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Employment Research

JULY 2004

*Persky, Felsenstein, and Carlson on
What Are Jobs Worth?*

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2004 Grant Awards

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Staff Working Papers

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Vol. 11, No. 3

Employment Research is published quarterly by the W.E. Upjohn Institute for Employment Research. Issues appear in January, April, July, and October.

The Institute is a nonprofit research organization devoted to finding and promoting solutions to employment-related problems at the national, state, and local level. The Institute is an activity of the W.E. Upjohn Unemployment Trustee Corporation, which was established in 1932 to administer a fund set aside by the late Dr. W.E. Upjohn, founder of the Upjohn Company, to conduct research on the causes and effects of unemployment and seek measures for the alleviation of the hardships suffered by the unemployed.

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Joseph Persky, Daniel Felsenstein, and Virginia Carlson

What Are Jobs Worth?

NOTE: This article highlights some of the research findings that appear in the authors' new book, Does "Trickle Down" Work? which is available this summer from the Upjohn Institute (see p. 7).

How much are jobs subsidized by state and local governments really worth? Policymakers have achieved surprisingly little consensus on the character and size of gains from economic development projects. Measurement of such gains must inevitably derive from a vision of the labor market. For subsidies to generate real gains for local workers, those workers must be unemployed or underemployed. Recent research on job chains provides a natural approach to such measurement issues. It addresses not only the number of job vacancies created as a result of a subsidized business investment or expansion, but also the extent to which gains are achieved by the unemployed and the underemployed, whether skilled or unskilled.

The tide of strong economic growth at the state and local level lifts all boats. Workers in regions experiencing such growth are more likely to be employed, more likely to work full time, and more likely to take home a thicker paycheck than workers in sluggish regions. Studies by Bartik (1991, 1996) and others have forcefully made such points. But state and local governments seldom undertake economic development projects on a scale likely to affect the overall growth rate of the state or local economy. Most state and local efforts billed as economic development projects take the form of subsidies to a relatively small number of private firms. Project analysts are left in

a quandary as to how to evaluate project benefits.

Any development project, whether a new auto firm or an airline terminal, announces new jobs, but the important question is, "How much are these new jobs really worth?" Wages generated by the project often are touted by sponsors as a dollar measure of benefits, but many, indeed most, of the workers hired into new jobs are already employed. Hence, the wage increases achieved by such job changers are likely to be relatively modest. Is this all a new job is worth? Common sense suggests there must be more. The natural question under the circumstances is to ask what happened to the jobs left vacant by the job changers. Of course, then we want to know what happened to any other vacancies left open further down the chain.

To value a new job, we need to value the gains made all along the job chain set in motion by the appearance of that job. For those eager to get to the bottom line, our estimate is that for every dollar of wages in a newly created job, the economic benefit is about 50 cents. That is a big discount on new payroll, but it still leaves a lot more than just the wage increases to new hires in the project itself. Below, we describe our logic for reaching this estimate using job chains.

Simulating Job Chains

The chain metaphor has been used to analyze a wide variety of markets involving durable goods, such as housing. Since every house has an address, housing chain research proceeds in a

straightforward fashion. Just ask the incoming household of a new dwelling where he/she/they moved from and then go back to that unit and ask the new household moving in there the same question. Continue in this fashion through successive vacancies until the chain ends with an in-mover to the region, a newly formed household, or a demolition. Unfortunately, most jobs in the United States lack an identifying “address” or any other clear record independent of the workers holding those jobs. In general, job data are not collected as if jobs are entities in themselves, to be filled, vacated, or destroyed. Rather, job data are gathered essentially as by-products of collecting information on the individuals who occupy them. While a number of data sources allow researchers to track job histories of sample *individuals*, virtually none allow tracking of the successive individuals employed in a given *position*.

Under the circumstances, the possibilities for collecting data on actual job chains are slight.¹ The empirical problem is very similar to that facing an input-output (IO) researcher. After all, an IO multiplier for an apparel firm is not estimated by actually logging the sale of cloth to that firm, then the sale of cotton to the particular textile firm supplying the cloth, then the sale of petroleum to those specific farmers selling the cotton and so on. Instead, IO researchers estimate an average “input vector” for each industry, assume those vectors to remain constant whatever the use of the industry’s product,

and then “simulate” the necessary character of production chains.

To use such a synthetic approach for job chains, we need to define and measure the equivalent of the IO input vector for each type of new job. If we break jobs down into discrete groups based on wages or some other general measure of quality, we simply ask what proportion of vacancies in a job at level 1 are filled by workers employed in level 2 jobs, workers employed in level 3 jobs, etc. To fill in the elements of such a vector, we need information only on a sample of those filling vacancies—their new jobs and

“The tide of strong economic growth at the state and local level lifts all boats.”

their old jobs—or, if not coming from an existing job in the region, their previous labor force status.

Still following the IO model, we now assume that the probability of a given link in a job chain (e.g., the probability that the vacancy opened at level 3 is filled by a worker employed in level 5) depends only on the level of the vacancy being filled (e.g., level 3), and not on any other characteristics of the chain (e.g., the chain began with a new job at level 1). With this key assumption, we need no further information concerning job chains. In effect, once we are armed with these “input vectors,” we can synthesize the expected character of chains.

This approach to job chains greatly simplifies empirical requirements. In recent work on trickle-down and economic development strategies, we use data from the Panel Study of Income Dynamics (PSID) to construct input vectors for an average state for five classes of jobs defined by wage level.² To build the input vectors for a given job level, we only need information on job changers. We do not need observations on entire chains, but only a representative sample of unrelated chain links. Such data are available from workers’ longitudinal job histories like the PSID. Without ever creating a sample of real job chains, we can now estimate all the relevant coefficients of the input vectors (Table 1). Not surprisingly, the largest entry in each column falls along the diagonal. Depending on the wage level, anywhere from 30 to 50 percent of hires in jobs come from workers already employed at the same level. But these hires add little to economic welfare. Gains must come from workers moving up from one job to a higher one, or from nonemployment.

Armed with these input vectors, it is a straightforward matter to generate the expected numbers of vacancies opened in each wage group as a result of a new initial job at any given level. These simulations are exactly analogous to the calculation of multipliers in IO analysis. They give job-chain multipliers. For example, a newly created job at level 3 is associated with an average chain of 2.7 vacancies, including 1.87 vacancies at level 3 itself, 0.66 vacancies at level 4, and 0.2 vacancies at level 5 (Table 2). The average chain is then terminated by the hiring of an unemployed worker, someone out of the labor force, or someone moving into the state. Perhaps not surprisingly, high-wage jobs like those at level 1 give rise to longer chains than low wage jobs like those at level 5. But the length of a chain is not in itself a measure of the chain’s value. To assess the worth of a new job, we also need to know the welfare gains made along the chain.

Valuing Average Chains

To the best of our knowledge, analysts of housing chains and the like have

Table 1 Basic Wage Group Transition Matrix (entries are column percentages)

Origin	New wage group				
	1	2	3	4	5
Wage group 1	41.1				
Wage group 2	25.0	52.9			
Wage group 3	4.8	22.1	46.6		
Wage group 4	2.2	1.5	18.5	47.3	
Wage group 5	0.0	0.3	2.4	13.3	34.5
Unemployed	2.9	3.8	9.7	15.8	24.7
Out of labor force	4.0	3.8	7.5	13.5	30.5
In-migrant	20.1	15.6	15.4	10.0	10.2
Column sum	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

NOTE: The data are from 1987 to 1993 and relate to heads and spouses in the PSID. Level 5 has a lower bound at the national minimum wage. The upper bound for each wage group is about 50 percent greater than the lower bound. See Persky, Felsenstein, and Carlson (2004) for details including justification for triangularization.

Table 2 Job-Chain Multiplier Matrix

Wage groups	Initial new job				
	1	2	3	4	5
1	1.70				
2	0.90	2.12			
3	0.52	0.88	1.87		
4	0.28	0.37	0.66	1.90	
5	0.08	0.12	0.20	0.39	1.53
All groups	3.48	3.48	2.73	2.28	1.53

stopped short of calculating formal economic welfare benefits associated with particular chains. But chains in general and job chains in particular lend themselves neatly to such estimation. Again using the PSID data, we have calculated the average welfare gain of successful job applicants for each type of vacancy. The contributions to these averages of job changers are relatively easy to estimate from the empirical data. We simply count the actual increase in wages of similar job movers in the PSID. More difficult are the gains attributed to those moving from unemployment, out of the labor force, or outside the region. Such calculations are necessarily speculative. At root, any estimate of the welfare gains of these groups requires an evaluation of the alternative opportunities available to such workers. The gain, then, is the difference between the wages taken and what was given up. Again, see Persky, Felsenstein, and Carlson (2004) for details of our approach and sensitivity analyses.

Using these estimates of average welfare gains of hires at each vacancy level in conjunction with estimates of the number of each type of vacancy opened by a given chain, we construct estimates of the total welfare gain associated with each type of new job. In Table 3, these welfare gains are expressed as a share of the average wage of jobs at each level. Thus, we estimate new jobs at the highest levels (level 1 and level 2) generate welfare benefits equal to little more than 40 cents per dollar of wages. At the lowest levels (level 4 and level 5), these benefits amount to more than 60 cents per dollar of wages.

On average a job is worth about 50 cents per dollar of wages. Thus the normal practice of counting up new wages will

considerably overstate the welfare gains generated by economic development projects. At the same time, just counting the gains to those workers actually taking the new jobs would set a much lower gain than estimated here. What accounts for this substantial discount? It is not job changers in the state or locality, because job changers leave behind vacancies for others to fill. If the entire chain consisted of such moves, the cumulative increase in wages would approach the wage of the new job. Rather, the discount originates in the opportunities facing those who at start hold no job in the region—the unemployed, out of the labor force, and in-movers. Of these, our analysis suggests that in-movers are the most important. Virtually all the difference between the two ends of Table 3 are accounted for by the greater proportion of in-movers filling level 1 vacancies as opposed to level 5 vacancies.

When it comes to economic development projects, questions of efficiency and distribution are very much intertwined. A dollar of wages created at the low end of the job distribution has an efficiency benefit more than 50 percent greater than a dollar at the high end. This is not based on any notion of diminishing marginal utility, although such a proposition would only strengthen the result. The simple logic here is that new high-end workers had substantially more attractive alternatives than new low-end workers. This result, too, seems much like common sense.

Table 3 Welfare Gains, by Initial New Job

	Wage group of initial new job				
	1	2	3	4	5
Welfare gains as a share of wages	0.43	0.42	0.56	0.62	0.69

Notes

1. The exceptions here are those jobs that are well defined in such organizational structures as religious denominations. Hence, White's path-breaking efforts to trace job chains among the clergy (White 1970). Also see Webster (1979) for an early application of job chains.

2. The data are from 1987 to 1993 and relate to heads and spouses in the PSID. Level 5 has a lower bound at the national minimum wage. The upper bound for each wage group is about 50 percent greater than the lower bound. See Persky, Felsenstein, and Carlson (2004) for details including our justification for triangularizing the matrix in Table 1.

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Mini-Grant Awards

The mini-grant awards went to the following individuals:

Daniele Coen-Pirani, Carnegie Mellon University, on the topic, "An Empirical and Theoretical Investigation on the Cyclical Properties of Aggregate Employment, Hours of Work, and Wages of Skilled and Unskilled Workers."

Stacy Dickert-Conlin, Syracuse University, on the topic, "The Economics of Optional SAT Scores: Gender and Race Implications."

Thomas Hertz, American University, on the topic, "Have Minimum Wages Benefited South Africa's Farm and Domestic Workers?"

Mary Noonan, University of Iowa, on the topic, "The Long-Term Costs of Women's Work Interruptions."

Jason Seligman, University of Georgia, on the topic, "Research on the Impact of Labor Force Absence on Pension Savings."

Takashi Yamashita, University of Nevada, Las Vegas, on the topic, "Generational Aspects of the Great Compression: A Cohort Analysis."

Myeong-Su Yun, Tulane University, on the topic, "Effects of Information Technology on Labor Supply and Gender Wage Differentials."

Roland Zullo, University of Michigan, on the topic, "Public-Private Contracting and Internal Labor Markets: The Case of Urban Transit."

2004 Grant Awards

The Upjohn Institute is pleased to announce that it is awarding four grants and eight mini-grants in 2004. The Institute's grant program is intended to fund significant research in the area of employment-related policy that will result in book-length monographs to be published by the Upjohn Institute. The mini-grants are intended to provide funding for nontenured scholars working on an employment-related research project.

The grant awards are being made to the following individuals:

William Lazonick, University of Massachusetts Lowell and INSEAD, on the topic, "Business Organization and Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) Employment Opportunities in the United States." This study will analyze the role of business organization in the evolution of employment opportunities in the U.S. ICT sector. It will seek to identify the ongoing structural changes in those industries that impact the availability of stable and creative employment for well-trained members of the U.S. labor force. The proposed book will help policy makers understand recent trends in the demand for and supply of high-tech labor including the period of time being called the "jobless recovery."

Brian McCall, University of Minnesota, and Wei Chi, Kansas State University, on the topic, "How Important Are the Incentive Effects of Unemployment Insurance (UI)? Implications for Public Policy." This work will explore the short-run and long-run incentive impacts of the UI system with a particular focus on work incentives. Most of the attention of the study is on the U.S. system, but it also includes some analyses of the Canadian system. Specifically, the project will study the determinants of claim duration, the effects of the earnings disregard on job search behavior, and repeat UI usage.

Frank Neuhauser and Steven Rafael, University of California, Berkeley, on the topic, "Apprenticeship Training: Evaluating the Impact on Human Capital among Today's Changing Entrants." During the 1990s, the number of participants in apprenticeship training nearly doubled in California. Using a unique administrative data set, these researchers will track wage and employment data for the universe of the 250,000 participants and compare them to a carefully selected comparison groups. The project will produce a book and database for future research.

Kristin Seefeldt, University of Michigan, and Rukmalie Jayakody, Pennsylvania State University, on the topic, "Moving Up or Getting Stuck? Former Welfare Recipients' Job Retention and Advancement." This study will examine how former welfare recipients are able to advance into better paying jobs while others remain in low wage or unstable employment. It will analyze quantitative data from the Women's Employment Study (WES), a longitudinal survey of former welfare recipients. In addition, it will analyze newly collected qualitative data that focus on work and employment advancement. A policy-focused manuscript is envisioned that will showcase the findings on factors contributing to job advancement for former welfare recipients and factors that may contribute to wage stagnation or unstable employment.

Christopher J. O'Leary and David E. Balducchi

A New Look at Labor Exchange Policy

It has been three decades since a thorough examination of labor exchange policy has been undertaken. A new book published by the W.E. Upjohn Institute for Employment Research fills that void. *Labor Exchange Policy in the United States* takes a broad and timely look at labor exchange policy in the modern U.S. workforce development system, which includes public, private for profit, and nonprofit providers. (See p. 7 for information on how to order this book.) Publicly funded labor exchange services, such as skills assessment, counseling, job search workshops, and job vacancy referrals and placement services, continue to be the most frequently used job search assistance provided to workers and employers at the nearly 3,500 one-stop centers and affiliated sites that make up the nation's workforce development system. Despite this fact, since the 1980s, policymakers, public service providers, and researchers have focused less on labor exchange services and more on developing and expanding local job training structures.

When work on this book commenced in spring of 2000, the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) of 1998—the federal law enacted with a five-year sunset clause requiring states to restructure their job training and labor exchange systems to meet the challenges facing the twenty-first century workforce—had not yet been fully implemented in all states. As circumstance would have it, the May 2004 publication of *Labor Exchange Policy in the United States* comes at a time envisioned by neither the book's authors nor editors: final congressional debate over reauthorization of WIA. The two competing legislative bills to extend WIA offer revisions to both workforce development policy and to grants-in-aid for labor exchange and job training programs. As such, the pivotal role that

labor exchange policy plays in the fabric of state and local economic development, and who controls policy and how labor exchange services are delivered, may be at center stage.

According to state data collected by the U.S. Department of Labor, in program year 2001, 19 million job seekers nationwide registered for labor exchange services with state workforce agencies; 12 million of those who registered received staff-assisted services, and more than 4 million found work. While impressive, these data do not include the huge volume of labor exchange services provided to job seekers through self-service and

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Web-based job finding services through America's Job Bank and local one-stop centers. In contrast, during the same period, about 425,000 job seekers exited WIA job training programs, with 241,000 of them entering employment. As these data illustrate, the scale of labor exchange services dominate the workforce development scene. Much of the debate about workforce development since the 1980s has concerned how to assimilate state labor exchange services into local job training structures.

Under the original Wagner-Peyser Act of 1933, a requirement for state agency affiliation with the U.S. Department of Labor was that state employment service agencies make regular labor exchange services available at no cost to employers and job seekers who are eligible to work in the United States. This universal service requirement was adopted for core employment services

available to participants in adult and dislocated worker programs under Title I of WIA. *Labor Exchange Policy in the United States* tells the story of how WIA has brought the employment service full circle by returning its labor exchange function to the original intent of the 70-year-old Wagner-Peyser Act. Under WIA, the ES joins other public and private service providers to supply a consolidated array of workforce development services through one-stop centers.

The book's authors, drawn from the fields of economics and public administration, dissect the evolution of labor exchange policy in the United States, summarize the major findings about the effectiveness of labor exchange services, and offer reflections on the future of labor exchange policy. In its eight compact chapters, the book provides an overview of U.S. labor exchange policy, focusing principally on the last three decades of the twentieth century. One chapter explores how the labor exchange system incorporated tools of the information age during the 1990s to advance one-stop center customer service techniques and self-service job finding methods. Another chapter closely examines the intergovernmental tensions over funding and delivery of services. Other chapters describe how federal, state, and local governments administer labor exchange and other workforce development services. Systems for performance evaluation and evidence on effectiveness of labor exchange services are also reviewed.

Following is a list of the chapter titles and authors:

- Overview of Labor Exchange Policies and Services, *Randall W. Eberts and Harry J. Holzer*
- Federal-State Relations in Labor Exchange Policy, *David E. Balducchi and Alison J. Pasternak*
- State and Local Labor Exchange Services, *Neil Ridley and William A. Tracy*
- Labor Exchange Performance Management, *David P. Smole*
- Evaluating the Effectiveness of Labor Exchange Services, *Christopher J. O'Leary*

- Information, Tools, and Technology: Informing Labor Exchange Participants, *Jim Woods and Pam Frugoli*
- Public Provision of Employment Services in Selected OECD Countries: The Job Brokerage Function, *Douglas Lippoldt and Melvin Brodsky*
- Experience and Prospects for Labor Exchange Policy, *David E. Balducci, Randall W. Eberts, and Christopher J. O'Leary*

As we enter a new century in which workers will face changing skill demands and work arrangements that may significantly alter job finding practices, it appears that government will continue to be engaged in efforts to link education, economic development, and employment. Likewise, the role of labor exchange services may continue to expand by including new public and private

intermediaries. The synthesis of research and policy insights in *Labor Exchange Policy in the United States* provides valuable insights to policymakers and practitioners interested in workforce federalism and the challenges of crafting education, economic, and employment policies.

Staff Working Papers

Upjohn Institute working papers present research by staff or by outside scholars affiliated with the Institute. The purpose of the papers is to present preliminary findings and to generate review comments and discourse. Full-text working papers are available on our Web site: www.upjohninstitute.org.

Economic Reforms and Productivity-Enhancing Reallocation in the Post-Soviet Transition

Staff Working Paper 04-98

J. David Brown, *Heriot-Watt University, Central European University Labor Project*

John S. Earle, *Upjohn Institute, Central European University*

Revised: January 2004

This paper studies the consequences of enterprise privatization and liberalization of product markets, labor markets, and imports in the former Soviet Republics of Russia and Ukraine. Analyzing interfirm reallocation of output, labor, capital, and an input index with annual industrial census data from 1985 to 2001, the paper finds that Soviet Russia displayed low reallocation rates that bore little relationship to relative labor and multifactor productivity across firms. Since reforms began, resource flows have increased in both countries, and their contributions to aggregate productivity growth have become substantial both through increased flows from less productive to more productive continuing firms and through higher exits of less productive entities, i.e., through creative destruction.

Incentive Solutions

Staff Working Paper 04-99

Timothy J. Bartik, *Upjohn Institute*

February 2004

This paper reviews the research literature relevant to economic development incentives provided by state and local governments, and recommends reforms in these incentives. It argues that the main problem with current incentive policies is that state and local governments often provide incentives that are not in the best interest of that state or local area—for example, incentives that are excessively costly per job created, or that provide jobs that do not improve the job opportunities of local residents.

Small Cities Blues: Looking for Growth Factors in Small and Medium-Sized Cities

Staff Working Paper 04-100

George A. Erickcek, *Upjohn Institute*
Hannah McKinney, *Kalamazoo College*
June 2004

The purpose of this exploratory study is to attempt to identify particular public policies that have the potential to increase the economic viability of smaller metropolitan areas and cities. The study identifies characteristics associated with smaller metro areas that performed better than expected (winners) and worse than expected (losers) during the 1990s, given their resources, industrial mix, and location as of 1990. Once these characteristics have been identified, it looks for evidence that public policy choices may have promoted and enhanced a metro area's ability to succeed and to regain control of its own economic destiny.

A New WPRS Profiling Model for Michigan

Staff Working Paper 04-101

Randall W. Eberts, *Upjohn Institute*
Christopher J. O'Leary, *Upjohn Institute*
June 2004

The Worker Profiling and Reemployment Services (WPRS) system was established nationwide following the 1993 enactment of Public Law 103-152. The law requires state employment security agencies to profile new claimants for regular unemployment insurance (UI) benefits to identify those most likely to exhaust their regular benefits, and refer them to reemployment services to promote a faster transition to new employment. This paper offers a new WPRS model for Michigan that improves on the original model (also estimated by the Upjohn Institute) by applying lessons learned nationwide in the years since WPRS models were first implemented. A variety of alternative specifications were considered, the best of these was proposed as the new Michigan WPRS model. Michigan has since implemented this model and is now using it to profile UI claimants for referral to reemployment services promoting a speedy return to work.

New Books

Labor Exchange Policy in the United States

David E. Balducchi,
Randall W. Eberts, and
Christopher J. O'Leary, Editors

This new book describes the evolution of labor exchange policy in the United States and summarizes the major findings about the effectiveness of labor exchange services. The book's contributors address key issues concerning public labor exchange including 1) the evolution of federal-state relations in labor exchange policy resulting from the Workforce Investment Act of 1998; 2) trends affecting the delivery of labor exchange services by state agencies, particularly how they interact with other public programs; 3) the performance and accountability mechanisms under which employment service offices operate and the effectiveness of employment services in helping job seekers find jobs; 4) the growing number and assortment of Internet-based tools and information sources that help people find jobs; 5) the international perspective on job brokerage functions; and 6) the current and future role of labor exchange services.

In addition, the book examines the appropriate role for government in helping job seekers and employers make the proper job match and provides an overview of U.S. labor exchange policy as it existed during the last three decades of the 20th century. See pages 5-6 for a listing of authors and their chapters.

295 pp. \$45 cloth ISBN 0-88099-303-0
\$20 paper ISBN 0-88099-2302-2 / 2004.

Does "Trickle Down" Work? Economic Development Strategies and Job Chains in Local Labor Markets

Joseph Persky, Daniel Felsenstein,
and Virginia Carlson

Persky, Felsenstein, and Carlson explore a new framework for evaluating economic development projects, the job-chains approach. This approach clarifies the potential justifications for economic development subsidies and the limitations that surround such activities, and allows a more accurate account of job creation. Specifically, it allows the authors to 1) observe the

existence of vertical job multipliers—links that work through job vacancies created by job changers (trickle down), 2) develop an intuitive technique for evaluating the benefits of job chains initiated in local labor markets, and 3) observe new insights into local labor market dynamics.

Overall, the job-chains approach will be useful to a wide range of audiences in the economic development community. For the practitioner, it offers a tool for assessing the opportunities and constraints of subsidizing job creation. For the policymaker, the job-chains approach provides a new perspective on traditional policies for promoting economic development. And for the researcher, the job chains model allows for the accounting for trickle down when evaluating job creation.

180 pp. \$40 cloth ISBN 0-88099-309-X
\$17 paper ISBN 0-88099-308-1 / 2004.

Leaving Welfare Employment and Well-Being of Families that Left Welfare in the Post-Entitlement Era

Gregory Acs and Pamela Loprest

Welfare recipients left the rolls in surprising numbers following the enactment of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA) of 1996. This exodus led many

researchers to ponder the fate of welfare leavers, leading to an array of studies that examine how former recipient families fared during the first years after welfare reform. It also made researchers wonder whether welfare reform was a success in terms of helping leavers find work and reach self-sufficiency or if leaving welfare was an end in itself.

This book pulls together much of the information from these leaver studies to provide a "bottom line" assessment of what was learned. Acs and Loprest compare welfare leaver outcomes across geographic areas and supplement these results with national level outcomes. This effort allows them to paint a comprehensive picture of the employment, income, and hardships families experience after leaving welfare. While others have compiled results from leaver studies, the authors go beyond summarizing to draw out major findings, put these findings in the context of national results, then discuss what they mean for welfare reform. The authors also suggest areas that could be addressed by future policy, propose program enhancements, and point to areas for future research.

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