention and commitment. Many entry-level former welfare recipients fall in this category as job growth is a major determinant of job retention; (2) for mid-career employees (31 to 50), commitment to the company increases as they mature and are more comfortable in managing their own careers. Professionalism and job satisfaction yield greater job retention for this age group than for either their younger or older colleagues; (3) among late career employees-those aged over 50-professional satisfaction relates to neither retention nor commitment. This is the only group for whom job security drives retention (Pekala, 2001). A majority of former welfare recipients also fit into 2 the latter categories because as they mature, job satisfaction and job security are deemed equally important.

The length of an employee's job tenure is determined largely by his or her relationship with a manager. Supervisors and managers who set clear expectations provide opportunities for employees to use their talents, allow input into decision making, and care about their employees increase retention (Buckingham & Coffman, 1999). Employers can foster excellent supervision by providing training to front-line managers and by rewarding good management. Special supervisory strategies, allowing for regularly scheduled breaks and other work-place adjustments that can accommodate physical or emotional limitations, need all be taken into account. The following are some recommended supervisory strategies that have proven to be very effective (Gregory, 2007).

- Understand their maximum potential how it affects their ability to influence others.
- Ascertain their natural leadership style.
- Comprehend the process on how all teams develop and why teams fail.
- Hire the right people the first time.
- Find and hire the right people the first time.
- Get the right people in the right positions on the team.
- Maximize leadership with an interconnected style.
- Recognize different behavior styles and how each style responds according to the situation.
- Adapt their leadership styles to employees' natural behavior styles.
- Develop a team mission and vision statement.
- Appreciate the importance of empowering others and learn how to do so.
- Maximize communication efforts up, down and across the chains of command.
- Set effective and productive goals for both the team and the individual.
- Effectively motivate and reward productive behavior.
- Expertly handle those who are less than cooperative.
- Develop the ability to utilize performance evaluations as a motivational tool

Organizations may provide a variety of emotional and physical support services on job sites. In most cases these accommodations can be separate from businesses or work sites within the industry. Experienced personnel can be rotated to provide ongoing support services. “Decisions about how to configure training, staff and other support will

need to strike a balance between the needs of the clients and the ability of the business to sustain such support” (Kramer, 2000a, p.2). One approach might be to identify tasks within existing jobs that can be performed by those with limited skills, and reconfigure job descriptions and staffing patterns in order to transform or aggregate those tasks into whole jobs (Roberts, 1999). Offering rewards to boost self-esteem, confidence, and gradually increasing responsibility as a tangible way of reinforcing motivation.

Supervisory support services may also include the need to address issues around social functioning, irritability, coping with stress and fear of the workplace. Individuals, particularly those with recent prison experience, may need special help dealing with frustration and anger, dealing with authority, and dealing with co-workers. Strategies for dealing with these issues include introducing stress gradually, avoiding isolation, and building in mechanisms for peer support, such as group meetings (Gregory, 2007). Some businesses introduce peer counseling as support strategies. Many companies have aided the transition by offering "buddy system" training or internships to bolster skills and orient workers to their new environments (Peterson, 1998). Job coaching and mentoring are other effective supervisory strategies commonly used in vocational institutions to address various forms of emotional or physical challenges (Kramer, 2000a, 2000b).

### *Job Growth Opportunities*

Closely following the need for training and supervision is employees' desire for job growth. A Gemini International Workforce Management Study confirmed that 53 % of Americans said they would leave their current jobs for an opportunity to advance in their careers (Bond & Galinsky, 2006). Some factors that lend to growth

and advancement in an organization include internal promotion, granting ownership, empowerment, autonomy, job learning and team participation (Bolman & Deal, 1997).

*More job autonomy.* There is a high correlation between job autonomy and job retention. Effective workplaces that empower and support employees have broad positive impacts on entry-level, low-wage employees that are similar to, and sometimes greater than, the impacts of more advantaged employees (Bond & Galinsky, 2006).

When workers are given more responsibility, held more accountable and are supported at work, they are more effective, more satisfied with their jobs, more committed to their employers, potentially more productive and more likely to be retained (Bond & Galinsky, 2006). Having greater autonomy on the job is more strongly related to more positive relationships off the job among lower paid entry level employees than among mid and higher wage employees. Employees who experience less negative spillover from home to work are more likely to be productive on the job (Bond & Galinsky, 2006; Lewis et al., 2005). Nevertheless, though there is evidence suggesting that autonomy is a predictable job retention strategy, “allowing entry-level employees full participation in decision-making processes could present management challenges as some entry-level employees might not yet attain the level of responsibility and accountability to earn employers trust” (Bond & Galinsky, 2006, p.10).

*More job learning opportunities.* There is a high correlation between on the job learning and job retention. Greater learning opportunities on the job have more favorable effects on job satisfaction among entry-level, low-wage employees than among middle and higher-income employees (Bond & Galinsky, 2006). Some programs target specific subsets of the welfare or low-income population, such as those who speak English as a

second language (ESL) or those with learning disabilities (Greenberg & Patel, 2006). The CET in California conducts assessments on all its students to determine if they require general training in English to function on the job (Greenberg & Patel, 2006). Other learning programs like Career Transitions, hire teachers to assist clients with learning disabilities, get training in micro-enterprise and other short-term employment training (Greenberg & Patel, 2006). Educational training and on-the-job-training do incur some expenses to the employers but these costs can often be offset with public funds from special programs designed to increase employability of low-wage, former recipient workers with limited educational background.

### *Communication*

Companies need to communicate their progress, financial news and major activities to employees on a regular basis (Thomas & Ganster, 1995). Even more importantly, they must demonstrate an interest in gaining employees' trust. Since the downsizing of the '80s, fewer employees have positive attitudes about the workplace (Pekala, 2001). In a 1999 Watson Wyatt Canada survey, only 37 % of respondents rate the level of honesty in their workplaces as high or very high (Pekala, 2001). Only 14 % agree that people trust each other. And, while 54 % of senior managers think the level of trust between corporate ranks is good, only 27 % of employees agree (Pekala, 2001). Entrenched hierarchy was reported as one of the key barriers to rebuilding trust.

Lack of communication typically threatens job retention (Thomas & Ganster, 1995). Employees who cannot meet critical job demands are considered unsatisfactory by their employers and are ultimately terminated. If employees are not participating in preferred activities or receiving desired reinforcements on the job, they become



dissatisfied with their work. Employees who are not happy in their work voluntarily leave the workplace. Without communication individuals do not maintain their employment (Pekala, 2001).

Workers today want to be treated more like partners than employees. More than just empowerment, they want a sense of ownership (Pekala, 2001). They want to make suggestions without regard to age or rank, be included in profit-sharing plans or enjoy team bonuses, and work in an environment that is free of rigid hierarchical titles and executive offices. They want more 'say' in the work they do and how they do it. However some employers still struggle with the idea of giving particularly entry-level employees more autonomy in these decision-making processes. For example, while 61% of senior managers felt that they treated employees as valued business partners, only 27% of the employees agreed (Pekala, 2001).

### *Work/life Balance*

Work/life culture supporting personal and family life has taken a new dimension as workers spend more time on the job (Pekala, 2001). Today's workers are increasingly exploring ways to balance work and leisure, family and community time. A global organizational study indicated that as many as 86% of employees cite work/life balance as the top priority in their career (Pekala, 2001). Workers today are willing to sacrifice twice as much pay as they were seven years ago to achieve a work/life balance. The time spent on the job in a given year has increased by 163 hours in the last 20 years while leisure has declined by one-third (Withers, 2001). In addition, 55% of 18-34 year olds say the option of taking extended leaves or sabbaticals is a key workplace benefit (Withers, 2001). Flexible work-time that make it easier for employees to balance work

with family obligations have been shown to increase productivity, reduce absenteeism and lower turnover rates (Lane & Stevens, 2001b).

Over the past several decades greater workplace flexibility is making it possible for employees to productively participate in the paid workforce, and sustain or increase their family's standard of living while also caring for their children, elderly parents or other family members (Perlmutter, 1997). Workplace flexibility is defined as the policies and practice that give employees greater control over their work schedules, their work locations and their ability to take time off to meet personal or family needs (Bond & Galinsky, 2006). "Flexitime may include giving the employee the choice to reduce commuting time by working around rush hours, arranging convenient and affordable transportation to and from work, coordinating child-care activities, and meeting other family responsibilities" (p.4). Special supervisory strategies allowing for regularly scheduled breaks and other work place adjustments to accommodate physical or emotional limitations should be taken into account (Kramer, 2000b). As such, flexitime allows employees more control over full-time work, part-time employment and allows the employee the choice to work extended hours including when to take restroom breaks. Greater workplace flexibility has more favorable effects on job satisfaction among entry-level, low-wage employees than among mid and higher income employees (Bond & Galinsky, 2006).

Flexitime is often critical for single parents who are struggling with childcare responsibilities. Effective workplace flexibility can foster recruitment, improve productivity and job retention. It also affords workers the opportunity to take advantage of training and education to upgrade their skills (Council for Adult and Experiential

Learning-CAEL, 2000). Workplace flexibility must benefit both the employer and the employee to be rendered useful (Bond & Galinsky, 2006). For this reason employers have requested employees to brainstorm creative team problem-solving techniques that will benefit employees without subjecting the company to financial losses.

### *Fairness and Respect*

As the workforce continues to diversify, many organizations identify non-discriminatory practices and respect as core competencies for success. Fair and respectful treatment in the workplace contributes to long-term job retention among former welfare recipients (Piper, 2006). As such a growing number of employer-based job programs are providing job security and offering job psychological training to welfare employees to ensure fair treatment (Bolman & Deal, 1997). Many former welfare recipients who participate in employer-base job training report feeling less stigmatized once they get the opportunity to interact with other workers outside of TANF (Greenberg & Patel, 2006). The interaction between TANF and non-TANF workers provides role model opportunities for former welfare clients to learn from the examples set by more experienced low-income workers. Additionally former welfare recipients report that these types of job placements make them more attractive to employers, provide an opportunity for them to be treated more equally, and respectfully, and reduce the stigma associated with being a part of TANF (Greenberg & Patel, 2006; Kramer, 2000a).

### Organizational Sizes

Organizational sizes are positively correlated with job retention (Lane, Stevens & Burgess, 1996). Employers who hire larger proportions of former welfare recipients are more likely to have successful outcomes than those who do not (Lane & Stevens, 2001a).

Large organizations and growing organizations have greater hiring rates and greater proportion of successful job matches, whereas the opposite is true for contracting employers (Lane & Stevens, 2001b). Large organizations are also in better positions to offer fringe benefits than small organizations due to cost factors involved (Bond & Galinsky, 2006). However, there is a substantial variation in the available fringe benefits offered by small organizations.

### Organizational Types

Organizational types are also highly correlated with job retention (Groshen, 1991). Wages are determined by organizational types, which in turn affect recidivism rates and job retention outcomes (Lane & Stevens, 1995). Non-profit organizations are more likely to utilize job retention strategies than profit-making organizations, in that they tend to offer more generous benefit packages and are more apt to engage employees in training programs (Greenberg & Savener, 1999). Welfare recipients constitute up to 60% of job training program participants (Greenberg & Patel, 2006), and those who were hired in public administration, health services, or social services were more likely to retain their jobs longer than those who were hired in the private industry (Bartik, 1997).

### Summary

Chapter 2 discussed the barriers faced by former welfare recipients and the job strategies used by participating organizations in the welfare-to-work program network to promote job retention. The chapter began with an overview of the societal issues of welfare and the stigma associated with welfare dependency. It chronicled the historical development of welfare leading to the current TANF program. TANF has an inherent work-first philosophy that imposes stringent work requirements regardless of the

numerous challenges and barriers encountered by former welfare recipients. Failing to overcome these challenges often result in punitive sanctions, severe penalties and possible termination of welfare cash benefits.

Personal barriers such as the lack of child-care, lack of transportation, lack of housing, substance abuse, domestic violence disabilities and mental health problems accounted for the most pervasive. Lack of family and community supports, and language barriers pose major social barriers for former welfare recipients' job retention. The lack of education, work training and experience constitute by far the most serious challenges to work (Holzer, 2005; 2007). The lack of these resources restricts them to low wages, reduced or non-standard work hours and exposes them to workplace discrimination. Efforts to meet these challenges result in the federal government giving states responsibilities, and granting each state fiscal incentive to solicit industry partnerships to develop and provide job training programs for former welfare recipients (Tweedie & Vasquez, 2008).

While states will need to develop strategies to meet federal requirements, the challenge is to ensure that compliance and penalty avoidance do not become the central goals of welfare reform. It is therefore important to have organizational strategies that address the needs of TANF recipients and other low-income families, and to be guided by goals that promote sustainable employment and economic self-sufficiency.

In the past, employment programs for welfare recipients and other individuals focused largely on the front end of job preparation and job search (Brown, Buck & Skinner, 1998). Support services and relationships usually ended when the individual found employment. Now welfare agency and employer partnerships play supporting roles

in welfare job retention. Business partnerships offer an opportunity to coordinate services available from public and community agencies with those provided by employers themselves. Business partnerships present better opportunities for post-placement supports (Brown, Buck & Skinner, 1998) because employer involvement allows for potential problems to be more readily identified as they arise on the job. Additionally, many welfare recipients who find work are eager to sever ties with the welfare system and would prefer to get their income through gainful employment.

Guided by the 3-M model of job retention, the constructs of match, maturity and mastery were used as the framework for discussions throughout the literature. The roles of welfare intermediaries (welfare counselors and case manager) in providing pre-employment strategies are presented as foundational to long-term job retention. These strategies necessitate screening, assessing, soft skills training, and offering support services to recipients, while liaising with employers to ensure the right employer/ job match prior to making job referrals. Intermediaries also conduct post-employment follow-ups to with employers and recipients to ensure compliance of the job placement contracts by both parties.

Employers benefit from participating in the welfare-to-work program because they are offered tax credits, wage subsidies and other financial perquisites as incentives to provide job retention supports. Consequently, this study examined what strategies employers in turn use to provide job retention among former welfare recipients. Ironically, only limited research is available on the types of strategies employers use to promote welfare job retention. The few available empirical reports cite wages and compensation, benefits, training, supervision, job growth opportunities, communication,

work/life balance and fairness and respect as being the most positive predictors of job retention.

Organizational sizes and types also impact welfare job retention. Large organizations are more likely to hire and retain former welfare recipients (Lane & Stevens, 2001a, 2001b). They are more likely also to have better resources to implement job retention strategies. Government and non-profit organizations tend to hire former welfare recipients at a disproportionately higher rate than private sector organizations. They reportedly offer more training opportunities and more generous job benefit packages than private sector organizations.

Chapter 3 presents the research method, design, and sampling and data collection, analysis, and management procedures. Chapter 4 explains the results of the findings in chapter three. Chapter 5 discusses the interpretation of findings and implications of the study.

## CHAPTER III

### METHOD

Chapter 3 begins with the purpose of the study, the research question and hypotheses. Next, the survey research design is discussed, followed by a description of the population, sample, instrumentation and procedures used for data collection and data analysis.

#### Purpose Statement

The purpose of this ex post facto study was to investigate the strategies used by organizations participating in welfare-to-work network programs and correlate the strategies with the retention data to determine best practices for job retention among former welfare recipients.

#### Research Hypotheses

Based on the theories and concepts derived from the literature, the following research hypotheses guided the study:

- H<sub>1</sub>. There is a significant relationship between employer job retention strategies and job retention of former welfare recipients.
- H<sub>2</sub>. There is a significant relationship between organizational type, organizational size, and job title, and job retention of former welfare recipients.
- H<sub>3</sub>. After controlling for salient background variables (i.e., organizational type, organizational size, and job title), job retention strategies will be significantly related to the job retention of former welfare recipients.



## Research Design

An ex post facto research design was utilized in this study. Because of the nature of this study where possible confounding variables identified in the literature were statistically controlled (hence providing at least some control of possible internal validity threats), this study is classified as the third and most powerful type of ex post facto design (Newman & Newman, 1994). Ex post facto designs do not permit claims of causality and only support cautious interpretation of the data. Correlational procedures were used to test the first two hypotheses. Correlations are useful in that they allow for the examination of relationships among a large number of variables in a single study and also provide information concerning the strength and direction of relationships between research variables. To test the third hypothesis, a hierarchical regression analysis was employed to test an a priori conceptual model predicting job retention through a combination of background variables and job retention strategies (Cohen, Cohen, West, & Aiken, 2003).

One important technique used for data collection in the social sciences is through surveys. Surveys are employed to gather information that describes a specified set of data ranging from physical counts and frequencies to attitudes and opinions (Gall et al., 1996). Surveys are also important tools for gathering both quantitative and qualitative data from a selected group of individuals (Creswell, 1994; Fink, 1995; Fowler, 1984). For the purposes of this study, the researcher employed the Internet to deliver the research survey to potential participants.

The use of the Internet for conducting Web-based survey research has increased substantially over the past 10 years. Self-report surveys are arguably the most widely

used form in organizational and institutional studies and are relatively easy to facilitate through modalities such as electronic mail and the World Wide Web (Kraut, 1996). Internet-based surveys have become very prevalent and may replace mail and telephone surveys in certain situations (Manfreda, Batagelj, & Vehovar, 2002).

The research literature suggests the following advantages of Internet-based surveys: ability to reach large numbers of people, anonymity, less costly, and less time-consuming (Shaefer & Dillman, 1978; Sheehan & Hoy 1999; Simsek & Veiga, 2001). Disadvantages include: possible technical problems; generalizability issues with populations that have Internet access or usage problems; response rates that are typically lower than traditional mail surveys; and possibly security issues (Dillman, Tortora, & Bowker, 1999). Simsek and Veiga (2001), for example, in a comparative study of Internet-based and paper-and-pencil surveys, found that response rates for Internet-based surveys ranged from 10% to 15% less than more traditional paper-and-pencil approaches. For the purposes of this study, the researcher selected the internet approach for data collection because the benefits seemed to outweigh the disadvantages, particularly with regards to cost and time savings.

### Procedures

A description of the sample from the study population is presented, followed by a discussion of the procedures for selecting and evaluating the instruments used to measure the predictor variables. The procedures for sampling, piloting, constructing and administering the survey questionnaire, and analyzing and managing the data are discussed in the following sections.

### *Population*

The target population for this study was large and small, for-profit and non-profit organizations with membership in the welfare-to-work employment program network in the state of Florida. By participating in this program, these organizations agree to hire welfare employees and subsequently provide at least some level of benefits (e.g., sick leave) to the entry-level welfare workers. In addition, participating organizations agree to work to create supportive work environments, offer work schedule flexibility, help connect workers to supports, and implement mentoring systems that assist welfare workers in sustaining employment (Relave, 2001). Welfare agencies and service providers can provide tax incentives to organizations to help implement these strategies (Relave, 2001). Welfare agencies also can set their own criteria for organizational participation. For example, in Broward County, Florida, participating organizations must have been in business for at least 1 year, possess occupational licenses, and employ at least 10 individuals for 6 months or longer.

### *Sampling*

The purpose of sampling is to collect information about a population by selecting and measuring a sample from the population (Moore & McCabe, 1996) and gain information that can be generalized to the entire population (Fowler, 1993; Gay, 1996; Merriam & Simpson, 2000). The researcher systematically selected 2000 organizations from among participating organizations within the Florida welfare-to-work network. The organizations were accessed through a database of participating network of welfare-to-work organizations provided by the State of Florida in Tallahassee.

Stratified random sampling was used in this study. “Stratified random sampling is the process of selecting a sample in such a way that identified subgroups in the population are represented in the sample in the same proportion that they exist in the population” (Gay, 1996, p. 12). Stratification is useful when trying to get proportional samples of the population that is representative of each group. To afford comparison with Winston, Burwick, McConnell, and Roper (2002) study of Florida welfare-to-work organizations, stratification was based on a representative sample of small and large for-profit and nonprofit organizations from the state of Florida. In other words, the researcher stratified by organization sizes and types. A small organization is defined as one employing less than 100 employees (Relave, 2001).

#### *Sample Size*

There is a population of 24,931 organizations participating in the Florida welfare-to-work program. A major source of survey error is the failure to collect data from a representative sample of the population (Fink, 2003a, b). The population was split into four categories: small for-profit, large for-profit, small non-profit and large nonprofit organizations. To assure correct representation from each of the four groups, a proportional number of organizations were randomly selected from each. A random number table (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005) was used to randomly select the sample organizations within each industry by type (i.e., for-profit/nonprofit) and by size (i.e., small/large). All the participants in the study were members of welfare-to-work network. Because the participants were members of the network, it was assumed that the members of this population had implemented varying types of job retention strategies (Relave, 2001). In accordance with the state of Florida dataset used in this study, large for-profit

organizations represented 12.0% of the survey distributed in this study; large nonprofits 8.0%; small for-profits 48.0%; and, small nonprofits 32.0% of the population, respectively.

### *Response Rate*

Response rates are usually reported as the percentage of a selected sample from which data were collected that responds or completes the survey (Fowler, 1993), but there is no standard “acceptable” response rate (Fink, 2003a, 2003b; Fowler, 1993). Response rates are affected by the length of the survey, and the number of follow-up reminders (Sheehan & McMillan, 1999; Yammarino, Skinner & Childers, 1991). Likewise, sending reminder letters or messages have been shown to generate positive survey response rates (Sheehan & McMillan, 1999).

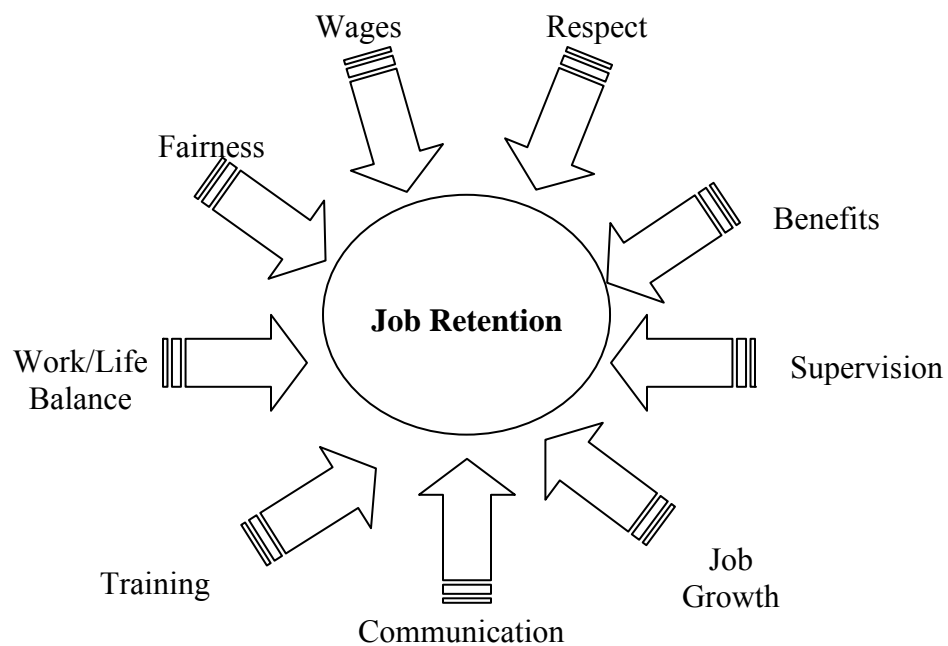
The response rate was 10.45% for this study, which is comparable to reports of a previous social science studies (i.e., Huselid, 1995). Because of the non-response issue, however, it will not be appropriate for the researcher to generalize beyond the respondents (Gall et al., 1996). The researcher e-mailed a total of 2000 surveys to a proportional representation of the four different types of organizations with each of the three mailings: 240 surveys to large for-profit organizations (12.0%); 160 to large nonprofits (8.0%); 960 to small for-profits (48.0%); and, 640 to small nonprofits (32.0%). Responses (and response rates) were as follows: large for-profit  $n = 15$  (7.2%), large non-profit  $n = 15$  (7.2%), small for-profit  $n = 101$  (48.3%), and small nonprofit  $n = 78$  (37.3%). In essence, only the small for-profit representation closely reflected the research population, while the small nonprofit representation was arguably closer. Overall, while the results were similar to the findings of Winston et al. (2002) and Deckop et al. (2006)

with regards to for-profit representation, large organization representation was under-represented in this study, again limiting the generalization of the findings beyond this study. The 209 responses collected were well within the range of the minimal acceptable participant-to-variable ratio (15:1) recommended for prediction-related statistical procedures (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2001). To further support the suitability of the sample size, using a power analysis where  $\alpha = .05$ , power = .80, with an estimated  $R^2 = .10$  (which was averaged from other studies on welfare-to-work; e.g., Deckop et al., 2006; Frazis, Gittleman & Joyce, 2000), an adequate sample size for this study should have been between 130 and 216 (Cohen, Cohen, West, & Aiken, 2003). This sample size criterion was clearly met in that the sample size was 209.

### *Instrumentation*

The Employer Job Retention Strategy Survey (EJRSS) was administered to the participants (the designated people who were representing their company [e.g., managers, HR personnel]; thus, the data collection was at the organizational level, not individual welfare-to-work employees self-assessing themselves). The instrument used in this survey was a modification of various sources of survey questions including Spector (1998) and Deckop, Konrad, Perlmutter, and Freely (2006). The 86-item self report, Likert-type scale questionnaire measured perceptions of nine variables that support job retention. Each 6-point item ranges from 1 (*disagree very much*) to 6 (*agree very much*). Item scores associated with each of the nine research variables are summed to form a total score for each. There are no reverse-scored items in the research measure. Cronbach's alphas for the nine subscales ranged from .71-.84 (Deckop et al., 2006).

To modify Deckop et al.'s (2006) original 66-item measure to be more in line with the context of this study, 16 additional questions were compiled from the welfare-to-work literature (Meisinger, 2006; Perlmutter, Deckop, Konrad & Freely, 2005; Spector, 1998). The nine job retention strategy variables were as follows: (a) wages and compensation (Meisinger, 2006), (b) benefits (Bond & Galinsky, 2003), (c) supervision (Holzer, 2001, 2002), (d) training (Holzer, 1999, 2000, 2001; Leonard, 1998), (e) communication (Thomas & Ganster 1995), (f) job growth opportunities (Johnson & Corcoran, 2003), (g) work/life balance (Lane & Stevens, 2001a, 2001b; Perlmutter, 1997), (h) respect (Piper, 2006), and (i) fairness (Piper, 2006). Figure 8 shows the posited relationship between job retention-the dependent variable (DV) and the employment strategies-the independent variables (IV; Spector, 1994).



*Figure 8.* Relationship between job retention strategies and job retention.

The EJRSS subscales and related items are presented in Table 8. The wages and compensation subscales were combined into one scale because of the considerable

conceptual overlap between the two (Meisinger, 2006). Thus, there were eight job retention strategies subscales overall. Job retention, the dependent variable, was measured as days of employment of welfare-to-work recipients (Deckop et al., 2006; Rangarajan & Novak, 1999). Organizational type (non-profit; for-profit), organizational size (10-100 employees; 101-200; 201-500; 501-1000; > 1000 employees), job title (1 = Frontline Team Member , 2 = Supervisor/Manager; 3= Administrator/HR Personnel; and 4 = CEO), and length of time in business (< 1 year; 2 years; 3 years; 4 years; 5-10 years; > 10 years) were measured as background variables.

Table 8

*Employer Job Retention Strategies Subscales*

<i>Instrument Subscales</i>	<i>Item #s</i>
Wages & Compensation	1- 6
Benefits	7-15
Training and Supervision	16-36
Communication	37-42
Job growth	43-53
Work/life balance	54-65
Respect	66-73
Fairness	74-82



### *Data Collection Protocol*

The data collection protocol was guided by Dillman (2000). First, three subject matter experts evaluated the content validity of the instrument before the survey was administered. The content area experts evaluated the measure to determine its suitability for this study. Their feedback was addressed to make certain content validity issues were addressed appropriately. However, any recommended changes in the feedback had to be agreed upon by all three of the experts (100%) for further inclusion. In general, the content experts suggested changes in wording to make the questions clearer, which was done. Next, a pilot study was conducted in two phases before conducting the final online survey.

### *Piloting*

The initial pilot phase included an interface with six individuals for feedback on the construction and length of the survey (i.e., time to complete survey), clarity of directions, and any other additional comments. The survey was designed to be completed in approximately 15 minutes. A few questions arose about the meaning of certain terms; the average time of administration was roughly 15 minutes, as planned. The second phase of the pilot study was conducted with 20 participants from the research population who were not included in the final study. Personnel from the central welfare agency office in Tallahassee, Florida were contacted as a prerequisite for gaining access to the organizational welfare-to-work database where the 20 pilot participants were to be surveyed. Once access was permitted, an online pilot testing was conducted to check again for clarity of instructions and time to completion, and also to troubleshoot possible technical issues associated with an online survey data collection approach. The results of

piloting suggested that the instructions were clear, but there were concerns about the length of the survey. However, because the survey was comprised of only one measure (job retention strategies), the researcher was unable to shorten the survey. Question Pro<sup>®</sup> Packaging Software was used to collect the data for the online survey. This software has been utilized successfully in a number of recent Internet-based studies (e.g., Robinson, 2007).

#### *Survey Instrument Administration*

Once feedback from the pilot study had been incorporated into the study, the stratified random sample of 2000 administrative or human resource personnel of selected organizations were surveyed via e-mail. Surveying administrators or human resource personnel as representatives of the organization is consistent with previous workplace research (e.g., Kidd, 2006; Lam & White, 1998). Similar to Lam and White (1998), for the purposes of this study one individual administrator or human resource person was asked to complete the survey per organization. However, to control for possible bias by job title, a job title variable was treated as a control variable in the partial correlational and hierarchical regression analyses (Reio & Sutton, 2006; see H<sub>3</sub>). Reio & Sutton (2006), for example, found that CEO/executives completed a workplace survey systematically differently than frontline managers or human resource personnel. The researchers did not find statistically significant differences between the ratings of frontline managers and HR personnel.

The researcher adopted Dillman's Tailored Design Method (TDM; Dillman, 2000) to seek optimal participation because this survey-related data collection approach can notably increase response rates. First, initial e-mails were sent to the participants to

inform them of their selection to participate in the study, to inform them of the purpose of the survey, and to assure them of confidentiality. Second, the online survey was administered, which included a “hotlink” where participants could click on said hotlink to move them to the e-survey. Third, two follow-up contacts were made via e-mail to non-responsive participants (3 waves of data collection overall). The following time-table Table 9 outlines the stages (in weeks) of data collection:

Table 9

*Data Collection Time-Table*

Stage	Activity
Week 1	Contacted accounting manager of the Welfare Workforce Agency for list of participating organizations.
Week 2	An e-mail was sent to organizational HR personnel informing them that they were selected for the study. The purpose of the questionnaire was subsequently explained.
Week 3	Survey was e-mailed to participants.
Week 6	First follow-up mailing to non-respondents sent via e-mail.
Week 8	Second follow-up mailing to non-respondents sent via e-mail.

*Data Analysis*

Descriptive statistics were used to interpret means, frequencies, modes, medians, and standard deviations. Inferential statistics were analyzed against an alpha level of  $p < .05$ , 2-tailed, which is commonly used in educational studies (Gall et al., 1996). In addition, measures of effect size were used to demonstrate the magnitude of relationship between the variables (e.g.,  $r$ ,  $R^2$ , adjusted  $R^2$ ). The data were imported into a Statistical

Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) 17.0 database to examine relations among variables and tabulate the outcomes.

To answer the first two research hypotheses, correlational analyses were conducted. (H<sub>1</sub>: There is a significant relationship between employer job retention strategies and job retention of former welfare recipients. H<sub>2</sub>: There is a significant relationship between organizational type, organizational size, and job title, and job retention of former welfare recipients.). The third research question was tested via partial correlational analyses after controlling for organizational size and type, and job title. (H<sub>3</sub>: After controlling for salient background variables [i.e., organizational type, organizational size, and job title], job retention strategies will be significantly related to the job retention of former welfare recipients.). Hierarchical regression analyses were also used to test which job strategies were most associated with job retention after controlling for organizational size, organizational type, and job title.

#### Data Management

The data gathered for the study was inputted and stored in files on the researcher's personal computer hard drive, located in a locked office. The data was backed up on CD as well as on Scandisk for retrievable access. The data set does not contain any identifying information about the specific organization.

#### Summary

The study used an Internet survey to investigate the strategies employed by welfare-to-work network program organizations to predict job retention among former welfare recipients. Participating organizations in the welfare-to-work program network were surveyed.

The surveys were completed online with Question Pro ® Packaging Software. Using SPSS 17.0, the data were analyzed to examine the relations between organizational job service strategies and job retention among former welfare recipients.

## CHAPTER IV

### RESULTS

Chapter 4 presents the results of the quantitative data analyses, which includes a description of the sample, the testing of the three hypotheses, and a brief summary. A chi-square analysis was employed to test the null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) that there is no significant difference between the expected and observed results of a given variable distribution (demographic variables; Babbie, 2004). The demographic variables are organizational size, organizational type, and job title. A MANOVA was conducted to determine organizational size and organizational type differences in job retention strategies. To examine the hypotheses, correlational analyses and hierarchical regression analyses were used to test the hypothesized model of employee job retention and identify important relations among the variables of interest. Hierarchical regression is a useful prediction procedure for determining which set(s) of variables or predictor(s) are most closely associated with a dependent variable (Green, 1991).

#### Description of the Sample

Two hundred and nine large, small, for-profit, and non-profit organizations responded to the survey. This amount represents 10.45% of the total population. Each organization hired former welfare-to-work recipients for a minimum of six months and had been in business for at least a year.

#### *Organizational Size*

A frequency analysis indicated that 56.5 % ( $n = 118$ ) of the sample employed 10-100 employees, 29.2 % ( $n = 61$ ) employed 101-200 employees, and 14.4 % ( $n = 30$ )

employed 201-500 employees. None of the respondents reported possessing more than 500 employees (see Table 10).

Table 10

*Organizational Size Frequency*

Size (# employees)	<i>f</i>	%
10-100	118	56.5
101-200	61	29.2
201-500	30	14.4
501-1000	0	0.0
> 1000	0	0.0
Total	209	100.0

Thus, the majority of organizations represented in this study were smaller organizations (100 or less employees).

*Organizational Type*

Fifty-five and one-half percent ( $n = 116$ ) of the sample consisted of for-profit organizations, while 45.5 % ( $n = 93$ ) of the sample consisted of non-profit organizations (see Table 11). Thus, the majority of the sample was a for-profit type of organization.

Table 11  
*Organizational Type Frequency*

Type	<i>f</i>	%
For-profit	116	55.5
Nonprofit	93	44.5
Total	209	100.0

*Tenure*

A frequency analysis indicated that 3.3% ( $n = 7$ ) had been in business for 1-2 years, 2.9 % ( $n = 6$ ) had been in business for 3 years, 20.6% had been in business for 4 years ( $n = 43$ ), and 73.3% ( $n = 153$ ) had been in business for at least 5 years (see Table 12). According to the data, then, the large majority of participating organizations had been in business at least 5 years.

*Position within Organization (Job Title)*

A frequency analysis indicated that 12.9% ( $n = 27$ ) of the respondents described themselves as an HR manager, 26.8% ( $n = 56$ ) as a manager/administrator, 21.1 % ( $n = 44$ ) as upper management, and 2.9 % ( $n = 6$ ) as “other” (see Table 13). Interestingly, 36.4% of respondents did not report their position within the organization. As the study was designed to do, the vast majority of the surveys were completed by the management of the participating organization.



Table 12  
*Organizational Tenure Frequency*

Tenure	<i>f</i>	%
Less than 1 yr.	0	0.0
2 years	7	3.3
3 years	6	2.9
4 years	43	20.6
5-10 years	153	73.3
> 10 years	0	0.0
Total	209	100.0

This finding that the majority of the participants completing the survey were supervisors, managers, or administrators is similar to the Deckop et al. (2006) and Reio and Sutton (2006) studies.

Table 13  
*Position within Organization (Job Title) Frequency*

Job Title	<i>f</i>	%
Frontline team member	27	20.3
Supervisor/manager	56	42.1
Executive	44	33.0
CEO	6	4.5
Total	133	100.0

### *Cross Tabulation of Demographic Variables*

Cross tabulations of the demographic variables used in this study were examined for relationships using inferential statistics (see Table 14). As an inferential statistic, chi-square procedures assist researchers in drawing conclusions about a population from a sample and provide evidence regarding the generalization of findings to a broader population (Green, 1991).

Table 14

#### *Frequency of Organizational Type by Organizational Size*

ORGTTYPE	Organizational Size (number of employees)					Total
	10-100	101-200	201-500	501-1000	>1000	
Profit	72	29	15	0	0	116
Non-Profit	46	32	15	0	0	93
Total	118	61	30	0	0	209

Chi-square analysis was used to test the null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ), meaning there is no significant difference between the expected and observed result of a given variable distribution (Babbie, 2004). The degree of freedom ( $df$ ) provides information about how much data was used to calculate a particular statistic; the  $df$  is usually calculated as one less than the number of variables. The  $p$  value is the probability that the deviation of the observed from that expected is due to chance alone (Creswell, 2005). Table 15 lists the values of the calculated chi-square statistic ( $\chi^2$ ).

In essence, the results of the  $\chi^2$  tests suggested no statistical differences between the distribution of each sample variable (i.e., organizational size and type [i.e., for-profit

and non-profit] and job title). The means, *SDs*, and Cronbach's alphas of the Employer Job Retention Strategies Subscales are presented in Table 16.

Table 15

*Cross Tabulation of Demographic Variables*

Variable Combination	$\chi^2$ Value	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i>
ORGSIZE and Job Title	12.54	12	.41
ORGSIZE and Tenure	13.47	12	.34
ORGSIZE and ORGTYPE	6.43	4	.17
ORGTYPE and Job Title	6.31	3	.10
ORGTYPE and Tenure	0.97	3	.81

Initial Cronbach's alpha analysis indicated that all but two of the subscales reached at least a minimal level of internal consistency (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2001). Because the wages and compensation subscale's reliability score was .52 and well below the recommended reliability level of .70, the entire concept was eliminated from statistical analysis in the study (item deletion procedures did not increase the reliability). The Fairness subscale's initial reliability score was .48. Upon further examination, it was found by deleting items 77-79, the Cronbach's alpha increased to .70; all subsequent analyses related to this variable were with the revised scale (now a 6-item subscale).

Job Retention Strategy and Organizational Size and Type

A two-way MANOVA was conducted to determine the effect of organizational size and type on the remaining seven job retention strategy variables.

Table 16

*Employer Job Retention Strategies Subscale Means, SDs, and Cronbach's Alphas ( $\alpha_k$ )*

Instrument Subscales	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	$\alpha_k$
Wages & Compensation	18.47	3.84	.52
Benefits	29.24	7.29	.86
Training and Supervision	77.28	10.47	.91
Communication	23.81	3.71	.89
Job Growth	40.43	5.22	.91
Work/life balance	37.51	5.07	.74
Respect	30.08	4.58	.72
Fairness*	26.46	3.28	.70

Note: \* = Revised Scale

The MANOVA results indicated that both organizational size (Wilks'  $\lambda = .919$ ,  $F(14, 394) = 2.31$ ,  $p < .05$ , multivariate  $\eta^2 = .072$ ) and organizational type (Wilks'  $\lambda = .908$ ,  $F(7, 197) = 2.48$ ,  $p < .05$ , multivariate  $\eta^2 = .081$ ) are significantly related to the combined DV (job retention strategies). An interaction effect was not revealed (Wilks'  $\lambda = .811$ ,  $F(14, 394) = 1.36$ ,  $p = .17$ , multivariate  $\eta^2 = .046$ ).

An ANOVA was conducted on each dependent variable as a follow-up test to the MANOVA. Organizational size differences were significant for 3 of the 7 job retention strategies (Communication, Work/Life Balance, and Fairness) where the  $F$ 's ranged from 3.436 to 7.352,  $ps < .05$ , partial  $\eta^2$ 's .033-.068. In all cases, the effect sizes were small.

The Scheffé post hoc analysis ( $p < .01$ ) revealed significantly lower mean communication scores for organizations with less than 100 employees versus those with 201-500 employees. With Work/Life Balance, post hoc analysis indicated significantly lower mean work/life balance scores in organizations with less than 100 employees versus those with 201-500 employees. For Fairness, there was also a significantly lower mean fairness score in organizations with less than 100 employees versus those with 201-500 employees. In other words, less fairness was perceived in organizations with less than 100 employees compared to the larger 201-500 employee organization.

ANOVAs for organizational type suggested that there were significant group differences for 5 of the 7 dependent variables (Benefits, Job Growth, Work/life Balance, Respect, and Fairness), with the  $F$ s ranging from 2.763-12.432,  $ps < .05$ , partial  $\eta^2$  s .024-.058. Scheffé post hoc analysis was not warranted as there were but two groups. In all cases the effect sizes were small. Thus, for non-profits, significantly lower group means were revealed on five of the seven dependent variables, that is, Benefits, Job Growth, Work/life Balance, Respect, and Fairness.

Overall, significant organizational size and type group differences were revealed among the combined DV (job retention strategies), with lower group means by organizational size for organizations with 100 or less employees and lower group means by organizational type for non-profits.

#### Length of Employment (Job Retention)

The mean length of employment (job retention) for the overall sample was 191.48 days ( $SD = 49.30$ ). Further analysis by organizational size revealed that for organizations

employing 100 or less employees, the mean length of employment for welfare-to-work employees was 159.92 days ( $SD = 44.29$ ). For organizations with 101-200 employees, the mean length of employment was 207.54 days ( $SD = 61.73$ ). In the 201-500 employee organizations, the mean length of employment was 283.00 days ( $SD = 77.03$ ). A one-way ANOVA of length of employment by organization size (with Scheffé posthoc analysis) suggested that there was a statistically significant difference in length of employment by organizational size, with organizations with 201-500 employees demonstrating a statistically significant difference from only organizations with 10-100 employees  $F(2, 206) = 9.32, p < .001, \text{partial } \eta^2 = .155$ . Thus, length of employment was significantly longer in large organizations versus small ones (100 employees or less).

The mean length of employment by organization type was 184.11 days ( $SD = 54.80$ ) for for-profits and 199.8 days ( $SD = 55.20$ ) for non-profits. A one-way ANOVA of length of employment by organizational type revealed no statistically significant difference between the two group means  $F(1, 207) = .504, p = .48, \text{partial } \eta^2 = .028$ .

#### Examination of Research Hypotheses

A hypothesized model of job retention was tested using correlational and hierarchical regression analysis. The model hypothesized that organizational size, type, job title, and work job strategies would be related to job retention. Prior to testing the model, underlying assumptions about correlational and hierarchal regression analyses techniques were examined. The four conditions examined were multicollinearity, normality, linearity, and homoscedasticity (Hinkle et al., 2005). Serious violations of

these assumptions could have made inferences drawn from results of this study problematic or invalid.

#### *Multicollinearity*

Multicollinearity occurs when variables are highly interrelated, making it difficult to obtain reliable estimates of their individual regression coefficients (Cohen & Cohen, 1983). To avoid multicollinearity issues, correlations between predictor variables greater than .90 should be removed or combined (Green, 1991). High intercorrelations of predictors tend to increase the standard error of the beta coefficients and make assessment of the unique contribution of each predictor variable in the regression equation untenable (Green & Salkind, 2005; Tabachnick & Fidell, 2001).

Intercorrelations were checked and no correlation between predictor variables was found to be at the .90 threshold.

#### *Normality*

Normality assumes that the residuals are normally distributed (Cohen & Cohen, 1983). Normality can be checked through skewness, kurtosis, and bivariate plots. If the multivariate normality assumption is met, the only type of statistical relationship that can exist between variables is a linear one (Green & Salkind, 2005). Normality was examined with a histogram and the data set was found to be normally distributed. Thus, the assumption of normality was met.

#### *Linearity*

The assumption of linearity assumes the relationship between the independent and dependent variables is a linear one (Cohen & Cohen, 1983). While difficult to ascertain (Green, 1991), this assumption was tested via bivariate scatterplots (Green, 1991). An

examination of the bivariate scatterplots demonstrated they formed relatively linear lines; thus, there were no violations of linearity and the assumption of linearity was met.

#### *Homoscedasticity*

Homoscedasticity is the assumption that the variability in scores for one variable is roughly the same at all values of the other variable, which is related to normality. The homoscedasticity assumption was examined with bivariate scatterplots and visually checked for shape (Green, 1991). The scatterplot showed a generally oval shape for all predictor variables, suggesting that the residual error variance was constant for all values of the predictor variables. Thus, the assumption of homoscedasticity was met.

#### *Testing the Research Hypotheses*

*H<sub>1</sub>*. There is a significant relationship between employer job retention strategies and job retention of former welfare recipients.

Zero-order correlation analyses among the seven job strategies and length of employment suggested there was a statistically significant relation for all but two of the variables with the dependent variable. The correlations are presented in Table 17. Benefits ( $r = .16, p < .05$ ), Training and Supervision ( $r = .34, p < .001$ ), Communication ( $r = .21, p < .01$ ), Job Growth ( $r = .23, p < .01$ ), and Respect ( $r = .19, p < .03$ ) demonstrated small to moderate relations with length of employment (Cohen, 1988). The Work/life Balance variable revealed a marginally significant relation with the dependent variable ( $r = .16, p = .07$ ), while the relation between Fairness and length of employment was not statistically significant ( $r = .13, p = .12$ ).



Table 17

*Zero-Order Correlations among Job Retention Strategy and Length of Employment Variables*

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
(1) LE	--							
(2) Ben	.16*	--						
(3) TS	.34*	.55***	--					
(4) Com	.21**	.41***	.80***	--				
(5) JG	.23**	.51***	.81***	.78***	--			
(6) WLB	.16	.43***	.66***	.64***	.75***	--		
(7) Res	.19*	.57***	.79***	.82***	.85***	.79***	--	
(8) Fair	.13	.61***	.70***	.65**	.73***	.71***	.75***	--

*Note.*  $N = 209$ . \*\*\*  $p < .001$ . \*\*  $p < .01$ . \*  $p < .05$ . LE = Length of Employment; BE = Benefits; TS = Training and Supervision; Com = Communication; JG = Job Growth; WLB = Work/life balance; Res = Respect; Fair = Fairness scale.

These findings suggest that organizations offering greater benefits, training and supervision, communication, job growth, and respect, were more likely to enjoy greater length of employment from their welfare-to-work employees. On the other hand, greater Work/Life Balance and Fairness were not significantly linked to greater length of employment. These findings, then, partially support the first hypothesis, in that all but two of the job retention strategies were significantly and positively associated with job retention or length of employment.

H<sub>2</sub>. There is a significant relationship between organizational type, organizational size, and job title, and job retention of former welfare recipients.

The correlations among the variables are presented in Table 18. The correlation between length of employment (job retention) and organizational size was  $r = .33$  ( $p < .01$ ), suggesting that large organizations were more likely than small organizations to demonstrate greater job retention for their welfare-to-work employees. Organizational size was also linked to job title ( $r = -.27$ ,  $p < .01$ ), but not organizational type ( $r = .09$ ;  $p < .01$ ). This finding indicates that for the large organizations participating in this study, it was more likely that an HR manager completed the research measure. Overall, H<sub>2</sub> was partially supported in that organizational size, but not organizational type was linked to greater length of employment or job retention.

Table 18

*Zero-Order Correlations among Demographic and Length of Employment Variables*

Variables	Length of employment	Organizational size	Organizational type	Job title
(1) LE	--			
(2) ORGSIZE	.34**	--		
(3) ORGTYPE	.05	.09	--	
(4) JOBTITLE	.03	-.27**	-.06	--

*Note.*  $N = 209$ . LE = Length of Employment; ORGSIZE = Organizational Size; ORGTYPE = Organizational Type

H<sub>3</sub>. After controlling for salient background variables (i.e., organizational type, organizational size, and job title), job retention strategies will be significantly related to the job retention of former welfare recipients.

Similar to Deckop et al. (2006), partial correlation analysis was employed to examine the relations among the job retention strategies and job retention, after statistically controlling for organizational size, organizational type, and job title. (See Table 19 for presentation of the strength and direction of relations among the variables and their accompanying *p* values).

The direction of relations among the job retention strategy and job retention variables was consistent with the zero-order correlations associated with the first hypothesis. However, after controlling for the demographic variables, the magnitude of relation between each of the job retention strategies and job retention variable increased (See Table 19). In particular, both the Work/life Balance (marginally significant in zero-order analyses; partial  $r = .31, p < .01$ ) and Fairness (not significant in zero-order analyses; partial  $r = .25, p = .02$ ) variables demonstrated statistically significant relations with the dependent variable. The range of partial *r* correlations with the dependent variable ranged from .24 (Benefits) to .42 (Training and Supervision). The overall findings suggest, then, that each of the job retention strategies are significantly and positively linked to length of employment or job retention for welfare-to-work employees after controlling for the confounding effects of the demographic variables. Thus, the greater the use of job retention strategies in organizations, the more likely welfare-to-work employees would be retained by the organization. The third hypothesis was supported.

Table 19

*Partial Correlations among Job Retention Strategy and Length of Employment Variables after Controlling for Organizational Size, Organizational Type, and Job Title Demographic Variables*

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
(1) LE	--							
(2) Ben	.24*	--						
(3) TS	.42***	.55***	--					
(4) Com	.31**	.41***	.80***	--				
(5) JG	.35**	.49***	.81***	.77***	--			
(6) WLB	.31**	.37**	.68***	.65***	.73***	--		
(7) Res	.36**	.54***	.81***	.83***	.84***	.76***	--	
(8) Fair	.25*	.58***	.70***	.64**	.71***	.67***	.72***	--

*Note.*  $N = 209$ . \*\*\*  $p < .001$ . \*\*  $p < .01$ . \*  $p < .05$ . LE = Length of Employment; BE = Benefits; TS = Training and Supervision; Com = Communication; JG = Job Growth; WLB = Work/life balance; Res = Respect; Fair = Fairness scale.

To further examine the job retention model presented in this study, hierarchical regression analysis was performed to ascertain the possible unique contributions of the job strategy variables to predicting job retention (Cohen & Cohen, 1983). The summary hierarchical regression table is presented in Table 20. In the first block of the regression equation, the demographic variables were entered (organizational size, organizational type, and job title), explaining 11.1% ( $p < .001$ ) of the variance in length of employment. Of these three variables, organizational size ( $\beta = .41$ ) was the only one making a unique

Table 20

*Summary Hierarchical Regression Analysis with Demographic and Job Retention Strategy Predicting Length of Employment (Job Retention) for Former Welfare Recipients*

<i>Variable</i>	<i>Job Retention Model</i>			
	$\beta$	<i>R</i>	$\Delta R^2$	Sig. <i>F</i> Change
Step 1				
Demographics				
Organizational size	.41***			
Organizational type	.05			
Job title	.12			
Block		.35	.11	.000
Step 2				
Job Retention Strategies				
Benefits	.04			
Training	.26**			
Communication	-.05			
Job Growth	.05			
Work/Life Balance	.03			
Respect	.13			
Fairness	-.11			
Block		.13	.09	.000
Total adjusted $R^2$			.20	

*Note.* \*\*\*  $p < .001$  \*\*  $p < .01$ .

contribution to predicting the dependent variable. In the second block of variables, the combination of seven job retention strategy variables were entered into the regression equation, explaining an additional 8.7% ( $p < .001$ ) of incremental variance in job retention. The training variable ( $\beta = .26$ ) was the only job retention strategy variable making a unique contribution to predicting job retention. The job strategy model predicted 19.8% of the variance (adjusted  $R^2$ ) in job retention or length of employment (medium-large effect size; Cohen, 1988). These findings indicate that job retention can be predicted by a combination of the size of the organization and the opportunity for training.

To test for possible collinearity effects between the research variables, the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) statistic was examined. In general, VIF scores greater than 10.0 suggests the possibility of a multicollinearity problem (Green, 1991). However, none of the VIF scores were greater than 4.4, with the majority being below 2.78. Thus, the evidence suggests that there was not a multicollinearity problem in the regression analyses.

### Summary

In general, the results at least partially supported each of the three hypotheses. First, the zero-order correlations related to hypothesis one indicated that five of the seven job retention strategies were statistically related to length of employment or job retention (Benefits, Training, Communication, Job Growth, and Respect). The second hypothesis was partially supported in that only organizational size was related to length of employment; that is, belonging to the larger organization was linked to longer employment for the former welfare recipients. Finally, the partial regression analyses

where organizational size, organizational type and job title were statistically controlled supported the third hypothesis.

Thus, each job retention strategy was linked positively and statistically significantly to length of employment. The hierarchical analysis also supported the third hypothesis, with the organizational size and training (and supervision) job retention strategy variables uniquely predicting length of employment.

## CHAPTER V

### CONCLUSION

The purpose of this correlational study was to investigate the strategies used by organizations participating in welfare-to-work network programs and to correlate the strategies with the retention data to determine best practices for job retention among former welfare recipients. Chapter 5 summarizes the study, presents the results of testing the hypotheses, and discusses the implications of the findings for theory, research and practice. The chapter ends with recommendations for further research and a discussion of the study's limitations.

#### Summary of the Study

The Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) with its focus on a work-first approach to economic self-sufficiency, by means of job retention, has generally been ineffective in meeting its goals (Relave, 2001). Job retention is defined as having at least 6 consecutive months of employment with the same employer.

Increased employer (organizational) participation in the welfare-to-work network has been linked to fostering job growth and job retention among former welfare recipients (Grossenbach & Hein, 1998). Employer partnerships provide opportunities to reach clients in the workplace and to develop work-based strategies (Grossenbach & Hein, 1998). Consequently, TANF programs are increasingly forging partnerships with organizations to provide job opportunities and job retention for former welfare recipients (Greenberg & Patel, 2006). Employer involvement in job retention efforts is also an effective way to decrease welfare case-loads and defray costs for TANF (Crandall, 2004).



Organizations are also realizing the benefits of welfare partnerships and are increasingly turning toward human resource researchers and practitioners to develop support strategies that facilitate welfare job retention (Duke, Martinson, & Strawn, 2006). However, there remains little empirical data on the effect of these collaborations necessary for job retention among welfare recipients (Moffit, 1992). A comprehensive review of the related literature found nine job retention strategies emerging as predictors of job retention: (a) wages and compensation (Meisinger, 2006), (b) benefits (Bond & Galinsky, 2006), (c) supervision (Holzer, 2001, 2002), (d) training (Holzer, 1999, 2000, 2001; Holzer & Stoll, 2000; Leonard, 1998), (e) communication (Thomas & Ganster 1995), (f) job growth opportunities (Johnson & Corcoran, 2003), (g) work/life balance (Lane & Stevens, 2001a, 2001b; Perlmutter, 1997), (h) respect (Piper, 2006), and (i) fairness (Piper, 2006).

The literature also suggests organizational size and type to be significantly related to welfare job retention. However, in contrast to the research literature (e.g., Bond & Galinsky, 2006; Lane & Stevens, 2001a, b), the study found no relationship between organizational type and job retention as operationally defined, but organizational size was modestly correlated to the dependent variable ( $r = -.27; p < .01$ ). A survey questionnaire instrument was used to investigate the relationship between the variables identified in the literature and job retention. Guided by theory and research, the study investigated the job retention strategies participating organizations in the welfare-to-work program use to increase job retention for former welfare recipients. The study's primary research question thus follows: What is the relationship between job retention strategies and job

retention among former welfare recipients? Three research hypotheses were tested to examine this question:

*H<sub>1</sub>*: There is a significant relationship between employer job retention strategies and the job retention of former welfare recipients.

*H<sub>2</sub>*: There is a significant relationship between organizational size, organizational type and job title, and the job retention of former welfare recipients.

*H<sub>3</sub>*: After controlling for salient background variables (i.e., organizational type, organizational size, and job title), job retention strategies will be significantly related to the job retention of former welfare recipients.

The proposed job retention model suggested that employees who are placed in organizations that employ job retention strategies are more likely to remain on the job longer (Roessler & Rubin, 1998).

### Discussion of the Results

Correlational and hierarchical regression analyses were used to test the hypothesized model. Results of this study suggested that there were statistically significant and meaningful relationships to explore among the variables of interest. First, *H<sub>1</sub>* and *H<sub>2</sub>* were examined through zero-order correlational analysis, while *H<sub>3</sub>* was tested through both partial correlational (controlling for organizational size, organization type, and job title) and hierarchical regression analysis. The section ends with a brief summary.

#### *Hypothesis 1*

*H<sub>1</sub>*. There is a significant relationship between employer job retention strategies and job retention of former welfare recipients.

The first hypothesis stated there would be a relation between employer job retention strategies and job retention of former welfare recipients. The wages and compensation variable was excluded from further analysis because the scale reliability was unacceptably low. Results indicated there was a significant positive relation between five of the remaining seven job retention strategies (benefits, training and supervision, communication, job growth, and respect) and job retention. Two variables, work/life balance and fairness were not correlated significantly to the dependent variable. Thus, there was partial support for  $H_1$ . The following subsections discuss the results of each variable and its relation to job retention of former welfare recipients. These include benefits, training and supervision, communication, job growth, work/life balance, respect, and fairness.

### *Benefits*

The results demonstrated that employer job benefits had a small correlation to job retention ( $r = .16; p < .05$ ). This preliminary finding corresponds to the empirical findings of Bond and Galinsky (2006), suggesting that benefits such as health insurance coverage, paid vacations, and paid time off for personal illness, employer-supported pension/retirement plans, financial assistance for child-care and financial assistance for education/training are associated with longer job retention.

Employers have been reluctant to offer the same benefits to low-paid welfare workers as they do to higher paid workers because of the high cost (Holzer, 2005), but there has been a general trend toward increasing fringe benefits to lower-paid workers over recent years (Lewis et al., 2005). Approximately one-third of lower-paid welfare workers received employer benefits in 2003 (Holzer, 2005). Those working as care-

givers and working in the service industry received fewer job benefits than employees in higher paid occupations (Holzer, 2005). Nevertheless, the evidence that employers at least provide some benefits to their low-wage employees suggests that they view the investments as worthwhile for purposes of improving recruitment, productivity and job retention (Bond & Galinsky, 2006). Longer job retention is reported among even some employers who offer temporary welfare workers more benefits than those employers who do not offer any benefits at all (Cohen, 1998).

### *Training and Supervision*

The results illustrated a moderate correlation between training and supervision and job retention ( $r = .34$ ;  $p < .001$ ). This is consistent with numerous research studies indicating training and supervision is the most salient factor in determining long-term job retention (Bloom, 1999; Cohen, 1998; Crandall, 2004; Frazis, Gittleman, & Joyce, 2000; Kramer, 2000b; Pekala, 2001). Studies show organizations that provide training and use innovative workplace practices have longer job retention rates (Cohen, 1998; Greenberg & Patel, 2006; Wallack, 1999).

Training and work experiences fulfill long-term employment objectives (Kramer, 2000b), while good supervision plays an important role in retaining top quality employees (Holzer, 2000; Pekala, 2001). Employees experience greater job satisfaction when training opportunities are made available to them (Pekala, 2001). As such, more and more states are enforcing mandatory educational and work training to meet their job retention goals (Bloom, 1999), and are partnering with employers to provide low-wage workers more access to job training and promotional opportunities (Crandall, 2004). Educational training and on-the-job-training obviously incur some employer expense, but

these costs can often be offset by government tax exemption/reduction incentives (Crandall, 2004).

Good supervision should be based on employees' needs that can be categorized into three basic stages: (a) among employees aged 30 and under, supervision should be geared towards career advancement to promote job retention; (b) for mid-career employees ages 31 to 50, commitment to the company increases if they are able to manage their own careers, and professional satisfaction, supervision should be aimed toward allowing more autonomy; and (c) older employees over 50 years are more concerned about job security, therefore supervision should be based on offering incentives such as good pension plans to boost commitment (Buckingham & Coffman, 1999; Gregory, 2007; Holzer, 2001). Most former welfare recipients fall in one of the two latter age categories. The findings suggest, then, that to foster longer job retention, not only training, but perceived good supervision is necessary.

### *Job Growth*

The results of this study corroborate the findings of Bond and Galinsky's (2006) empirical study suggesting a positive correlation between job growth and job retention. Thus, the components of this variable as measured in this research (advancement, responsibility, internal promotion, granting ownership, empowerment, autonomy, job learning and team participation; Bolman & Deal, 1997) are significantly associated with job retention ( $r = .23$  ;  $p < .01$ ).

Bond and Galinsky (2006) asserted that when workers were given more responsibility, held more accountable and supported at work, they retained their jobs longer, were more committed to their employers, and were potentially more productive.

Having greater autonomy on the job is more strongly related to lower negative spillover from life off the job (Bond & Galinsky, 2006).

Organizations that provide learning tools to support employees' growth report higher job retention (Bond & Galinsky, 2006). Greater learning opportunities on the job result in more job satisfaction and longer job retention among entry-level, low-wage employees than among middle and higher-income employees (Greenberg & Patel, 2006).

The results of this research parallel these earlier findings.

### *Communication*

Results of the study showed a positive correlation between communication and job retention ( $r = .23; p < .01$ ). Studies indicate the work culture of today demands workers be treated more like partners rather than mere employees, therefore frequent communication gives employees a sense of ownership (Pekala, 2001; Thomas & Ganster, 1995). Conversely, the lack of communication negatively impacts job retention (Thomas & Ganster, 1995).

Thomas and Ganster (1995) also reported longer job retention among companies that communicate their progress, financial news and major activities to employees at all levels, on a regular basis to keep them updated and gain their trust. As stakeholders, employees feel they are better able to participate in the decision-making processes of the company. Thus, when employees perceive greater communication, they are more likely to stay at their place of employment longer. The results of the study are consistent with these previous findings.

### *Respect*

The results of the study indicated a positive correlation between respectful workplace treatment and job retention ( $r = .19; p < .03$ ). This result is consistent with the findings of the Piper (2006) study that attributes long-term job retention among former welfare recipients to respectful workplace treatment.

### *Fairness*

The zero-correlational results of the study did not demonstrate a link between fairness and job retention ( $r = .13; p = .12$ ). This study's result is inconsistent with Piper's (2006) where a positive relation between fairness and job retention was found. Neither did the results of this study support Greenberg & Patel (2006), who suggested longer job retention among former welfare recipients who indicated fair treatment on the job. It is possible that the difference between the findings of this study and the Greenberg & Patel (2006) and Piper (2006) studies was that they investigated organizations in general; whereas, this study looked at a smaller specific sample of organizations that are part of the welfare-to-work network in Florida.

### *Work/Life Balance*

There was a marginally significant correlation ( $r = .16; p < .07$ ) between work-life balance and job retention. Rather than risking going beyond the data, the researcher interprets that in essence there was not a statistically significant relationship between these two variables in this study, although this result warrants future research.

Flexible work time allows employees more control over full-time work and part-time employment, and allows the employee the choice to work extended hours.

Workplace flexibility has reportedly more positive effects on job satisfaction among

entry-level, low-wage employees, particularly among single parents, than among mid and higher income employees (Bond & Galinsky, 2006). However, the results of this study did not seem to support Bond and Galinsky's findings at the  $\alpha=.05$  confident level. It is possible that the difference between the findings of this study and that of Bond and Galinsky's (2006) is that Bond and Galinsky's (2006) study investigated organizations in general, while this study looked at a smaller specific sample of organizations in Florida.

### *Hypothesis 2*

*H<sub>2</sub>*: There is a significant relationship between organizational size, organizational type and job title, and job retention of former welfare recipients.

The results from the correlational analysis indicated there was a significant positive relation between organizational size and job retention as operationally defined, but organizational type and job title were not related to job retention. Thus, the results showed partial support for *H<sub>2</sub>*. The following sections present the results of each outcome variable and its relation to job retention, the dependent variable.

#### *Organizational Size*

The results of the study showed a moderate, positive correlation between organization size and job retention ( $r = .33$ ;  $p < .01$ ). The results parallel the findings of Lane and Stevens (1995) who found large organizations had longer job retention because they had a higher proportion of successful job matches, whereas the opposite is true for small organizations. The results of the study also support Bond and Galinsky's (2006) notion that large organizations were in better positions to offer fringe benefits than small organizations due to cost factors, though there was a substantial variation in the available fringe benefits offered by small organizations.



### *Organizational Type*

In contrast to the findings of Groshen (1991) and Lane and Stevens (1995) who reported positive linkages between organizational types and job retention, organizational type and job retention were not significantly associated in this research. Results of the study failed to show a statistically significant relationship between organizational type and job retention. The results of this study also failed to support Bartik's (1997) assertion that former welfare recipients who were hired in public administration, health services, or social services were more likely to retain their jobs longer than those who were hired in the private industry. Thus, the results did not show support for arguments that government and non-profit organizations report longer job retention than for-profits (Greenberg & Patel, 2006; Lewis et al., 2005). It is possible that the difference between the findings of this study and that of Greenberg & Patel, 2006 and Lewis et al., 2005 is their studies investigated a large sample of all organizations nationwide, while this study looked at a smaller specific sample of organizations within the welfare-to-work network in Florida.

### *Hypothesis 3*

*H<sub>3</sub>*: After controlling for salient background variables (i.e., organizational type, organizational size, and job title), job retention strategies will be significantly related to the job retention of former welfare recipients.

The third hypothesis showed that after controlling for organizational size, organizational type, and job title, all seven job strategies: training and supervision, benefits, communication, job growth, work/life balance, respect and fairness, were positively linked to job retention ( $r_s = .24-.42; p < .05$ ). Results of the partial correlation

analyses illustrated that after controlling for the three demographic variables, organizational size, job training and supervision were found to be most strongly associated variable to job retention. These results were consistent with the zero-order correlations; however, the work/life balance and fairness variables benefited most from partialing out the possible confounding variance from the demographic variables, as they now became statistically significantly associated with job retention. These results add further evidence suggesting that each of the job retention strategies identified in the literature were significantly related to job retention.

To further test the linkages between the demographic, independent, and dependent variables and their unique contributions to predicting job retention, a hierarchical regression analysis was conducted. According to the final model, after statistically controlling for the demographic variables, the training and supervision strategy uniquely accounted for 9.0% of the variance in predicting job retention. What this means is that after controlling for organizational size, organizational type, and job title, the training and supervision job retention strategy was a potent predictor of job retention, especially for large organizations in this study ( $r = .34$   $p < .001$ ).

Overall, the partial correlational analyses lent considerable support for the relationship between the seven job retention strategies hypothesized in the literature and job retention. The findings therefore demonstrated positive linkages between each of the job retention strategies and job retention after controlling for the confounding effects of the demographic variables. Thus, the greater the use of job retention strategies, the more likely welfare-to-work employees would remain at the organization. In particular, the

training and supervision variable demonstrated the most association with the dependent variable in the regression equation. The results showed support for the third hypothesis.

### Implications and Recommendations

The findings show a positive relationship between employer job strategies and job retention among former welfare recipients. Relatively few studies (Deckop et al., 2006; Perlmutter, 1997; Perlmutter et al., 2005) have analyzed the retention strategies and their respective relationships to job retention among former welfare recipients. The following sections examine implications of this study to theory, research, and practice and suggest recommendations for future studies.

#### *Implications for Theory*

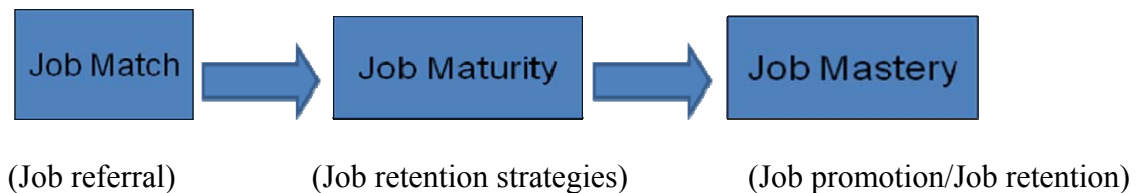
The study is based on Roessler and Rubin's (1998) 3-M model of Job Retention where employer job retention strategies were predicted to promote welfare job retention. Lane and Stevens (2001a) assert that the three major factors to consider in the implementation of welfare-to-work job retention efforts are welfare recipients, employers, and the match between the two. The 3-M model fits closest to this assertion because unlike other job retention models, the 3-M model purports linkages between the right job match, the worker's maturity, and job mastery as predictor variables of job retention. This theory was well supported by empirical evidence throughout the research literature as the scaffold for job retention (Allen, 2001; Buys & Rennie, 2001; Gulick, 1992; Lane & Stevens, 2001; Super, Savickas, & Super, 1996) and by the results of this study.

Variations of the model address the job retention needs of the general population, but the 3-M model of job retention was selected for being most effective in its application

of pre- and post-employment strategies for special needs clients, among whom are former welfare recipients.

The 3-M job retention model was originally designed to be used with employees with disabilities (Kramer, 1999), but has later been successfully used with other populations who present similar difficult work-related challenges; for example, former welfare recipients (Lane & Stevens, 2001a). The model recommends options by which welfare programs and employers can partner and provide services to help these special needs employees with difficult work-related challenges, overcome these barriers.

Figure 9 shows the results of the study were consistent with the hypothesized 3-M model of job retention. When clients are matched with organizations that use job strategies (as was demonstrated in this study), job mastery, and job retention will be more successful.



*Figure 9.* Congruence between the 3-M model of job retention and job retention strategies.

Assisted welfare agency counseling and assessment lead to job referral and job placement (match); soft skills training/learning directly linked to respect, social acceptance, fair treatment, ethics, and proper conduct (maturity); technical skills training leads to the development of problem solving, promotion, increased earnings and job retention (mastery). While the right job match is considered a necessary prerequisite strategy to improve job retention outcomes (Buys & Rennie, 2001), attaining a level of

maturity is also helpful in developing skills to meet the challenges of career development, not only for job retention but also for advancement and promotion (Super, Savickas, & Super, 1996).

Acquiring maturity will over time allow the worker to develop and master complex skills that allow competitive advantages for job retention (Gulick, 1992). This was demonstrated in previous research (Allen, 2001; Kuttner, 2000), whereby state welfare programs have reported resounding success by using the 3-M model to match former welfare recipients to jobs with private organizations within communities. Nonetheless, there remains little empirical data on the effect of these collaborations on job retention among welfare recipients (Moffit, 1992).

Findings from this study support the 3-M model of job retention. After controlling for the demographic variables, employer job strategies (related to job maturity) were positively correlated to job retention. According to the hierarchical regression model, the training and supervision job strategy and organizational size accounted for approximately 20% of the variance in predicting job retention.

Results from this study predicted a positive relationship between benefits and job retention. Bond and Galinsky (2006) claim that benefits such as health insurance coverage, paid vacations, and paid time off for personal illness; employer-supported pension/retirement plans financial assistance for child care and financial assistance for education/training can significantly increase job retention. Approximately 61% of permanent welfare workers receive health insurance (Cohen's 1998). Among temporary welfare workers, less than 10% receive health benefits such as paid or partially paid medical insurance, dental insurance, paid vacation or holiday pay, sick leave, personal

leave days, or participation in retirement programs (Lewis et al., 2005). The positive relationship found between employer benefits and job retention in this study suggests that organizations need to provide more job benefits to foster long-term job retention.

This study's job strategy model predicted 19.8% of the variance (adjusted  $R^2$ ) in job retention (medium-large effect size; Cohen, 1988). These findings indicate that job retention can be predicted by a combination of the size of the organization and the opportunity for training and supervision. Training and supervision was deemed the most significant predictor of job retention in this study. Thus, developing expert job training curriculum may be an effective job retention strategy (Bloom, 1999). Similar to what was found in this research, too, good supervision predicts retaining employees longer (Holzer, 2001). Employers can play a vital role in welfare organizational job training by clarifying the structure and goals of their job training programs (Bloom & Butler, 1995). Some companies (for example, in Montana) are already using the 3-M model of job retention to provide training in commercial truck driving, construction, clerical and accounting occupations; others are using consultants to develop training curricula. However, most small companies are without well planned and well executed job training strategies. Employers need to offer solid training programs to remain competitive and thereby sustain economic viability (Kramer, 2000a).

The results of the study demonstrated positive correlations between communication strategies and welfare job retention. Workplace communication is important to disseminate information about the company's progress, financial news and major activities to employees regularly (Thomas & Ganster, 1995), and to gain employee trust (Pekala, 2001). Lack of communication typically threatens job retention (Thomas &

Ganster, 1995); without proper communication, employees become dissatisfied with their work and voluntarily leave the workplace.

Solid workplace communication includes employees in decision making processes. When employees feel their needs are not being met, then there is no communication. Likewise, when employees feel they are excluded from decision-making processes, they become dissatisfied with their work. In a 2001 study, 61% of senior managers felt that they treated employees as valued business partners, but only 27% of the employees agreed (Pekala, 2001). Results of the study therefore suggest considerable utility for companies to employ more effective workplace communication strategies for the purpose of improving job retention.

This study found job growth was also an important job retention strategy. Previous research showed 53% of American respondents said they would leave their current jobs for an opportunity to advance in their careers (Bond & Galinsky, 2006). Factors leading to job growth include internal promotion, granting ownership, empowerment, autonomy, job learning and team participation (Bolman & Deal, 1997). Job growth strategies that include greater learning opportunities on the job have been found to have favorable effects on job retention among entry-level, low-wage employees (Bond & Galinsky, 2006). When workers are given more responsibility, are held more accountable and are supported at work, they are more effective, more satisfied with their jobs, more committed to their employers, potentially more productive and more likely to be retained (Bond & Galinsky, 2006). Sectors of the welfare or low-income population, such as those with language barriers, or those with learning disabilities (Greenberg &

Patel, 2006) benefit best from employer programs that offer job growth strategies for longer job retention.

Work/Life Balance seems to be a growing workforce trend. This job retention strategy has been shown to increase productivity, reduce absenteeism and increase job retention (Lane & Stevens, 2001b). In this study, work/life balance was associated with job retention through the partial correlational analyses. Eighty-six percent of today's employees cite work/life balance as the top priority in their career (Pekala, 2001). In addition, workers are expressing more need for work/life balance than in past years and are willing to sacrifice compensation for the purpose of enjoying more work/life balance (Withers, 2001). This trend is particularly evident among younger workers, 18-34 year-olds, who weigh the option of taking extended leaves or sabbaticals as a key workplace benefit (Withers, 2001); flexible work-time makes it easier for them to balance work with family obligations.

Respect was shown to be positively related to job retention. Employer participation and support is integral to the welfare reform effort (Brown, Buck, & Skinner 1998), but many employers' discriminatory practices and perceptions often thwart job retention efforts. Some organizations provide employer-based training programs to give entry-level workers an opportunity to be treated more equally and respectfully (Greenberg & Patel, 2006). Many former welfare recipients who participate in employer-based job training report feeling less stigmatized because they get the opportunity to interact with other workers outside of TANF (Greenberg & Patel, 2006), which provides an opportunity for being treated more equally and respectfully (Greenberg & Patel, 2006; Kramer 2000a, 2000b).



Results of the study showed fairness was positively linked with job retention. Emerging employer-based job programs are providing job security and offering job psychological training to welfare employees to ensure fair treatment (Bolman & Deal, 1997). The interaction between TANF and non-TANF workers provides role model opportunities for former welfare clients to learn from the examples set by more experienced low-income workers. Former welfare recipients report that these types of job placements make them more attractive to employers, provides an opportunity to be treated more fairly and respectfully, and reduces the stigma associated with being a part of TANF (Greenberg & Patel, 2006; Kramer 2000b).

While organizational size was a predictor of job retention, there was no significant relationship between organizational type and job retention, in contrast to previous research. The study's results therefore suggest that large organizations will likely retain welfare-to-work employees than small organizations. The goal of welfare reform is economic self-sufficiency (Lane & Stevens, 2001b). Therefore, three major factors to be considered in the implementation of welfare-to-work policy are welfare recipients, employers, and the match between the two (Lane & Stevens, 2001b). HR professionals whose interests pertain to increasing job retention and reducing welfare caseloads should consider examining the job retention variables discussed in this study in terms of their application to welfare job retention. Welfare agency workers could apply the 3-M model in their job counseling, referral, and placement interventions by ensuring proper assessments and job referrals (Matching). Given appropriate job placement, providing ongoing counseling/soft skills training and support programs (Maturity) will

predict increases in job retention (Mastery) among former welfare recipients and the subsequent decrease in caseloads not due to attrition.

Organizations could reap major benefits from partnering with welfare agencies and by adopting the 3M-Model to apply the retention strategies empirically supported in this research. HRD professionals could, for example, carefully design interventions that teach managers and supervisors how to apply these strategies to help employees be involved in meaningful work that fits their abilities and interests, feel safe at work cognitively, emotionally and physically, and have the available resources, both tangible and intangible, to retain their jobs. The findings of this study demonstrate especially that training and supervision positively impact job retention, particularly in larger organizations.

Training is one way to assure long-term economic viability (Kramer, 2000b). Employers who use the training and supervisory strategies supported by this job retention model may benefit from the overall profits gained from retaining low-wage workers; and from not having to withstand the costs associated with recurring hiring and training due to high attrition. Education and training efforts for welfare recipients will likely be relatively costly in the short-term (Wallack, 1999), but when return on investment is measured in its larger social context, the efforts will pay off for welfare programs, organizations and for the former welfare recipients.

#### *Implications for Research*

Policies that govern welfare reform have failed to address the problem of welfare reform from a systematic perspective. Given the preponderance of female welfare recipients, policies should address the importance of women's work-related issues far

more than currently. If the success of welfare reform depends on the right match between the welfare recipient and the employer (Lane & Stevens, 2001b), then work-first has not accomplished its goals of long-term job retention for former welfare recipients (DeParle, 2002; Gais & Weaver, 2002). TANF policies have been mostly geared towards case-load reduction (instead of gender-based employment issues), and have increase barriers for long-term job retention. This is due to the program's initial emphasis on work first, rather than on strategic job placement and on increased employer involvement. Researchers have long debated the low rate of welfare job retention created by the TANF work requirement barriers (Kramer, 2000a, 2000b). Some studies have discussed the role of employer participation in helping to mitigate these barriers (Haskins, Sawhill & Weaver, 2001) and in providing physical and structural needs (Isbell, Trutko, Barnow, Nightingale, & Pindus, 1995), but relatively few studies (Deckop et al., 2006; Perlmutter et al., 2005; Perlmutter, 1997) have actually examined specific ways in which employer retention strategies can effect welfare job retention, especially among females.

The study's findings provide evidence that while training and supervision is the strongest predictor of job retention, other job strategies such as benefits, communication, work/life balance job growth, fairness, and respect have positive, meaningful relationships with job retention. Earlier studies also suggested that wages and compensation (Bond & Galinsky, 2006) had strong positive effects on job retention as well, even though the researcher was not able to test this notion in this research (scale reliability unacceptably low). Technical training remains one of the most important job strategies employers can provide to increase job retention especially among lower skilled workers (Gagne & Medsker, 1996).

The study's findings could have implications for future research in welfare policy programs at the federal and state levels. Involving employers in retention and advancement efforts can substantially decrease costs for welfare agencies as a result of fewer individuals returning to TANF (Crandall, 2004). Researchers should strongly encourage partnerships with organizations that provide job strategies to boost job retention. These emphases could be translated at the state level. Currently, funding and tax benefits are available to attract employers who are willing to hire and train former welfare recipients (Crandall, 2004), but further research is needed to study the best ways to improve and advertise tax incentive programs to increase employer partnerships.

Large organizations that participated in this study were shown to have longer job retention advantages over smaller organizations. As such, HRD researchers need also to expand the model to other large organizations to test for similar job retention outcomes (Hinkle, et al., 2006). Researchers need to replicate the model in other organizational settings (for example, with small, medium, non-profit and for-profit organization) to test the utility of the model, as well as introduce other variables that might affect job retention (e.g., personality traits).

HRD interventions could utilize experimental designs to see how the introduction of new job strategies can cause better job retention. Such studies could focus on the job strategy variables examined in this study, or use an expanded literature base to guide the selection of other variables, including control variables (e.g., organizational culture). If researchers were to test the utility of an intervention in the development of employer job retention through a series of training workshops, pre- and post intervention data could be examined for significant differences. Moreover, examining effect sizes of the intervention

could produce additional information about the utility of the intervention and provide information on the steps an organization might consider next.

In this study, wages and compensation was not used for predicting job retention due to poor scale reliability, even though the variable has been tested as a job retention predictor in other studies (Meisinger, 2006). New research testing the model introduced in this research should consider including this variable. The development of new job retention measures that are theoretically grounded, conceptually clearer, and psychometrically more rigorous would be of great benefit to future researchers.

Qualitative studies might also assist in better understanding the phenomenon of employer job retention. For example, researchers could conduct case studies (Patton, 1990) with select employees within a particular organization for feedback on how job strategies benefited them. Such studies might provide more direct insights into the use of job retention strategies as organizational performance variables. The convergence of such research methods is necessary to increase the external validity of this research.

Longitudinal case study studies could be beneficial in understanding how employer job strategies can affect job retention over time. Researchers could focus on a specific group of employees in a variety of organizational settings over an extended period to see how employer involvement changes over the course of an employee's tenure to provide in depth understanding around the variables of interest (Yin, 2003).

The most unique feature of this study is that it is the first study conducted in the state of Florida to investigate the effects of employer strategies on job retention. This study is different from previous studies (e.g., Deckop et al., 2006) conducted in Pennsylvania where the welfare population is less diverse. The results of this study could

be expanded to other states for further testing of the strategies examined to promote job retention strategies, and increase awareness among HRD professionals.

### *Implications for Practice*

One underlying aim of human resource development is individual performance improvement; therefore, its tenet is based on three principles: personal (individual development), professional (career development) and organizational development (Gilley & Egglund, 1995). Human resource practitioners can take an important role in designing and implementing interventions to foster employee job retention. For example, proper assessments, counseling, and job referrals to organizations that provide job retention strategies were identified as pre-emptive strategies for practitioners looking to enhance welfare job retention (Giloith, 2004; Kramer, 1998a, 1998b). Evidence shows that creating opportunities for former welfare recipients to work in roles in which their knowledge, skills, and abilities fit with their job responsibilities, creating a supportive work atmosphere, and providing opportunities for them to advance within their organization are conditions that support job retention (Holzer 2001; Kramer, 2000a, 2000b).

Thus, these variables should be considered as starting points for referral and intervention. After hiring processes are completed, HRD practitioners should liaise with organizations to implement job retention strategies by training leaders, managers, and supervisors about the strategies that improve welfare job retention. Sensitivity training would help employers better relate to women's issues and would lessen the likelihood of gender discrimination practices. As was illustrated by this study and supported by other research (Deckop et al., 2006), employer job strategies can strongly influence job

retention. Interventions for leaders, managers, and supervisors could take the form of formal development and coaching programs that focus on training as a key job retention strategy.

HRD practitioners must cooperate with welfare reform agency staffs to design and deliver job service programs for a more competent and resilient workforce (Alfred, 2003). Adult educators can become key players in welfare reform efforts by assuming important roles in designing and implementing programs that will help employers understand the needs of welfare recipients, especially as it pertains to gender issues. Providing these services could yield higher job retention rates. In making job referrals welfare program intermediaries need to pay close attention to job/skill matches for their recipients. Improper job/skill matches may cost even more than many "work first" designs, both in front-end assessment and in more cautious placement choices whereas the right matches may pay off in longer lasting and better long-term job placements (Kramer, 1998a).

Finally, organizations looking to increase job retention should focus on *the process of how* work gets accomplished, not just *how much*. To recruit, maintain, and motivate employees in an increasingly competitive environment (Beck, 2003), human resource practices must be innovative and compelling, benefiting both the organization and the employee (Joo, 2010). Using results from this study to better understand how employer job retention strategies can be beneficial to both the organization and individual, and could serve as a structure for implementing compelling, focused, and effective HRD interventions. As illustrated by the findings of this study, job retention strategies can have useful implications for organizations; consequently, those who lead

these organizations must work to create the conditions for employer job retention strategies to develop. As the field of HRD evolves, employer job strategies provide HRD professionals with a means to help special needs employees in work-related jobs successfully operate within the inner workings of a competitive and ever-changing work culture (Roessler, 2002).

### Limitations of the Study

As with other research studies, this study was exposed to various limitations. The first limitation was the use of a sample consisting of members from a range of organizations who were participants of the welfare-to-work organizational network. While the use of heterogeneous convenience samples such as this is common in exploratory HRD research (Reio & Ghosh, 2009; Yaghi, Goodman, Holton, & Bates, 2008), caution should be used when generalizing the results beyond the current study.

A second limitation was the use of self-reports to collect the data examined in this study. Self-report measures offer benefits to the researcher such as their inexpensive use and ease of distribution; however, using these measures raises the possibility of common source method variance producing inflated correlations among the variables of interest (Crampton & Wagner, 1994; Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Lee, & Podsakoff, 2003). Common method variance bias is a potential problem whenever data is collected from a single source, which is the case with the present study. Several steps were taken to reduce the likelihood of this method biasing the findings. First, participant anonymity was assured to participants (Podsakoff et al., 2003). Second, Dillman et al.'s Tailored Design Method (2009) was employed to provide a clear procedural approach. A clear procedural approach such as having the survey reviewed by knowledgeable experts and conducting a



pilot study reduces the likelihood of coverage, sampling, measurement, and non-response error in the collection of data (Dillman et al., 2009).

The third limitation of the study was the relatively low (10.45%) response rate, although it is consistent with prior Internet survey research. Furthermore, this study did not control for possible non-response bias while collecting the data (Rogelberg & Luong, 1998). Some of the demographic characteristics of non-respondents might have unknowingly introduced bias into the study's data analysis. For instance, employers belonging to certain positions (for example, CEOs, and administrators) within the sample population might have found it difficult to find time or the opportunity to participate in the survey, lowering the subsequent participation rate in the study. Further, because the composition of the sample did not match the characteristics of the research population, generalization beyond the findings of this study is not warranted.

Finally, failure to survey the welfare recipients themselves might have biased the study. The study would have been better supported if the welfare recipients themselves were able to participate. Involving the recipients in the study might have shed light on a totally new perspective. For example, whereas the employers in this study consensually reported treating their welfare workers "fairly" and "respectfully" welfare recipients themselves might have responded differently. Interestingly in this study, small organizations reported treating workers with less fairness than large organizations. Had they (former welfare recipients) participated in the study they might have lent a different perspective, given the pervasive acts of discrimination (associated with the stigma of welfare) against them by many employers.

Generally, employers who hire welfare recipients do so primarily to meet their business objectives, not out of a sense of social responsibility (Long & Ouellette, 2004). Companies are mostly concerned about the frequency and cost of job turnover, which clearly affects their hiring decisions. The demand for welfare recipients is strongly influenced by economic conditions and with the current recession, their willingness to hire former welfare recipients remains questionable. Future studies with former welfare recipient using longitudinal approaches or qualitative designs might help gather more information to determine what best organizational job strategies are useful in determining job retention for former welfare recipients

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APPENDIX A

Survey Instrument

EMPLOYER JOB RETENTION STRATEGY SURVEY		
1 = Disagree very much	4 = Agree slightly	Using the guideline on your left, please circle the one number for each question that mostly reflects your opinion of your organization.
2 = Disagree moderately moderately	5 = Agree	
3 = Disagree slightly much	6 = Agree very	
1	The salaries offered by this organization are competitive with similar job positions in other organizations.	1 2 3 4 5 6
2	Hourly paid entry-level employees are paid overtime.	1 2 3 4 5 6
3	Stock option investments are not available to entry-level employees.	1 2 3 4 5 6
4	401K plans are not available to entry-level employees.	1 2 3 4 5 6
5	Membership in the company's pension plan program is not available to entry-level employees.	1 2 3 4 5 6
6	Annual bonuses are given to employees.	1 2 3 4 5 6
7	Sick benefits are comparable to those offered by other organizations.	1 2 3 4 5 6
8	Paid maternity and sick family leave are a part of the company's benefit package.	1 2 3 4 5 6
9	The company provides health insurance coverage that is comparable to other organizations.	1 2 3 4 5 6
10	The company provides prescription drug coverage comparable to that of other organizations.	1 2 3 4 5 6
11	Partial tuition reimbursement program participation is available to all employees after job confirmation.	1 2 3 4 5 6

12	Assistance with Earned Income Tax Credit application is provided to employees as needed.	1 2 3 4 5 6
13	Entry-level employees are allowed to participate in the company's Employee Assistance Program (EAP).	1 2 3 4 5 6
14	Paid personal days are included in the entry-level employee's package.	1 2 3 4 5 6
15	Paid holidays are included in the entry level employee's benefit package	1 2 3 4 5 6
16	The organization provides continuous training and supervision to entry-level employees	1 2 3 4 5 6
17	English as a Second Language (ESL) training is available to entry-level employees from Non-English speaking backgrounds.	1 2 3 4 5 6
18	The organization provides sensitivity training on the life circumstances of former welfare clients.	1 2 3 4 5 6
19	Supervisors are appraised on their abilities to develop teamwork among employees.	1 2 3 4 5 6
20	Supervisors are required to check and give regular feedback to entry-level employees on the quality of their work.	1 2 3 4 5 6
21	Supervisors are required to check and give regular feedback to entry-level employees on the quantity of their work.	1 2 3 4 5 6
22	Entry-level employees fully understand how their work directly contributes to the overall success of the organization.	1 2 3 4 5 6
23	Entry-level employees fully understand that their job is important in accomplishing the mission of the organization.	1 2 3 4 5 6
24	Entry-level employees are encouraged to learn from their mistakes	1 2 3 4 5 6
25	Entry-level employees are given proper training on how to demonstrate professional attitude on the job.	1 2 3 4 5 6
26	Entry-level employees are given clear instructions and guidelines regarding the company's policy regarding tardiness.	1 2 3 4 5 6
27	Entry-level employees are given clear instructions and guidelines regarding the company's policy regarding absenteeism.	1 2 3 4 5 6
28	The organization provides conflict resolution training to entry-level employees in compliance with its goals and mission.	1 2 3 4 5 6
29	Managers actively seek out information and new ideas from employees at all levels of the organizations to guide their decision- making.	1 2 3 4 5 6
30	Work-related training is provided continuously to employees.	1 2 3 4 5 6
31	The organization offers pre-employment training to entry level employees	1 2 3 4 5 6
32	Employees are given clear instructions and guidelines on how to take directions from supervisors	

		1 2 3 4 5 6
33	The organization enforces disciplinary procedures when necessary to maintain standards in keeping with company rules and regulations	1 2 3 4 5 6
34	The quality of our products and services are very important to this organization.	1 2 3 4 5 6
35	Employees are held accountable for the quality work they produce	1 2 3 4 5 6
36	Customer needs are top priority in this organization.	1 2 3 4 5 6
37	Communication is encouraged in this organization	1 2 3 4 5 6
38	Entry-level employees are provided regular information about the goals and mission of the organization	1 2 3 4 5 6
39	Supervisors do a good job of communicating well to entry level employees.	1 2 3 4 5 6
40	Information and knowledge is shared openly within this organization.	1 2 3 4 5 6
40	Senior management communicates well with all levels of the organization.	1 2 3 4 5 6
41	Entry-level employees are given useful and constructive feedback from supervisors on a regular basis.	1 2 3 4 5 6
42	Entry-level employees are clearly instructed how to accept feedback from supervisors.	1 2 3 4 5 6
43	There are adequate opportunities for professional growth in this organization.	1 2 3 4 5 6
44	Management is actively interested in the professional development and advancement of its entry-level employees.	1 2 3 4 5 6
45	The company institutes written appraisals as part of its performance evaluation procedures for entry level employees.	1 2 3 4 5 6
46	The organization ensures that work is challenging for entry-level employees.	1 2 3 4 5 6
47	The environment in this organization ensures that work is stimulating for entry-level employees.	1 2 3 4 5 6
48	Entry-level employees are given the opportunity to participate in goal setting processes.	1 2 3 4 5 6
49	The organization institutes programs that reward entry level employees for outstanding work.	1 2 3 4 5 6
50	There is a strong feeling of teamwork in this organization.	1 2 3 4 5 6
51	The organization has reasonable expectations of its entry employees.	1 2 3 4 5 6

52	The organization has the resources to meet the needs of its entry level employees.	1 2 3 4 5 6
53	Career counseling/planning is available to entry level employees.	1 2 3 4 5 6
54	Employees are allowed to bring children to work in emergency situations.	1 2 3 4 5 6
56	Employees are not forced to choose between their work and their job.	1 2 3 4 5 6
57	The environment in this organization supports a balance between work and the personal needs of its entry-level employees.	1 2 3 4 5 6
58	Entry-level employees do not have the option to work from home.	1 2 3 4 5 6
59	Supervisors are encouraged to grant requests for flexibility.	1 2 3 4 5 6
60	Supervisors are appraised on their abilities to help entry-level employees integrate work and family life.	1 2 3 4 5 6
61	Rotational assignments are granted to accommodate the needs of entry-level employees.	1 2 3 4 5 6
62	The organization provides release time for parent-teacher conferences and / or medical appointments.	1 2 3 4 5 6
63	Supervisors understand the importance of maintaining a balance between work and person.	1 2 3 4 5 6
64	Employees are able to keep up with the pace of work in this organization.	1 2 3 4 5 6
65	The organization has reasonable expectations of its employees.	1 2 3 4 5 6
66	Respecting and valuing the entry-level employee's contribution ranks highly among the goals and mission of the organizations.	1 2 3 4 5 6
67	Supervisors are encouraged to listen to suggestions from entry-level employees.	1 2 3 4 5 6
68	Supervisors are encouraged to respect the input from entry level employees.	1 2 3 4 5 6
69	Employees who challenge the status quo are valued.	1 2 3 4 5 6
70	People with different ideas are valued in this organization.	1 2 3 4 5 6
71	We work to attract, develop, and retain people with diverse backgrounds.	1 2 3 4 5 6
72	Co-workers have mutual respect for each other.	1 2 3 4 5 6
73	Co-workers are sensitive to the life circumstances of former welfare recipients.	1 2 3 4 5 6
74	Everyone is treated fairly in this organization.	1 2 3 4 5 6
75	The organization's policies for promotion and advancement are always fair.	1 2 3 4 5 6
76	Management is always fair and consistent when administering policies concerning employees.	1 2 3 4 5 6
77	Favoritism is not an issue in determining raises or promotions.	1 2 3 4 5 6

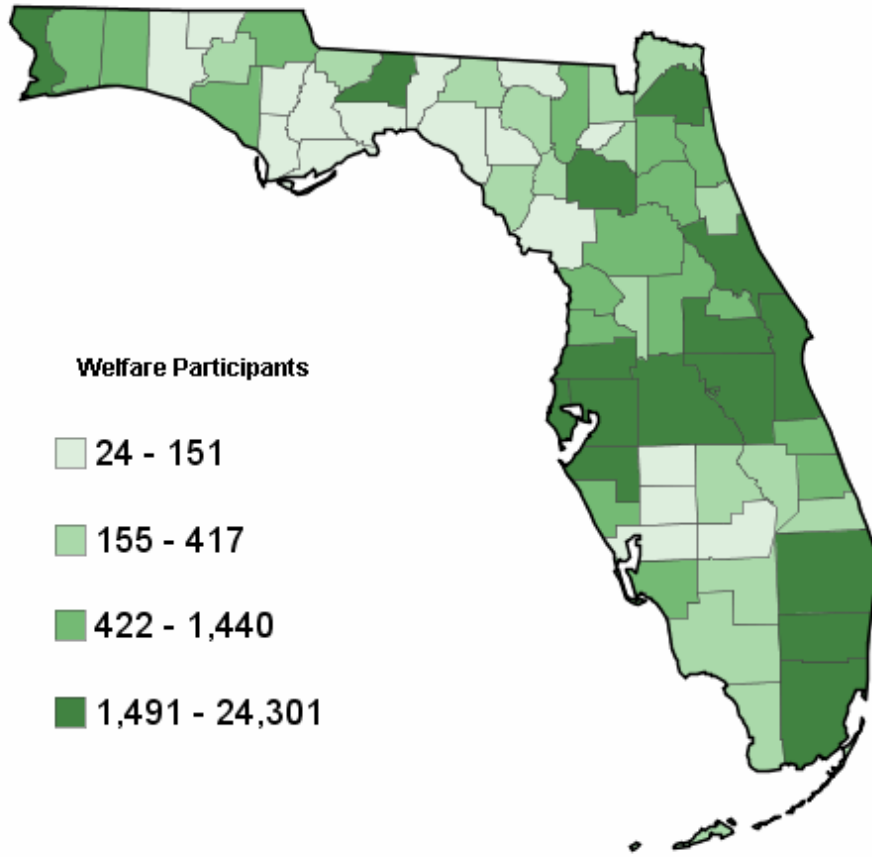
78	Nepotism (giving special privileges or preferences to family members) does not affect hiring processes and decisions.	1 2 3 4 5 6
79	My organization relies on welfare intermediaries (counselors/agents) to pre-screen potential entry-level employees.	1 2 3 4 5 6
80	Welfare intermediaries (counselors/agents) ensure a proper job match prior to making referrals to my organization.	1 2 3 4 5 6
81	Entry-level job recipients referred to my organization possess adequate soft skill training.	1 2 3 4 5 6
82	Entry-level job recipients referred to my organization possess adequate technical skill training.	1 2 3 4 5 6
Background Information		
83	Please indicate what is the size of your organization (select one): 1) 10-100 employees; 2) 101-200 employees; 3) 201-500 employees; 4) 501-1000 employees; 5) greater than 1000 employees; 6) Other	1 2 3 4 5 6
84	Please indicate the type of your organization (select one): 1) for-profit; 2) nonprofit	1 2
85	Please indicate how long you have been in business (select one): 1) less than one year; 2) 2 years; 3) 3 years; 4) 4 years; 5) 5-10 years; 6) greater than 10 years	1 2 3 4 5 6
86	Please indicate your job title: (select one): 1) Supervisor/Frontline manager; 2) Middle manager, 3) Administrator/HR personnel; 4) CEO	1 2 3 4

*Sources:* Modified from “The effect of human resource management practices on the job retention of former welfare client” by J. R. Deckop, A. M. Konrad, F. D. Perlmutter, & J. L. Freely, (2006). *Human Resource Management*, 45(4), 539-559.

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APPENDIX B

**Welfare Participants Statewide OCT 09 - Oct 10**





## VITA

### PAULINE JENNIFER SMITH

BIRTHPLACE                      Kingston, Jamaica

1977                                  Diploma in Education  
Centennial College, Toronto, Canada

1981                                  Bachelor of Arts in Psychology  
York University, Toronto, Canada

1995                                  Master of Arts in Education,  
Florida International University, Miami, Florida

### PROFESSIONAL EMPLOYMENT

1982                                  Actuarial- George B. Brock  
Toronto, Canada.

1983                                  Administrative Assistant  
Betting, Gaming & Lotteries Commission  
Kingston, Jamaica.

1983-1985                          Field Officer- Human Employment and Resource Training  
Kingston, Jamaica.

1987-1991                          Drug Abuse Counselor - The Starting Place  
Hollywood, Florida.

1991-1993                          Social Work-South Florida State Hospital  
Hollywood, Florida.

1993-1995                          Drug Abuse Counselor - Broward Addiction and Recovery  
Center. Ft. Lauderdale, Florida.

1996-1998                          Family Therapist-Family Central/ Children and Families  
Margate, Florida.

1999                                  Supervisor-Parent Information Resource Center  
(Welfare Reform Agency Program).  
Ft. Lauderdale, Florida.

2000-Present	Real Estate Investor- P. J. & Son Enterprise Inc. Hillel Investment, LLC. Pembroke Pines, Florida.
	INTERNSHIP AND EDUCATIONAL CONFERENCES
2000	Internship – Memorial Regional Hospital Hollywood, Florida.
2001	Educational Leadership Conference Beijing, China.
2005	AE/HRD Conference University of Athens. Athens, GA.
2006	AE/HRD Conference University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, Minnesota
	VOLUNTARY SERVICES
1990-1991	Feed the Children
1995-1996	St. Jude’s Hospital
2008	Community Hope Center Ft. Lauderdale, Florida
1990-Present	World Vision
2009- Present	Women for Women International