Responsible but Uninformed?
Nonprofit Executive and Program Directors’ Knowledge of Welfare Reform

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Based on extensive qualitative data, this article explores nonprofit executive and program directors’ knowledge and views of welfare reform, including how their levels of knowledge affect their ability to advocate for clients and to plan proactively. Overall, the findings suggest that the majority of the respondents do not have a comprehensive understanding of the welfare rules. Analyses further suggest that levels of knowledge vary by organizational characteristics (e.g., agency size, main service domain, and type of clientele served) and the directors’ views of welfare reform.

Over the last few decades, authority for helping needy individuals has devolved to local levels, and public services have been privatized. These trends are exemplified by the bipartisan 1996 welfare reform legislation, the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA; U.S. Public Law 104-193 [1996]). The act dramatically changed America’s welfare system by ending 6 decades of entitlement, creating time limits for assistance, and requiring work of welfare recipients. The legislation also provided states with extensive discretion on how they implement welfare reform.

Policy reforms occur for multiple reasons, but proponents of devolution often argue that local authorities (both private and public) are more capable than the federal government of providing aid to families in need. Local authorities are said to be more connected to local constituents and more aware of their needs. Proponents argue that this, in conjunction with other presumed features of local service delivery (e.g.,
organizational flexibility), enhances the effectiveness and efficiency of assistance and services (see Kelleher and Yackee [2004] for a summary of this view). This article examines a related component of local capability: whether directors of community-based nonprofit organizations are knowledgeable about the welfare policies under which they and their clientele operate.

Christine Kelleher and Susan Yackee (2004, 254) argue that "a complete understanding of the policymaking process requires a focus on the policy impacts of devolution at the subnational level." It is similarly important to understand whether knowledge of devolutionary policies trickles down to the subnational level, particularly to local agencies asked to serve needy populations. The knowledge that nonprofit directors possess may affect their ability to help clients navigate through the current welfare system and to advocate for clients within the system. Comprehensive knowledge of welfare rules could also enhance directors' ability to keep their organizations fiscally and programmatically viable amid change. This applies to all nonprofits serving the poor, as even those not providing welfare-to-work services have been affected by the welfare changes (Bischoff and Reisch 2000; Reisch and Sommerfeld 2002; Kissane 2003). Accordingly, if knowledge of the shifting policy environment varies among the nonprofit directors, clientele of some agencies may be at a disadvantage, as they may not be privy to important information on welfare policies or may receive less aid in other areas if organizations are struggling to deal with changes in demand. This all may potentially create or reinforce inequalities among client groups.

The nation now asks local nonprofit organizations to take on a larger share of welfare provision than they did prior to PRWORA. This article investigates whether the leaders of these organizations are well informed about the new policies that greatly affect not only their clientele but also their agencies. Specifically, this article explores whether local nonprofit directors have sound knowledge of the welfare changes, what they think about welfare reform, how knowledge varies among directors, and how levels of knowledge affect the ability of agencies to advocate for clients and plan proactively.

Welfare Reform in Pennsylvania

Michael Katz defines the welfare state as "a collection of programs designed to assure economic security to all citizens by guaranteeing the fundamental necessities of life: food, shelter, medical care, protection in childhood, and support in old age" (Katz 2001, 9). Overall, the American welfare system combines public and private elements (Skocpol 1992; Gordon 1994; Quadagno 1994; Katz 1996, 2001; Amenta 1998; Brown 1999). Social insurance and public assistance compose the main public elements, while social service agencies (both for-profit and non-
profit) and employee benefits represent the primary private elements (Katz 2001).

In the last decade, responsibility for welfare devolved from the federal government to the states. Under PRWORA, the federal government empowered the states to determine eligibility for public assistance, while the federal government provides funds to the states in the form of a block grant. In these grants, federal aid to the states is effectively capped. The federal government requires that states limit eligibility for Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) to 60 months over a recipient's lifetime. The 1996 act also makes changes in other programs, including tightening eligibility criteria for the Food Stamp and Supplemental Security Income (SSI) programs. Through PRWORA, the government attempted to end entitlement to public assistance, encourage marriage, limit nonmarital childbirths, and push welfare recipients to become self-sufficient through employment.

Because of the new state autonomy to determine eligibility for TANF, welfare programs now dramatically vary. Pennsylvania, the current research site, is rather typical among states in its focus on work, time limits, and the creation of some supports for working welfare recipients. Specifically, the state implemented 2-year and 5-year time limits. The 2-year work-trigger time limit requires that, after 24 months on the welfare rolls, household heads work at least 20 hours a week or participate in a work-related activity (such as unsubsidized employment, on-the-job training, job search, job readiness, community service, and vocational educational training; Quint et al. 1999). A household head who fails to comply with this requirement and is not a member of an exempt group (such as single custodial parents caring for a child under 1 year of age, teens pursuing a high school diploma or general equivalency diploma [GED], and individuals with certified disabilities), jeopardizes the entire family's welfare benefits (Quint et al. 1999). The federally prescribed 5-year limit imposes on most families a maximum time for receipt of cash welfare. In Pennsylvania, time limits were implemented on March 3, 1997 (Quint et al. 1999). The 2-year time limit thus first affected welfare recipients on March 3, 1999, and the 5-year time limit affected clients beginning on March 3, 2002.

In addition to the time limits and work requirements, Pennsylvania also established other welfare rules. Welfare recipients are required to sign an Agreement of Mutual Responsibility (AMR), which describes the steps each recipient plans to take to become self-sufficient. The state created a new employment and training program that includes an initial 8-week job search followed by additional training or education for those unsuccessful at finding employment. Pennsylvania mandates a 50 percent earned income disregard, whereby the welfare department ignores half of the recipient's earned income when calculating welfare benefits. Also, those who leave welfare for work but earn a household income at
or under 185 percent of the federal poverty level can receive up to 1 year of child-care subsidies and medical coverage (with 6 months of medical coverage provided regardless of income). The state also provides welfare recipients with incentives to begin looking for employment. These include money for child care, clothing ($75), and transportation during welfare recipients’ initial job search activity (see Quint et al. [1999] for more details on Pennsylvania’s welfare rules).

Nonprofits and Welfare Reform

In what some scholars term “second-order devolution” (e.g., Poole et al. 2002, 261), many state governments delegate responsibility for welfare services to local (e.g., city and county) levels. Second-order devolution entails not only transferring responsibility to local governmental entities but also delegating an increasingly large share of welfare-state administration to private nonprofit and for-profit organizations (Salamon 1993; Nathan 1996; Salamon and Abramson 1996; Abramson, Salamon, and Steuerle 1999; Katz 2001). All in all, scholars report that the government is taking a “relatively passive, fiscally conservative role in public service provision, and the private, nonprofit sector is expected to move to the fore with new levels of charitable funding and volunteering” (Young 1999, 62). Michael Reisch and David Sommerfeld (2002, 157) note that while government and private nonprofits had a 30-year partnership, PRWORA “made a range of services provided by nonprofits both more critical to clients’ success and more complicated to access.”

Despite nonprofit organizations’ importance in the welfare system and the increased pressures on them, little is known about how these organizations respond. Researchers who study nonprofit agencies and churches that serve the poor largely analyze how welfare reform has affected agencies’ bottom line, service delivery, staffing, and demand for services (Alexander, Nank, and Stivers 1999; Bischoff and Reisch 2000; Paulsell and Stieglitz 2001; Twombly 2001; Poole et al. 2002; Reisch and Sommerfeld 2002; Kissane 2003). These studies reveal the strains nonprofits face under the current welfare system and question agencies’ capacity to assume an increased role in service provision. Research also suggests that certain agencies, such as those that primarily serve racial minorities, that are small, and that provide emergency services, are poorly equipped to deal with changes linked to welfare reform. Variations across nonprofit service providers may exacerbate inequalities among low-income recipients, as devolution and the needs of families in poverty bind clients to agencies of varying capacity for uneven services (Reisch and Sommerfeld 2002).

Researchers rarely examine whether information on welfare reform policies flows down to nonprofit providers. Research on one issue, the
Charitable Choice provision of the welfare reform legislation (U.S. Public Law 104-95 [1996], sec. 104; the provision encourages states to contract with faith-based organizations), suggests that knowledge about welfare reform is uneven. Suzie Cashwell and associates (2004), for example, discover low levels of knowledge of Charitable Choice among food pantry directors in Alabama and Mississippi. Mark Chaves (1999) finds that, among congregational key informants interviewed for the National Congregations Study, only 24 percent are aware of Charitable Choice. Paula Pipes and Helen Ebaugh (2002) find that only about half of studied faith-based coalition leaders in Texas know of Charitable Choice.

Overall, little is known about whether nonprofit providers are aware of PRWORA (especially beyond Charitable Choice) or of their state’s welfare policies. Little also is known about what kind of knowledge providers possess, how knowledge gets to local providers, what they think about welfare reform, and how knowledge varies across providers. Additionally, there is little information about the potential effect of nonprofit providers’ knowledge on their ability to offer relevant services to their clientele. If knowledge is limited, it is not clear whether most or some nonprofit organizations have the ability to shoulder an increasingly large role in the welfare state.

Method

This article draws on data from 109 interviews conducted between 1998 and 2002 at 28 different nonprofit social service agencies across three neighborhood sites in Philadelphia (Kensington, North Central, and Germantown). A research team conducted 86 of the interviews as part of the institutional component of Urban Change, a multilayered, multicity, longitudinal study of welfare reform. The study was run by Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation (MDRC; see Quint et al. [1999] for details on Urban Change). The author conducted the 23 remaining interviews independently as part of a study on welfare reform’s effects on community-based organizations and poor women’s use of these agencies.

In order to enable intercity and intracity comparisons across the Urban Change study, the research team selected for study one white neighborhood and two black neighborhoods in Philadelphia. All three neighborhoods (Kensington, Germantown, and North Central) had high poverty rates (at least 30 percent) and welfare receipt rates (at least 20 percent; U.S. Census Bureau 1990). In the core census tracts of each of the targeted areas, the team compiled a list of nonprofit organizations and churches by surveying each street of each neighborhood and logging the located institutions. Lists were expanded by adding agencies found via the phone book, the Internet, nonprofit organizations’ re-
feral literature, and word of mouth. In all, a sample of 113 nonprofit organizations was compiled across the three neighborhoods. Churches offering social services were included. From this list, the research team selected one-quarter of the organizations for study on the basis of the following factors: (1) heterogeneity: agencies were selected so that the sample included the range of services and agency sizes in each neighborhood; (2) clientele: agencies serving community residents, especially those participating in the ethnographic component of Urban Change, were given highest priority; the team eliminated those agencies that primarily serve individuals not directly affected by welfare reform (e.g., those primarily serving single men or seniors); and (3) age of agency: the team excluded agencies founded after 1994, as it would be difficult to assess how these agencies responded to welfare reform. This process resulted in a sample of 29 nonprofit agencies. One agency (a small health clinic) refused to participate, leaving a sample of 28 agencies. Thirteen of the agencies were located in Kensington (the most service rich of the three sites). Seven were in North Central, and eight were in Germantown.

The selected agencies provide their communities with a wide range of services, from basic needs to job placement and training. In all, the agencies offered some 180 different services to their communities. To give a sense of the sample, agencies were classified into four groups by main service domain. A little over a third of the sample (36 percent) concentrated on basic needs services (e.g., health care, clothing, shelter, and food). Less than a third (29 percent) were classified as multiservice (meaning they provided services across multiple domains) or as concentrating on adult education services (e.g., adult basic education, English as a second language, GED test preparation, and literacy, computer, and college programs). Less than a fifth focused on youth and child-care services (18 percent) or other services (18 percent; e.g., nonemergency housing services, community beautification, and providing referrals instead of direct services).

Few of the agencies received welfare-to-work program funds; in fact, only five agencies provided approved welfare-to-work employment or training programs. Five agencies received money from the PA Department of Public Welfare (DPW) for children in their child-care programs, and an additional agency was active in helping local child-care providers receive welfare-subsidized child-care slots. Some of the agencies had other links to the DPW. By the second round, over half (57 percent) of the nonprofits reported that at least one welfare recipient fulfilled welfare-to-work requirements by acting as an intern at the agency. Furthermore, the majority of the agencies received referrals to their programs from welfare caseworkers; most of the agencies (80 percent), however, did not rely heavily upon welfare caseworkers for client recruitment. The fact that only a small proportion of respondents in the
sample relied upon welfare-to-work funds and direct referrals from the DPW to run their programs may indicate that this population of nonprofit respondents may be less likely than other nonprofit respondents to be well informed of the changes.

The agencies were generally well established; 90 percent were in operation before 1989. They were largely community based, operating with few full-time, paid staff (60 percent reported fewer than five full-time, paid staff members) and on small- to medium-sized budgets (56 percent reported annual budgets at or under $200,000). The sample incorporates religiously affiliated ($N = 12$) and secular ($N = 16$) agencies. The religiously affiliated agencies included both congregational churches providing services and religiously affiliated organizations not housed in churches. Throughout the article, these organizations are described as nonprofits (see table 1 for nonprofit sample details).

To assess how welfare reform affected the agencies as it was implemented, the Urban Change team conducted semistructured, qualitative interviews with key organizational contacts at the agencies at two points in time. In addition, as part of another project, the author conducted a third round of interviews at 12 of the 13 nonprofits in the Kensington sample. For this article, the author reports findings from analyses of the interviews conducted with upper-level organizational contacts. This includes 42 interviews conducted from February through August 1998 (round 1 or baseline), 44 interviews conducted from August 1999 through March 2000 (round 2), and 23 interviews conducted from October 2001 through April 2002 (round 3 interviews were conducted only in the Kensington neighborhood). The bulk of the analyses presented in this article are based on the baseline interviews.

Most of these respondents were executive or program directors (86 percent of the baseline interview respondents held one of these titles). The sample also includes pastors (10 percent of respondents) and assistant priests (5 percent). For the purposes of this article, all respondents are described as directors unless otherwise specified. At baseline, the majority of the respondents were female (74 percent), well-educated (57 percent had more than a bachelor’s degree), white (50 percent), and worked at the agency for 5 or fewer years (55 percent; see table 2 for individual respondent characteristics). To obtain an accurate and thorough picture of each agency and its programs, the team conducted multiple interviews at many of the agencies and, whenever possible, interviewed the same person at each round. Therefore, in some cases, more than one individual was asked about the welfare policies (particularly at some of the large agencies), and as such, individuals from large agencies in this sample are overrepresented in this analysis. Whereas 18 percent of the agencies in the sample had annual budgets over $1 million, 26 percent of the respondents worked at agencies with annual budgets over $1 million at baseline.
Table 1

INSTITUTIONAL SAMPLE CHARACTERISTICS BY NEIGHBORHOOD (Baseline; %)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Faith-based agencies</th>
<th>Kensington</th>
<th>North</th>
<th>Germantown</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Faith-based agencies</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year agency created:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Before 1905</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1960–74</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1975–89</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990–94</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>11</td>
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<tr>
<td>Number full-time paid staff:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1–4</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5–19</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20–54</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55 or more</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annual budgets:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$50,000 or less</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$50,001–$100,000</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$100,001–$200,000</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$200,001–$500,000</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$500,001–$1 million</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over $1 million</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing data</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Main service domain (or domains):</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basic needs (health care, clothing, food, and shelter)</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multiservice or adult education</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth and child-care services</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other *</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agency clientele by race and ethnicity:†</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mainly African American</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mainly white</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mainly Latino</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixed</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note.—Percentages are based on column totals. Due to rounding, percentages may not add to 100%. Data are missing on funding amount for one Germantown agency; given the size of the agency’s staff and programs, it is likely that its annual budget is over $1 million.

* The “Other” category includes nonemergency housing services, community beautification, and agencies that primarily provide referrals instead of direct services.

† An agency is defined as serving mainly one ethnoracial group when one ethnoracial group makes up over 50% of the agency’s clientele. Those categorized as “mixed” did not have one ethnoracial group that made up more than 50% of the clientele base.

Each of the semistructured interviews covered a wide range of topics, including descriptions of the agency (e.g., programs, clientele, staffing, funding, and function), the respondent’s knowledge and views of welfare reform, the realized and anticipated affects of welfare reform on the agency, and the agency’s plans for the future. Whenever possible, the team supplemented interviews by collecting program documents, administrative records, agency histories, and press clippings. The interviews ranged from 45 minutes to 4 hours with each respondent at each
Table 2

INDIVIDUAL RESPONDENT SAMPLE CHARACTERISTICS
(Baseline)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondent Characteristic</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Position</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Executive director</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pastor</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program director</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant priest</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African American</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native American</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High school diploma or GED</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some college, no degree</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Associate’s degree</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor’s degree</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than bachelor’s degree</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data missing</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Years at agency:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0–2</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3–5</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6–10</td>
<td>21</td>
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<td>11–20</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21 or more</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note.—GED = general equivalency diploma.

round and were conducted in person at the nonprofit agency (at times, over multiple visits).

Data are coded in QSR International’s NVivo, a data analysis software that allows for the coding and management of qualitative data. The data measure how much nonprofit actors knew and thought about welfare reform and devolution. Relevant coding categories emerged through analysis (Strauss and Corbin 1990). Additionally, to begin to make sense of the respondents’ varied levels of knowledge, the author coded the respondents into three groups: very good or good knowledge, fair knowledge, and poor or very poor knowledge. Coding was based on knowledge of welfare reform at the baseline interview.

Those respondents categorized as having good or very good knowledge of the welfare changes knew about the time limits, the work requirements, and one or more other details about welfare’s rules. For example, one well-informed nonprofit director told us, “March 3, 1999
is the deadline for those who have been on welfare for 24 months—they must be in a work-related activity, which has not been defined yet by the state, but it must be 20 hours a week. You can go to school as long as you have your 20 work-related hours a week in addition. . . . There is more incentive to work—cash is not cut as much as in the past. [Recipients] have a day care subsidy for 12 months. There is a 5-year lifetime time limit. [Recipients] must sign the AMR."7 Those coded as having fair knowledge generally knew something about the time limits and work requirements but were not sure about the details or about other aspects of welfare reform. For example, one respondent with fair knowledge knew that “welfare mothers will lose their welfare checks unless they find some type of work. They can be on welfare for 2 years in a row.” This respondent was also “pretty sure” that the lifetime time limit was 5 years. Those respondents coded as having poor or very poor knowledge of welfare reform only knew that welfare was time limited in some way or that welfare recipients needed to work at some point. Some did not even know these basic facts. Furthermore, they often held incorrect knowledge on some or all of the details of welfare reform. For example, one respondent with poor knowledge of the changes claimed she knew that welfare reform meant that the government was “going to try to cut back welfare,” but she was unsure if the government had developed any specific plan yet.

Results

Directors’ Knowledge of Welfare Reform at Baseline

The majority of the first-round interviews were conducted over a year after Pennsylvania started the clock on time limits.8 It might seem that agency heads would have heard a great deal about welfare reform by this time. The data suggest, however, that while most of the nonprofit directors had heard of welfare reform and knew that the system somehow changed, few had comprehensive knowledge of the rules at baseline. About half of the respondents (45 percent) heard about the 5-year time limit to welfare receipt. Sixty-six percent knew something about a 2-year time limit, with 36 percent of these respondents specifying that this time limit began to affect clients in March 1999. Sixty percent knew that there was some sort of work component to welfare. Fewer knew about two or all three of the fundamental changes to the system. Thirty-two percent were aware of both the 2-year and 5-year time limits. Approximately one-quarter (24 percent) knew about both time limits and the work requirement.

Few of the respondents knew anything about the rules beyond the existence of time limits and the work component.9 Twenty-one percent demonstrated some awareness of at least one of the new supports (e.g.,
child-care or transportation subsidies) offered to welfare recipients moving toward work. Sixteen percent knew of the limits to education.\textsuperscript{10} A slightly lower percentage (13 percent) knew that welfare recipients are expected to develop a plan with their caseworkers to achieve self-sufficiency, or mentioned knowing about the AMRs. Few evinced knowledge of changes in the system for teens (3 percent), exemptions to the rules (5 percent), the income disregards in calculating welfare benefits (5 percent), and changes in food stamp eligibility (3 percent). Overall, 24 percent of the respondents were coded as having good or very good knowledge of the welfare changes, another 24 percent as having fair knowledge, and 53 percent as having poor or very poor knowledge.

About one-third of those interviewed (35 percent) suggested that families, nonprofit providers, and even DPW caseworkers were confused about the new welfare rules. A program director at a large nonprofit claimed, “Everyone seems confused—from the clients, to the state, to the welfare departments, to the social service institutions.” Another director claimed, “It is all so confusing that nobody seems to have the correct information as to what is actually happening.” Still another complained, “It doesn’t seem like there is any coordinated effort to disseminate information. Welfare caseworkers don’t even seem to know [about the welfare rules].”

Several respondents remarked that the rules seemed to change continually. In part, such perceptions may reflect the fact that the state had not fully worked out its welfare reform plan at the time of the data collection. A program director at a church complained, “[Welfare reform] is definitely a work in progress. They enacted it and didn’t have the kinks worked out.” A director of a large education program simply stated, “The rules seem to change daily.” Another similarly said, “I hear one thing today [about the welfare rules] and another tomorrow.” These respondents complained that they could neither count on consistency in what the rules were nor in how caseworkers applied them. All this resulted in uncertainty and confusion.

Ironically, those rated as having good or very good knowledge of the welfare rules were especially likely to focus on this theme of confusion (66 percent of those with good or very good knowledge did so). The directors claimed they often discovered confusion as they sought out information on welfare reform from state administrators, particularly welfare caseworkers, whom they expected would be knowledgeable. Furthermore, since these respondents knew the rules well themselves, they could recognize uncertainty, misunderstanding, and bewilderment when they saw it. In essence, the directors coded as having only fair or poor knowledge of the welfare rules were often too ignorant of the policies to feel confused about them or to ascertain that state administrators, their clients, other nonprofit directors, or fellow staff members were confused.
Sources of Information on the Welfare Rules at Baseline

Given the importance of these types of agencies for the functioning of the welfare state, one might expect that these directors would receive information directly from welfare offices and other governmental sources. However, only 14 percent of the directors claimed they learned of the changes from information the state’s welfare department provided. Twenty-one percent reported that they received information on the welfare rule changes from local political offices (e.g., city councilman, mayor), and 18 percent received information from state offices (e.g., state legislators, governor). Sometimes directors reported that they received information from public agency mailings (11 percent). Directors also reported that they gained information from meetings sponsored or attended by state or local governmental representatives, or at which such representatives spoke. Twenty-four percent of the respondents learned of the changes while attending some sort of seminar, workshop, or conference. Most frequently, however, the respondents say that they turned to the media (television news, talk shows, or newspapers) for information on welfare reform. In fact, 45 percent of the directors reported at the baseline interview that they learned of the rules from print or television media. Respondents also reported receiving information from their professional networks, particularly from individuals working at other nonprofits (29 percent), other staff at their agencies (13 percent), and infrequently, their agency’s funders (3 percent). Most of the respondents (69 percent) reported learning about the changes from multiple sources.

Continuity of Knowledge between Interview Rounds

Second-round interviews were initiated a few months after the 2-year time limit passed. Despite the significance of this deadline, many of the respondents (particularly those relying on the media) asserted that they heard little about welfare reform between the baseline and second-round interviews. For example, in the second-round interview, the director of a Germantown nonprofit focusing on youth services claimed, “I’m sure that [welfare reform is] still going on, but it’s like the issue just faded away in the media or something.” Similarly, the director of a church-based food pantry claimed during the second-round interview that she heard little about welfare reform in the previous year and, “It seems like people just don’t talk about it so much anymore.”

Perhaps, in part, because of diminishing media focus on welfare reform, directors who knew little about the welfare changes during the baseline interview remained largely in the dark, demonstrating little progress in the second (and third, for Kensington directors) round of interviews. In fact, all of the respondents who were coded as having poor or very poor knowledge of the changes at baseline were also coded
as having poor or very poor knowledge at round 2 (and round 3 for Kensington directors). However, directors who were well informed at the baseline interview remained well informed about the developments at the second round (and third round for Kensington directors) interviews, indicating that the small subset of the directors who were coded as having good or very good knowledge of the changes at baseline managed to keep abreast of the rules between baseline and round 2 (and between rounds 2 and 3 for Kensington directors). Where there were changes in knowledge among the respondents, those tended to be within coding categories. For example, three respondents moved from being coded as having poor knowledge to very poor knowledge, or vice versa, between at least one of the rounds. Only one director was coded as moving from one knowledge category to another between rounds. This respondent was rated as having fair knowledge at round 1 but was coded as having poor knowledge at round 2.

Besides this continuity in the level of respondents’ knowledge of the welfare rules across the rounds, remarkable continuity existed between the knowledge of previous directors and that of the new directors interviewed. Between the first and second rounds, 32 percent of the agencies experienced turnover in at least one position interviewed. Therefore, it was theoretically possible for the agency director interviewed at round 1 to be well informed but for a new director to be poorly informed in round 2. However, in all but three cases (across all three rounds) in which there was turnover, the replacement was coded as having the same level of knowledge of welfare reform as the previous director.

For example, the executive director of a large multiservice agency was coded as having very good knowledge of welfare reform at round 1. The director knew of the time limits, the work requirements, the limitations to education and training, changes in the system for teens, the sanctions for noncompliance, and the increased emphasis on locating noncustodial fathers to gain child support. By round 3, this agency had a new executive director. While the new director did not offer all of the details that the previous director had, the new director was also rated as having good knowledge of welfare reform. She knew of the time limits, the work requirements (including the required number of hours per week), the AMR, and the limits to training and education. These findings allude to a link between organizational context and individual knowledge of welfare reform. More specifically, certain organizations may attract individuals predisposed to gaining in-depth knowledge of the welfare rules. It is also possible that certain organizational characteristics foster directors’ need and ability to gain knowledge.
Views on Welfare Reform at Baseline

The respondents’ lack of comprehensive knowledge of welfare reform did not prevent them from voicing strong opinions about it. Overall, the respondents fell into three groups: 25 percent approved of welfare reform, 33 percent had mixed feelings, and 43 percent disapproved.

The opinions articulated by the directors in favor of welfare reform (25 percent) suggest an ideological convergence with the proponents of welfare reform. These directors’ discourse reflects notions circulated in discourse by the American public and policy commentators (Murray 1984; Mead 1986). For example, these respondents argue that they support welfare reform because welfare recipients lack a solid work ethic, because the government needs to force welfare recipients to work, and because welfare breeds dependency. One director who favors welfare reform claims, “The [welfare reform] goals are good. Some people on welfare really are lazy, and it will hopefully take care of that problem. Something had to be done to stop the dependence on welfare.” Another director argues that welfare reform is laudable because “[welfare] makes you lazy. People on welfare don’t want to work anymore.” Another claims that “[our clients] complain all of the time but don’t try to get jobs. Moving them off of welfare forces them to go to work.”

The second group of respondents (33 percent) regards welfare reform with mixed feelings. On the negative side, the respondents worry about how welfare reform is implemented, whether those being pushed off welfare have the necessary job skills to get good jobs, whether there are enough jobs in the area, and how certain subgroups of recipients, particularly, single mothers, drug addicts, and high school dropouts, might fare. But, they support changing the welfare system, the general goals of welfare reform, and some other aspects of the reform. One director says, “Welfare reform is good in the fact that people will have to go back to work or to job training programs, and it will force churches to play a more active role in their communities. Welfare reform is harmful in the fact that it does not take into consideration the deep drug problem in inner cities. . . . In many ways, we’re asking people to pull themselves up by their bootstraps, but there are no soles on their boots.”

The third group of respondents (43 percent) vehemently opposes welfare reform. These directors object on the basis of structural issues within the economy (e.g., jobs are scarce), human capital issues (e.g., welfare recipients do not have the skills to hold good jobs), and issues of governmental support (welfare recipients need more assistance to achieve self-sufficiency). They also argue that welfare reform is likely to cause social and physical disorder in the communities where they provide services. The director of a nonprofit that primarily offers youth services claimed, “The effects of welfare reform could be devastating on
the community. How can you tell somebody to go get a job if there are not jobs out there? If you’ve got to eat, what would you do? Welfare reform is too idealistic. The jobs just are not there yet. . . . Even if there were jobs there, the people do not have the job skills. We’re talking about fifth-generation welfare families here! We need more job training programs. . . . Crime will very likely rise.”

Continuity of Views of Welfare Reform between Interview Rounds

As was the case with the respondents’ knowledge of the welfare rules over time, respondents’ opinions of welfare reform generally remained the same over the course of the study. In fact, only three respondents revised their view of welfare reform between interviews. For example, one director was coded as holding an overall negative view of welfare reform at round 1. When asked for her views, she responded, “It’s terrible. I have people who call in and tell me they’ve been cut off without notice. They have had their medical taken away or their cash or their food stamps. Welfare used to help with education, now they help you only to a certain degree. What the hell good is it when you don’t have an education? . . . There are people who really need [welfare assistance]. I think that if the people who oversaw welfare had done their jobs better, then the situation now would not be so bad.” By her third-round interview, however, this respondent was coded as having an overall mixed view of welfare reform. When asked for her views at round 3, she responded, “Well, I don’t know, it’s kind of hard. I mean I think that there needs to be some type of programs, like the welfare, DPA [Department of Public Assistance], medical, whatever, for residents out here. But I think [welfare] had become crazy. . . . They needed to do something. I don’t know if it was this, but something definitely needed to be done.”

Where there was turnover, each new director generally held a similar view of welfare reform (i.e., overall favored it, had mixed feelings, or was against it) as his or her predecessor. In only four cases were new directors rated as having a view of welfare reform that differed from the predecessor. For example, one program director claimed in the first-round interview that there was “nothing good” about the new rules. He continued, “Something really negative is going to have to happen before they realize the negative impact that [welfare reform] could have on families. They are taking a big chance that crime will go up because people will be more desperate when they do not receive their checks and cannot get a job. There is nothing wrong with encouraging people to work, but you have to provide them with adequate training and then make sure that the jobs are out there for them. The current welfare reform has not done this.” By the second round, however, this program director had left the agency. The new director’s view toward welfare
reform was very different. She “generally” agreed with welfare reform and believed that “people who are doing the right thing won’t have a problem.”

Overall, however, the respondents remained consistent in their views of welfare reform across the rounds, and new directors held views of welfare reform that were similar to those of previous directors. Again, this strong continuity of directors’ beliefs suggests a convergence between the individual and the organization concerning core beliefs on welfare reform.

Patterns of Knowledge at Baseline

Based on the qualitative data analyses, a number of patterns emerged concerning how much respondents knew about the welfare rules. This section reviews the correlates of knowledge using baseline interviews and offers potential explanations for the uncovered relationships.

Levels of knowledge vary with organizational characteristics: whether the agency is religiously affiliated or secular, the agency’s main service domain (or domains), its size, and the reported demographic characteristics of its primary clientele. Furthermore, knowledge among the respondents varies with how the respondent received information about the changes and his or her view of welfare reform. Other factors that seem likely to be related to the respondents’ level of knowledge, but that are not, include the type of funding an agency receives, the percentage of professionalized staff at the agency (as measured by education level), and personal respondent characteristics (such as educational attainment).

Religiously affiliated classification.—Respondents working at religiously affiliated agencies are less informed of the welfare changes than those working at secular agencies. At the baseline interview, 18 percent of the religiously affiliated agency respondents, compared to 30 percent of secular agency respondents, rated as having good or very good knowledge of welfare reform.

Agencies' main service domain (or domains).—Respondents from agencies that offer predominantly educational services or that are characterized as multiservice have the most comprehensive knowledge of welfare reform (42 percent had poor or very poor knowledge). In contrast, respondents who work at agencies that focus on youth services or day care have the lowest ratings of knowledge, with 71 percent of respondents at these agencies having poor or very poor knowledge of the changes. Fifty percent of the respondents at agencies focusing on basic and emergency needs (e.g., health care, food, clothing, and shelter) were rated as having good or very good knowledge of the rules. Finally, 60 percent of respondents at agencies classified as focusing on other services (i.e., nonemergency housing, community beautification, and referrals) have poor or very poor ratings of knowledge of the rules.
Size of agency.—Respondents at small- or medium-sized agencies have lower ratings on knowledge of welfare reform than those working at larger agencies. Only 10 percent of those respondents from small agencies (budgets under $100,000 per year) and 17 percent of respondents at the medium-sized agencies (budgets between $100,001 and $200,000) had good or very good knowledge compared to 31 percent of the respondents from very large agencies (budgets over $1 million).

Client characteristics.—At nonprofits in which less than half of agency clientele are reported to be welfare recipients, respondents are unlikely to be rated as having very good, good, or fair knowledge of the changes. Only 27 percent of these respondents were so rated, compared to 56 percent of those at agencies that primarily serve TANF recipients. Additionally, those that serve mainly white clientele were most likely to have poor knowledge (100 percent compared to 52 percent of the respondents at agencies serving primarily African Americans and 45 percent of respondents serving a mixed clientele).

Source of information.—Fifty-six percent of those who reported attending workshops, seminars, or conferences on welfare reform are rated as having good or very good knowledge of welfare reform. Respondents claiming to rely on television or newspapers for knowledge were particularly likely to have poor or very poor knowledge (53 percent of those using the media for knowledge have poor or very poor knowledge). Use of other sources of information, such as staff at other nonprofit organizations or governmental offices, is not found to predict rated levels of knowledge of the rules.

Views of welfare reform.—One of the most interesting findings is the relationship between knowledge and opinions of welfare reform. Respondents who are rated as having at least fair knowledge of welfare reform are not supportive of the changes. For example, one respondent coded as having very good knowledge of welfare reform asserted, "[The welfare reform goals] are inhumane. You can't throw people off the rolls if there is nothing there to replace it, exchange it with. People [will] get kicked off the money, off food stamps, off the medical. It is a violation of their economic human rights and dignities." In contrast, when asked about the goals of welfare reform, one respondent with very poor knowledge of welfare reform simply answered, "I'm all for it." Overall, among those rated as having very good, good, or fair knowledge about the changes, only one respondent views welfare reform positively.

Interpreting the patterns.—The data may suggest that directors are motivated to learn about welfare reform when they are concerned about it for professional reasons. Those who believe that welfare reform might drastically affect the clientele or overall operations of the agency seem to be particularly motivated to investigate the welfare rules. But directors may also be motivated to learn about the changes for ideological reasons. Those who disagree with welfare reform may seek out more details on
the welfare rules than those who agree with or lack an opinion of welfare reform. Certainly it is also possible that people who gain knowledge may then become skeptical. The author leans toward the first scenario because of the continuity of beliefs and knowledge across the rounds. The fact that new directors share similar views and levels of knowledge with previous ones (even if the new respondent’s tenure was only a few months) suggests that individual motivations lead both to working at particular agencies and to obtaining certain levels of knowledge. If this is indeed the case, it is likely that particular organizational cultures attract directors with certain ideological leanings.

This article does not propose that individual motivation (whether professional or ideological) alone compels knowledge acquisition. In fact, the data suggest that motivation is necessary but not sufficient for the acquisition of comprehensive knowledge of the welfare rules. Many of the directors, even those rated with poor knowledge, expressed a strong desire to know about the welfare changes; 16 percent mentioned explicitly that they wanted more information, and twice that amount claimed informally before or after the interview that they wanted to learn more about the changes. Beyond motivation, one needs to have the resources to find accurate, in-depth information on the welfare changes. One also needs the time and energy to digest such information.

The data further suggest that resources relevant to knowledge acquisition are unevenly distributed by size and type of agencies. Directors who work at large secular agencies, especially at those agencies that offer a myriad of services or are focused on educational services, may benefit from the professional networks and resources provided by these agencies. These directors not only were most likely to hear about seminars on welfare reform, but it may be that they are also the most able to attend them (because of time, staffing, and budgetary considerations). As some of these seminars were day long (or over multiple days) and focused solely on welfare reform, it is reasonable to assume that they may go into more depth on the welfare policies than the media did. Many of those at the smaller agencies claimed they just do not have the time to seek out and digest information on welfare reform.

Knowledge as Power?

Advocacy work and knowledge of the welfare rules.—Whether agency directors have good knowledge of the welfare changes may have profound implications for how well these directors can help their clients navigate the welfare system and advocate for their clients. Advocating for one’s clients could entail providing them with accurate information on welfare reform, referring them somewhere to get this information, going with them to the welfare office, calling caseworkers on their behalf, protesting the welfare rules, and lobbying for changes. With each round of the
study, agency directors increasingly reported that staff at their agencies were doing this kind of work. At baseline, directors at 18 percent of the agencies reported that their staff were increasingly doing advocacy work for their clients because of welfare reform. By round 2, directors at 71 percent of the agencies reported doing some work beyond normal services to help their clients deal with the welfare reform laws. By round 3, directors at all but one of the Kensington agencies reported doing advocacy work of some sort.

In general, directors coded as having good or very good knowledge of welfare reform were those who claimed their agencies’ staff actively seek to spread the word about the changes to their constituencies and directly attempt to help their clients deal with the rules. In fact, 67 percent of those coded as having good or very good knowledge of the changes at baseline worked at agencies that were also coded as being very active in advocacy work concerning welfare reform. Advocacy work at these agencies is more pervasive and extensive than at other agencies in the sample. For example, one agency (whose director was coded as having very good knowledge of the welfare rules) published a short, understandable pamphlet explaining the welfare changes for the agency’s clientele. The executive director also reported that agency staff call caseworkers to “explain” the rules to them when it helps the agency’s clients. She professed, “Our full-time workers know the changes better than the [welfare] caseworkers do. We explain the rules to them. We’ve explained to them that the rule is ‘work-related’ not ‘work’ by March of 1999.” Another agency developed a welfare advocate position dedicated to helping families get subsidies for child care and helping local child-care providers get subsidized child-care slots. The welfare advocate also helps clients understand the rules regarding welfare reform. While the data do not allow for an exploration of precisely how directors’ knowledge of welfare reform translates to lower-level staff’s advocacy work, they do indicate that directors’ knowledge of the changes is linked to the ability and willingness of agency staff to advocate for and assist their clients.

Stance toward dealing with welfare reform and knowledge of the rules.—By the time of the baseline interview, over half of the directors (63 percent) already thought about how their organizations could respond to the needs created by welfare reform and, thus, were actively planning for the law’s effects. Thirty-six percent, however, took a more reactive stance to dealing with the changes, claiming that their organizations would deal with issues as they surfaced. What emerged from the data was that these two different stances toward welfare reform were related to directors’ overall knowledge of welfare reform. None of the directors at agencies that were taking a reactive stance to welfare reform at baseline was rated as having good or very good knowledge of welfare reform; in fact, 75 percent were coded as having poor or very poor knowledge.
For example, one executive director reported, “Now you can stay on welfare for only a year or so.” When asked how her organization was planning on dealing with the demands created by welfare reform, she replied, “I don’t know. We are just trying to think about that.” Another poorly informed respondent simply answered, “We will handle it somehow.”

Conversely, 89 percent of those rated at baseline as having good or very good knowledge of the welfare rules were approaching welfare reform proactively. One director with very good knowledge of welfare reform claimed her agency would continue with plans it already put into place. She reported, “[We] started to work on [dealing with welfare reform] 2 years ago. [We] started to try to connect [our clients] to employment . . . working on getting [more] internships with local employers for [our] clients.” She also claimed that the agency enhanced the career portions of its education programs. Another well-informed respondent argued that her agency is planning to “go after some welfare-to-work money. [We plan to add] another staff person, hopefully to focus on the welfare issue—to spend more time with recipients and get involved in motivational issues. Welfare recipients will be harder to place and will take more time and resources to get placed [than our previous clients], so [our agency] need[s] another staff [member].” Other well-informed directors planned on changing hours of service to meet the needs of clients moving from welfare to work. At a women’s shelter that offers extensive services to its residents in the hopes of helping them become self-sufficient, the director reported in her baseline interview that her agency expanded the hours of its day care by an hour in the morning. She anticipated that the agency would extend it an additional hour at night the following year, as more of her agency’s clients got jobs. Looking ahead, she stated, “We may need to adjust our program hours to those working. [We] may extend the day care hours again.” It should be noted that, given the previously discussed relationship between size of agency and level of knowledge of welfare reform, size of agency may also be a factor in explaining the relationship between proactivity in planning and levels of knowledge of welfare reform. Teasing out causality is an important task for future inquiry.

Conclusion and Discussion

Researchers find that welfare recipients in Philadelphia generally know about the 2-year and 5-year time limits but that only a small minority accurately understands both of these time limits (Quint et al. 1999). Furthermore, welfare recipients are not clear on the details of welfare reform that could help them move toward self-sufficiency (e.g., child-care subsidies, earned income disregards, and medical coverage) or could help them avoid sanctions (e.g., exemptions to the rules). This
article demonstrates that directors of nonprofit agencies serving the poor are not much better informed than clients. Although almost all of the respondents have a broad understanding that welfare changed and became time limited in some way, the majority of the respondents do not have a comprehensive understanding of the new rules of welfare reform. The directors are particularly unlikely to know details beyond the time limits. If agency directors themselves do not have comprehensive knowledge of welfare reform, they can hardly act as effective advocates or reliable sources of information for their clients. Numerous times during the interview process, the respondents expressed a desire to learn more about the changes and admitted that clients asked them questions that they could not answer about welfare reform. Increasing director’s level of knowledge, therefore, is critical if these agencies are to act as advocates and sources of information on the changes.

Researchers have argued that one of the potential drawbacks of devolution is that inequalities might be exacerbated as local jurisdictions have varying levels of capacity to deliver services to the needy (De Vita 1999; Reisch and Sommerfeld 2002). One element of capacity is the ability to foresee threats to and opportunities for one’s organization and to plan proactively based on these assessments. As suggested by these analyses, agency directors’ knowledge of welfare reform may influence this element of capacity. Agencies with directors who are rated as having good knowledge of reform say that they plan to respond proactively to the changes, that is, they have specific ideas of what they could do to meet increased or changing future needs (in some cases, they were in the process of actively implementing changes). All of the directors who take a reactive stance to welfare reform (i.e., those not planning for the effects of welfare reform and who claimed they would try to deal with changes as they occurred) were rated as lacking good knowledge of the rules. If it is assumed that forward, proactive thinking enhances an agency’s prospects for meeting increased or changing needs due to welfare reform, then it is essential that agency heads have a good understanding of the new welfare rules.

Since knowledge is patterned, some agencies are found to be more capable of reacting to welfare reform than others. This creates the potential for increased inequities among agencies and, thus, among the needy individuals they serve. Within the context of these Philadelphia neighborhoods, those clients who come to agencies that serve a primarily white clientele, that are small, that are religiously affiliated, that focus on youth or other services, and that serve relatively few TANF clients may be least likely to receive information on welfare reform, to have staff advocate on their behalf, and to have access to services that best meet their current needs.

To be sure, further research is needed to address the issue of causality. For example, it is not clear if knowledge of welfare reform leads indi-
viduals to view the reform negatively or if those with negative opinions of welfare reform are driven to learn more about the reform. Furthermore, it is not clear if certain types of organizations promote high levels of knowledge acquisition or if people with certain levels of knowledge (or motivation to acquire knowledge) are drawn to certain types of agencies. While the data do not allow for a complete elucidation of these questions, they do suggest that individual motivations (based on professional and ideological considerations) combine with organizational resources to result in comprehensive knowledge of welfare reform.

In evaluating the effects of welfare reform and determining its future, researchers need to be cognizant of how much those who lead nonprofit service agencies know about welfare policies. If nonprofits are expected to take on an ever-greater share of service provision in the welfare state, it is necessary to also find ways to provide the leaders of these organizations with accurate information on the welfare system. For example, policies might explore ways to enable directors to attend workshops on the subject. Without accurate information about welfare reform, these agencies will be ill prepared to remain viable or to provide effective assistance to needy families, even as states ask them to shoulder the responsibility for ensuring social welfare.

References


Notes

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1. After the initial implementation of its welfare rules in 1997, Pennsylvania increased the requirement for work-related activity to 30 hours per week.

2. Pennsylvania now has Extended TANF. Those reaching the 60-month time limit can still receive cash benefits if they qualify under one of several different tracks (for details, see Community Legal Services [2003]).

3. Agencies were classified under one main service domain if the majority, but not necessarily all, of its programs and resources are dedicated to providing services in one particular domain. Note that an agency classified under one particular service domain may still offer some services in other domains.

4. Multiservice agencies were grouped with adult education agencies because one of the main focuses for all the multiservice agencies was adult educational programs.

5. One agency closed between rounds 2 and 3. Another agency in the sample took over some programs after the closure, allowing the author to gather information on what remained of the agency’s programmatic activities. Kensington was chosen for further study, in part, because it was the most service rich of the three neighborhoods. Additionally, a third round of interviews was conducted in this neighborhood to complement other interviews the author was conducting with poor women about their use of community-based organizations in this neighborhood.

6. Two individuals were classified under the “assistant priest” category. Both respondents performed duties roughly equivalent to a program director at a secular agency. The pastors in the study performed duties roughly equivalent to that of an executive director of a secular nonprofit.

7. Concerns for confidentiality of subjects prevent the identification of the individuals interviewed, as well as the dates and locations of those interviews.

8. The analyses in this section are based on interviews conducted at baseline with 38 respondents for whom assessments of knowledge of welfare reform could be made.

9. Note that respondents were not asked about each of the welfare rules specifically; rather, they were asked in an open-ended manner to describe the changes in welfare rules and policies since the enactment of welfare reform.

10. At the baseline interviews, education and training could count toward fulfilling one’s work requirement for up to 12 months.

11. In determining these patterns, the author followed standard qualitative data analysis techniques and allowed patterns to emerge from the data (Strauss and Corbin 1990). The author provides percentages in this section and throughout the article to give the reader a sense of the magnitude of the findings; however, the assessments of patterns are based on qualitative analysis and not statistical significance.

12. Agencies that offered services across two or more domains were classified as multiservice. See table 2 for percentages of agencies in each category.

13. An agency is defined as serving primarily whites if over 50 percent of the clientele was white. Note that only three agencies at baseline reported serving a predominately white clientele. This contradicts previous findings that agencies serving predominately minority clients were least equipped to deal with welfare reform (Reisch and Sommerfeld 2002).

14. States can contract with child-care providers to reserve a certain number of spaces for children qualified for subsidies. Providers then will receive payment from TANF funds for enrolled subsidy-eligible children in their child-care programs.