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Real Welfare Reform Requires Jobs: Lessons from a Progressive Welfare Agency

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This article discusses evidence from a local progressive welfare agency that has, along with other achievements, created innovative work programs within the framework of Job Opportunities and Basic Skills (JOBS). We discuss the institutional and bureaucratic limits of what such agencies can accomplish and that there has been some room for innovation for agencies that are so inclined. We then focus on two work-related innovations within the local JOBS program that demonstrate that there are many welfare clients ready and able to work in useful jobs. We take the position that government job creation is necessary to fill the employment gap left by normal labor markets and to make "welfare reform" effective.

There are institutional constraints and ideological influences that establish the legal framework for welfare programs, define the rules and regulations that guide the activities of local agencies, and determine the resources with which agencies operate. These institutional and ideological influences must be considered in any serious attempt to understand how the constituent parts of these institutions, including local welfare agencies, operate. There are both federal and state regulations and rules that impinge on local agencies and define the parameters within which they are expected to deal with clients, including regulations and rules dealing with eligibility, benefits, participation in JOBS, and a host

of reporting requirements. However, these bureaucracies cannot anticipate all of the novel contingencies that variously confront county human-service agencies. Thus, within the institutional parameters of human services, a significant degree of agency autonomy and individual discretion can sometimes produce a unanticipated and effective social dynamic among the chief actors involved in the local welfare drama—administrators, staff, clients, experts, advocates, concerned citizens and organizations—in the *implementation* of the programs, rules, regulations that have been established at higher levels of the bureaucratic hierarchy. Although usually unnoticed, there are lessons to be learned from innovative, client-oriented agencies that have relevance for welfare generally, the JOBS program, and welfare reform. While not necessarily significantly altering public-assistance policies or diminishing poverty generally, local innovations can benefit some clients. Indeed, every large system needs the flexibility to experiment that leads to productive innovations. Reflecting on Arnold Toynbee's epic study of the growth and decline of the world's greatest civilizations, Korten (1995) emphasizes that what is true of large civilizations is also true of all complex systems, namely "that diversity is the foundation of developmental progress in complex systems and uniformity is the foundation of stagnation and decay" (269).

In order to get a grass-roots perspective on how public assistance and the JOBS program are working at the county level, we have chosen to study the Athens County Department of Human Services (ACDHS) in Ohio. The ACDHS has a reputation locally and across the state for its liberalism and sympathy for the interests of its clients. We are not suggesting that it is perfect, or that there may not be some members of the agency who denigrate clients, withhold information from them, or in any number of other ways convey a demeaning attitude toward them. But we are convinced by our experience and the information that we have collected that overall the agency personnel are trying hard to be client-oriented. Our study is an attempt to understand the extent to which this reputation is deserved—that is, whether, despite the institutional context that overburdens it with regulations and rules and limits its resources and the benefits it can distribute, there are practices and innovations that are helpful to clients. What we report here is a part of this study.

Institutional Constraints

The ACDHS is located in Athens County, a rural county of Appalachian Southeast Ohio of roughly 55,000 people in 1995. The county is dominated economically by Ohio University and a multitude of medical and social service providers.

There are many institutional constraints that shape the context in which the agency operates and that significantly reduces its ability to advance the interests of clients (or most clients). The administrators and staff in human service agencies have no control over the social forces that produce and reproduce poverty. They do not influence the local, regional, or national labor markets and the number and kinds of jobs that are available. They have little or no influence over the quality or availability of educational opportunities, transportation systems, childcare programs, and so forth. In addition, they have little influence over the national political and ideological battles that determine the substance of welfare policies and programs or that reinforce the most negative stereotypes of AFDC clients. Eligibility standards and benefit levels are established by the state and federal governments, as are a multitude of other rules and regulations under which agency workers operate. Needy applicants are sometimes screened out because they cannot satisfy state-defined eligibility criteria. The normal package of benefits is insufficient to allow recipients and their dependents to leave poverty, let alone to have a decent standard of living.

Increasingly "clients" who receive benefits are mandated by the federal and state governments to participate in education or work programs through the JOBS program in exchange for their benefits. But the JOBS program as it has functioned across the nation in the late 1980s and early 1990s is characterized by low funding, low participation rates, and the evidence on how the JOBS program failed to help most clients to leave welfare or to leave the rolls permanently, let alone to leave poverty ([U.S.] GAO 1994; GAO 1995). These recent initiatives replicate the history of welfare-reform efforts and how they have done so little to address the real sources of welfare dependency and poverty (Handler 1995; Handler and Hasenfeld 1991; Abramovitz 1988).

Just as poverty has been increasing nationally, so it has increased in Athens county—but at a much more alarming level

and rate. Estimates by the Council for Economic Opportunities in Greater Cleveland (1994) of the Ohio county poverty rates indicate that in 1993 Athens County had the highest poverty of the 88 counties that comprise Ohio—a poverty rate of 33.3 percent, up from 28.7 percent in 1990 (16% increase) and from 21.6 percent in 1980 (54.2% increase) (Table 4, p. 135). With an estimated county population of 51,435 persons in 1993, 17,128 were poor, up by 2,504 since 1990 and by 6,680 since 1980. Annual estimates from 1980 through 1993 establish a pattern in which, starting with a poverty rate of 21.6% in 1980, the poverty rate rose almost continuously on an annual basis over the next thirteen years, declining only once in 1986 (Table 4, 135). According to estimates by the Council of U.S. Bureau of the Census data, the majority of the county's impoverished population (55.1%—derived, 131) were extremely poor, with gross incomes of only 50 percent of the poverty line or less.

The immediate roots of the problem lie partly in the limitations of the local Athens economy. Economically, the county labor market does not generate enough jobs according to estimates (some of which are derived from the U.S. Bureau of the Census) by the Council for Economic Opportunities of Greater Cleveland (1994). In 1980, the county's unemployment rate was 9.1 percent and in 1990 it was 9.6 percent (Table 24, 173). While the number of jobs rose from 20,038 in 1980 to 23,533 in 1993, an increase of 3,495 jobs over the decade, most of the increase came in retail/wholesale trade (1,043 jobs), services (1,131 jobs), and government (1,376 jobs). The first two occupational categories are associated with having a disproportionately high share of low-wage, no-benefit, part-time, and insecure jobs. Government often provides jobs that do pay decently with benefits and some relatively high degree of security, but these are highly sought after jobs that typically require experience, the ability to pass a civil service examination, and often credentials beyond high school. The number of jobs in manufacturing and transport/utilities declined by 591 and 314, respectively.

Moreover, these are labor market conditions that are not limited to Athens County; they are typical, sometimes even worse, in other counties of Southeastern Ohio. A report of the Institute for Local Government Administration and Rural Development

at Ohio University found that in a thirty-county area there had been a decline in higher wage mining and manufacturing jobs, while jobs in retail trade and service industries had grown, but that these industries offered predominantly low wage and/or part-time employment. The author of the report, Karen O. Spohn (1991), indicated that the changing industrial composition of the region's labor market, with an increasing number of low-wage jobs, contributed to the high poverty levels in this region that were maintained even when official unemployment estimates dropped in the late 1980s (xii).

Trying To Be Client-oriented

A client-oriented agency that operates pragmatically within the limits of the regulations and program parameters established by the federal and state governments and human-service bureaucracies can do a number of things to promote and sustain an agency climate that is basically sympathetic and responsive to the clients who come for assistance. Our research has indicated that there are four principal methods by which the ACDHS attempts to achieve its client-oriented approach to clients.

First, while there is little the agency can do about reducing the amount of information and verifications of information that the state requires, the ACDHS has tried to reduce the amount of time clients spend in the waiting room (routinely to 15 or 30 minutes and typically no more than an hour), to expedite assistance in emergency cases, to ensure that clients get the benefits and services to which they are entitled, and to be concerned that benefits reach clients in a timely fashion. In addition, Jack Frech, the agency's director, has submitted a proposal, with the backing of the state's welfare directors' association, to streamline the eligibility process for AFDC by giving all recipient families a \$900 flat monthly grant—something akin to a minimum guaranteed income. This proposal reflects a client-orientation in the sense that it would reduce the number of verifications required of applicants for public assistance and, on average, bring the value of their cash benefits closer to the state's need standard. Implied in Frech's proposal is the assumption that applicants for welfare should be treated with more trust than they are now, and should have a level

of assistance that better enables them to get by financially than is the case now.

Second, county agencies have no control over the level of benefits for which families of various kinds qualify. In Ohio and other states, benefits are widely viewed as seriously inadequate. Nonetheless, the policy of the Athens agency is to ensure that benefits are legitimately maximized, and Jack Frech advocates the need for improved benefits, as he speaks out at public meetings, through interviews with the press, and through a statewide lobbying organization called Have A Heart.

Third, the federal JOBS program gives states certain mandates, and, in turn, the individual states determine how flexible these mandates will be implemented at the county level. The Athens Department of Human Services provides a wide range of educational and work options in the local JOBS program, has given participants the maximum allowable mileage reimbursement (29 cents a mile), developed a large system of childcare providers (including 100 homecare providers whose licenses have been facilitated by the agency), and works to ensure that participants in the JOBS program are aware of the options available to them. The local agency administrators have also been innovative in their approach to aspects of the JOBS program, as exemplified by two innovative work programs that will be discussed below.

Fourth, and very unusually, the Athens agency fills many of its staff positions from JOBS participants whose work assignments have been in the agency. From 75 to 80 percent of all the employees in the agency are former welfare recipients. They have been hired on a competitive basis—not given special consideration. As much as anything else, this pattern of employment reflects how the agency is oriented to its clients and its assumptions that, given the opportunity and the appropriate training, experience, and support, many welfare recipients are ready and able to be responsible and effective employees.

In this article, we focus on two innovative work-oriented programs which are a part of the ACDHS's JOBS program, Extended-Community Work Experience Program (E-CWEP) and the Ohio Homemaker Health Aide Program (OHHA). Both of these programs provide useful and challenging work for some JOBS' participants as well as significantly improving their financial

situation. They demonstrate that there are many welfare clients who are ready and willing to acquire job skills on the job and to work in jobs that provide useful services to the larger community.

The Community Work Experience Program (CWEP):
What it is and the rationale

CWEP, sometimes known as workfare, is one of the principal work-oriented components of JOBS. It is a program that requires participants to work off their grants at a CWEP public or not-for-profit work site. Participants do this by working as many hours as it takes at the equivalent of the federal minimum wage to match their AFDC grant. Thus if a single woman with two children gets a monthly grant of \$340, then she would be expected to work 80 hours a month, or $80 \text{ hours} \times \$4.25 = \$340$. AFDC grants vary with the size of the family; therefore, those with larger families must put in more hours than those with smaller families. In AFDC-U families where there are two able-bodied parents, at least one of them must engage in a JOBS activity, which may involve a CWEP assignment.

If a worker continues at a CWEP site for more than nine months, then her/his required hours typically decline, because the rate at which they work off their grant rises from the minimum wage to the "prevailing" wage (of regular workers) for the job-tasks for which they are responsible at the site. For example, the prevailing wage for library aides at one of the local elementary schools is \$5.25 an hour and range from \$6.98 to \$8.00 for janitorial and maintenance workers at the ACDHS. Hence, after nine months, a CWEP worker would work off their grant at \$5.25 as a library aide or between \$6.98 and \$8.00 as a janitor or maintenance "worker."

The official rationale for the CWEP component of JOBS is that CWEP provides a client with useful work experience, an opportunity to demonstrate their commitment to the work ethic, a chance to earn a job reference from the CWEP supervisor, the respect that allegedly comes from work, and the opportunity to repay the state for her/his AFDC benefits through activities that are useful to an employer and/or the community. Most importantly according to the official rationale, and contrary to the bulk of the evidence on

workfare and CWEP (McFate 1995), such work experiences are also said to increase the chances that welfare clients will find an employer who will hire them and enable them to achieve "self-sufficiency."

Extended-CWEP: "Supplemental Grants"

The ACDHS has introduced an innovative program called Extended-CWEP that does not exist anywhere else in the country. This program provides a CWEP participant the opportunity to get an additional grant beyond the AFDC grant. Participation by the client is voluntary. There are Federal rules that allow for supplemental grants to be given welfare clients by certain government entities such as Counties. While the additional grant does not affect the AFDC grant, it does reduce the Food Stamp allotment. A supplemental grant of \$300 reduces the Food Stamp allotment about \$100, but the E-CWEP participant is still ahead by \$200 a month.

The program starts when CWEP worksites contact the local JOBS Program and request additional hours of work beyond the mandated hours for a CWEP client assigned to them. The funds for the supplemental grants come from the budgets of the various CWEP worksites. In Athens County, most of the current worksites are units within the ACDHS.

The obligation for the supplemental grant is the requirement to "work" additional hours at a rate of \$5.00 per hour beyond those hours required normally for a CWEP assignment. Additionally, the client signs an agreement that they will get the supplemental grant only if they complete all of the additional "work" hours. The limit of the supplemental grant for a particular client is that all income, including the AFDC grant, supplemental grant, child support, and other income, cannot exceed the State Standard of Need for the assistance group size. For example, if the relevant State Standard of Need for three is \$700 and the only income is a \$350 AFDC grant, then the amount of the E-CWEP supplemental grant can only be \$350. The other limit is the number of assigned hours. The combination of required hours and "extended" hours is limited by the standard of 172 per month. For short months like February it is less than 172.

The JOBS unit, for example, gets an annual allocation of roughly \$400,000 a year. After expenditures on staff and overhead (e.g. space, supplies, telephone, utilities), which are budgeted as "shared costs" and are allocated by staff FTEs (full-time-equivalents), other costs such as for travel are directly expensed against the unit's allocation. The supplemental grants for E-CWEP participants are also a direct cost. In the case of the JOBS unit, each of the two CWEP participants assigned to the unit put in fifty extended hours a month beyond their 80 mandated hours for which they each receive a supplementary grant of \$250. Over the course of the year, the extended hours of these two CWEP participants cost the JOBS unit a total of \$6,000. This is a very small part of the unit's allocation.

There are benefits for both E-CWEP participants and the agency units in which they work. The participant earns additional money, is engaged in work experience that is similar to a real, full-time job, and is treated like a real staff member, with opportunities to attend staff meetings and volunteer for staff training opportunities. Worksite supervisors find it easier to train and coordinate the activities of CWEP participants who are working extended hours, and also to ascertain whether participants are ready to move into real jobs inside or outside the agency.

The three dozen or so CWEP participants who volunteer to work extended hours for the supplemental grants make important contributions to the missions of various units of the ACDHS, including to the Income Maintenance unit, OHHA, and the Child Enforcement unit as well as the JOBS unit. For example, eight CWEP participants are on extended hours in the Child Enforcement unit as investigative aides and clerical aides. Agency Director Frech says that this unit would not function adequately without the assistance of the CWEP participants and comments:

"Before we began this program, there were like a 150 or 160 out-of-wedlock births in the county. We never did more than maybe 12 paternity establishments in a year. We had maybe 400 or more cases backlogged. When we created this program, for the last, I don't know, four or five years at least, we've established paternity on over 200 cases every year. And we do 95% of all the new out-of-wedlock births we're establishing paternity on, and we've cleared up all but 30 or 40 of those 400 old cases."

We conducted interviews with thirteen of the current JOBS clients in E-CWEP, eight of whom were assigned to the Child Support Enforcement unit, two to the JOBS unit, and three to the Homemaker unit. There was unanimity among the thirteen clients that the extended hours they are given significantly increases their chances of paying their essential bills and getting through the typical month financially. They were getting from 30 to 100 extended hours a month, working in some cases four eight-hour days a week. The extended hours brought them a tax-free supplement of from \$150 to \$500 to their ADC grants, a somewhat reduced food stamp allotments of roughly one dollar less in food stamps for each three dollars in additional income, a small monthly work allowance of \$25, and mileage reimbursement at the rate of 29 cents a mile. They were unanimous in their view that without the extended hours of paid work they would not be able to pay all of their essential bills or avoid running up debts, and that their families would experience increased hardship, variously saying: "it would be kind of rough," "it would really be hard," "could not survive without it," "don't know how we would survive," and "there's just no way."

What stands out in the interviews with the E-CWEP participants is that they enjoy their work, feel useful, believe they are learning new skills, and are in fact making a major contribution to the agency's missions.

Frech maintains that E-CWEP has not led to the displacement of regular workers or the loss of opportunities to hire new regular workers, but rather that it has provided the agency with the chance to sustain the agency's work force at a relatively effective level with a limited budget that is more likely to shrink than grow. Given the budgetary limitations, the use of CWEP participants to carry out important tasks in the agency is reasonable. For example, the cost (salary, benefits, and overhead) of an average regular staff person in the agency is \$35,000. Three CWEP participants, each of whom do sixty hours of extended hours a month, cost the agency a grand total of \$900 a month and only \$10,800 over the entire year. But displacement remains an issue. If workers are needed for important functions in the ACDHS or in any other government or non-profit agency, then it is also reasonable that somehow the government should generate the funds to create real

jobs that pay real wages. As it stands, the ACDHS has created a hybrid occupational category that is something, but not quite, like a job. E-CWEP workers become part of an ambiguous work force, whose status and benefits are still linked to welfare. This is not the fault of the ACDHS. Indeed, the agency deserves credit for finding a way to increase benefits for some CWEP workers and using them creatively to advance the mission of the agency. At the same time, E-CWEP has the paradoxical effect of reducing pressure on the government to create real jobs inside and outside the agency.

The Homemaker Services Unit

Of the many components of JOBS in Athens and across the nation, the homemaker home health aide programs have the greatest potential for creating jobs and, if adequately subsidized, enabling welfare clients with modest formal educational credentials to leave public assistance and poverty. National data from the U.S. Bureau of the Census project that between 1992 and 2005 the occupation of home health aides will generate a higher employment growth rate than any other occupation, creating an expected 480,000 additional jobs (Passell 1995, 9; Freeman 1995, 3–11). The current problem with many of the jobs in the homemaker home health aide occupational realm is that they pay low wages, offer erratic hours—often only part-time work—and provide few or no benefits (Burbridge 1993, 41–46).

Even before the U.S. Congress passed the FSA/JOBS into law in 1988, the ACDHS had launched a homemaker-home health aide program in Athens County that provided a variety of home-based services to the elderly and handicapped and provided temporary subsidized employment for some welfare clients, while hiring some of them into regular jobs in the Homemaker Services unit of the agency.

With the passage of FSA/JOBS, OHHA became one of the JOBS program's work-options. It is a subsidized-employment program that is targeted to JOBS participants who are on AFDC. When AFDC clients enter OHHA, they do not officially leave welfare, but rather enter into subsidized employment through the Subsidized Employment Program (SEP) after a six-week training

course. During the nine-month period of subsidized employment, they lose their AFDC grant, some of their food stamp allocation, a \$25 work allowance for those who had assignments on a CWEP site, and any rent subsidy they may be getting (most don't get this) for an hourly wage of \$8.41 an hour (the wage offered during 1994 and through the spring of 1995). This wage comes to substantially more a month than their AFDC grant and the other benefits that will be foregone. Indeed, \$8.41 an hour for forty hours a week, times 4.3 weeks in the average month, represents gross monthly earnings of \$1,446.52 a month, from which state and federal taxes and \$20 for union dues are deducted. In the nine months of the program, participants earn a gross income of \$13,018.68, enough with other benefits and cash assistance for the other three months, to lift most participants and their families above the official poverty line.

The OHHA program represents a major part of the agency's homemaker unit which provides homemaking, personal, and some health-related services to 150 local clients who are mostly elderly persons and who have lost one or more of their capacities to cope with the routine requirements of daily living. Without the services of the Homemaker unit, including OHHA, estimates by one of the agency's administrators suggest that half of the 150 or so people served would require institutional care in nursing homes.

Given the limited resources of the agency's homemaker unit, not all of the persons in the community who need home-based services to remain out of nursing homes or other forms of institutional care are being served by the homemaker unit or other similar programs in the community. There is a fluctuating waiting list of roughly 180 to 200 persons recommended for services who are waiting for services and who are at risk of either ending up in nursing homes or suffering from neglect. Beyond this list, there are others who need care but who are unaware that it might be available and have thus not sought it.

Clients are chosen for services in various ways, but always within a context of limited funds that make it impossible to serve all those with acknowledged needs. In some cases, the ACDHS is able to choose clients who are recommended for services by physicians or other health providers and who conform to criteria specified in the relevant funding sources for home-based services, while in other cases the final decision lies with the regional Area

Agency on Aging located in Marietta, Ohio. There are five funding sources. Two of these sources, the Social Security's Title XX Social Service Block fund and the state's JOBS' budget, give local human-service agencies considerable leeway, specifying only income and racial/ethnic parameters, in which clients for homemaker home health aide services (home health aide for short) are served. The three programs that are administered by the Area Agency on Aging include Passport, Options, and Block-Senior Services are all funded in large part by federal Medicaid funds. In these cases, usually a local physician will request home health aide services for a patient. The ACDHS will then forward this information to the Area Agency on Aging. Then a case manager from this agency will conduct an in-depth interview with the potential client. On the basis of this interview, the case manager will make a recommendation on whether the person should be provided with services, and if approved for services, the number of hours and the kinds of services they should be provided.

The Homemaker unit of the ACDHS has a workforce of twenty-nine workers, which varies over time somewhat. Seven of the nineteen workers are full-time, regular agency employees. Their salaries and benefits are paid from Medicaid and Title XX Social Services Block funds. The unit's supervisor and secretary, both regular full-time workers, are paid out of administrative revenues from the state JOBS budget. The twelve workers who are participants in the agency's OHHA program are paid from the JOBS budget. Additionally, in the Spring of 1994 there were eight E-CWEP participants assigned to the Homemaker unit, all of whom had gone through the OHHA program and who then were receiving supplemental grants.

OHHA: an overview

We interviewed twenty-nine persons who are or have been associated with the Homemaker unit, twenty-eight of whom have prior or current experience on OHHA. Jeff Bush, the agency's Director of Social Services who has administrative responsibilities for the Homemaker unit and OHHA, is the only one of the twenty-nine interviewed who has never participated in the OHHA program. Of the other twenty-eight interviewees, seventeen are currently employed in various units of the ACDHS, including the Homemaker unit, the agency's Personnel Officer, the

secretary of the Director of the agency, the Child Support Enforcement unit, the Healthcheck and Transportation units, the Income Maintenance Clerical unit, the Income Maintenance Screener-Reception unit, and the JOBS unit. The other eleven include five who were currently participating in the OHHA program, three who had finished the OHHA program and were now back on public assistance and assigned as E-CWEP participants to the homemaker unit, and three former OHHA participants who now held jobs outside of the agency.

Being Recruited and Selected

Of the twenty-eight current and former OHHA participants who were interviewed, all learned about the OHHA program from one or a combination of five sources, including an advertisement in the local newspaper, a letter from the agency included with their monthly food stamp allotment, from friends or neighbors who were participating in OHHA or who had previously participated in the program, on a CWEP work assignment, or from staff members of the Homemaker unit.

Once welfare clients on AFDC apply for the OHHA program, groups of 12 to 15 people from the 60 to 100 applicants (the average number applying in recent years) are invited to "a group interview," followed by "an individual interview" with those who are still interested, and, if they are identified as a likely candidate, put through a security check.

Individual applicants are chosen on the basis of a number of criteria, including relevant prior experience, whether they have an operational car, and how they express their feelings about taking care of elderly or handicapped people.

"Informed decision"

Those who are selected next have interviews with a designated staff member of the JOBS unit both before and after the six-week training program. During the first of these interviews preceding the six-week training course, they are apprised of how their benefits will be affected by entering the training program, along with an attempt to identify their work experience, skills, and interests. For the training period, participants are told that

their AFDC and food stamp benefits will continue, and that they will also receive a "participation allowance" of \$25 and mileage reimbursement for the miles they drive going to and from the training site at the Tri-County Vocational School and their homes. They are also entitled to free child care for their child or children through the six-week training period and the subsequent nine-month subsidized employment program represented by OHHA. When they finish the training program, they have an "informed decision" interview at which time they will be advised of the relative benefits of remaining on AFDC as opposed to going ahead and entering the OHHA program. Virtually all clients who finish the training choose to continue and enter the OHHA program itself. In addition to other benefits, the agency provides all clients who are entering the OHHA program with up to \$400 for car repairs, which, as Jeff Bush emphasizes, is not a lot per car. He says: "It adds up quick. You're talking about maybe four tires and a tune up, something along those lines." In addition, the agency has six vans, one or two of which can be used on an emergency basis when a car of one of the unit's workers breaks down or to transport elderly clients to the physicians or to Columbus, seventy-five miles away, for special medical treatment.

What They Learn

The useful skills and information to which they refer fall into four categories: health related, personal care, homemaking and shopping, and relationships. In the *health-related* category, the client-students learned cardio-pulmonary resuscitation techniques (or CPR), first aid, and how to take a person's blood pressure, pulse, and temperature. Regarding *personal care*, they learned how to lift clients as they helped them in or out of bed. In one case, this had a personal payoff. "Well, short time after I got my permanent job, my mother...had to have an operation, had to have her gall bladder taken out. And it really came in handy then, because she is a heavy woman, and I had to lift her out of bed cause she couldn't get out of bed. So it came in handy even in my (personal) life." Personal care also involved learning how to position people in bed, how to work with clients who were incontinent, bathe clients in the bathtub or in their beds,

how to change and clean a colostomy bag, the use of bed pans, learning how to assist them in walking, and the importance of washing up before and after providing clients with personal care ("sanitation").

The training also gave some attention to *homemaking and shopping* skills, including doing the laundry, house cleaning, and shopping, with tips on the kinds of products to use. *Personal relationships* were also emphasized in some of the training courses, learning about the importance of feelings, how to talk and listen to clients or patients, to be nonjudgmental about their living arrangements, personal habits, and idiosyncrasies, and, as the following quote indicates, the value of having a positive attitude.

"I learned that the elderly has different needs. Everybody is different. Everybody's got different personalities. And you don't know what you're going to face when you're going to go to that door, when you are going to knock at that door. What kind of attitude are they going to have when you knock at the door. So no matter what it is, you've got to have a smile on your face."

Examples of what they do for clients

The OHHA participants, along with some of the other workers in the Homemaker unit, typically each provide services to six to eight individual persons a week, seeing them two or three times during the week usually for two or three hours a visit. Some of those in the E-CWEP program and some of the regular staff act as "floaters" who will fill in for regularly assigned workers who are ill or somehow indisposed and cannot come to work.

The overall array of services provided to the clients they serve is impressive. The workers from the Homemaker Services unit clean the homes and sometimes their appliances (e.g. refrigerators) of their clients. They also shop for them and sometimes the clients drive along on shopping trips and in the process attend to other errands.

The budgeting involved is basically helping clients to determine how much money they will have for food expenditures and other necessary weekly or monthly expenditures, helping them write out checks, and sometimes making deposits in the bank to cover the bills that have been paid by check.

In addition to home health services, clients also like to socialize with the workers from the Homemaker unit. Some workers in the unit provide other special services to their appreciative clients. Amidst the whirl of activities, Helen sometimes finds time to read to her clients and finds that "they like that more than anything." Beyond cleaning, budgeting, shopping and other errands, socializing, and other homemaking chores, workers in the Homemaker Services unit provide personal and health-related services as well. Helen described taking the blood pressure of one client and driving her to and from the doctor's office. Workers sometimes bathe clients, take vital signs, help clients get some physical exercise, and remind clients to take their prescribed pills.

There is virtual unanimity among those interviewed from the Homemaker Services unit that clients are invariably very appreciative of the services they receive. Indeed, without these services, many of the clients would have to leave their homes, which they do not want to do, and be committed to nursing homes. Tina commented that in some cases "we are the only ones they see" and without assistance they would be in nursing homes. Mary refers to how clients "just love you to death." Joni refers to an elderly relative who has been one of the clients of the Homemaker Services unit. This relative recently had to enter the hospital and she told Joni to "tell the girls (from the homemaker unit), Lord willing, I will be back."

In entering the homes of clients who need their assistance, they not only provide a wide range of useful services but also often break through the formal veneer and detachment of their official role and become attached to their clients. Given that their clients are often of very advanced ages, there is sometimes a down-side to such attachment, when clients die. Myrna says: "Oh, I loved my people. I'm not a person that likes to do housework. But I would do it because it needed done. But I liked my people very, very well. I enjoyed talking to them and helping them out." And Terri commented: "You get used to them, you know, they are like family . . . a friendship, yeh."

Various outcomes for OHHA participants

The lack of useful and reliable information on what becomes of former participants of OHHA or any other JOBS program says

nothing about the quality of these programs. It does indicate that local human service agencies are not equipped to do such research. Our research is also hardly definitive and does not allow us to make quantitative generalizations about the percentage of participants who leave or stay on the welfare rolls or about what happens to those who leave the rolls. However, the twenty-eight current and former OHHA participants interviewed for our research does suggest that there are a variety of outcomes. Some of those who began the nine-month program, which in the early 1980s lasted a year or a year and a half and then subsequently was reduced to nine months, are lucky enough to get regular jobs in one of the units of the ACDHS itself. Others complete the entire program and do find jobs, but the jobs are not always sufficient to enable them to completely leave welfare or raise them out of poverty. The transitional benefits they receive—free childcare for their children and Medicaid coverage—last only a year. After the benefits end, they may have no choice but to return to the rolls if they have family members who need costly medical care or drugs. There are others who complete the program but then fail in their attempts to find jobs that would improve their situation, and return to the rolls. They are often then reassigned as E-CWEPs back to the Homemaker unit, given extended hours in addition to their mandated hours, and continue to do what they had previously been doing in the OHHA program. Some who fail to find adequate employment after the end of the nine months decide that their next JOBS assignment will be to Hocking College, where they hope to get an associate's degree in nursing that will increase their chances of getting a decent job. Those who are currently in the program have various hopes, the principal one is that they will be able to get a regular job in the Homemaker unit or another unit of the ACDHS before or at the end of the nine months. They have little optimism about finding a job in homemaking home health services or in any other job for which they are qualified that will pay much or provide adequate benefits.

In order to employ a much greater percentage of the AFDC workforce in such activities, the federal government must make a commitment to making jobs pay and job creation. In the area of homemaker health services, the evidence suggests that there is a potentially large pay off for society as well as for many welfare

recipients or those who are at risk of going on welfare. Jeff Bush, director of the agency's social service programs, makes a persuasive case for how programs like the OHHA program are cost effective from a strictly financial point of view. He estimated that in 1991 the ACDHS provided 18,328 hours of home-based care to clients served under OHHA. During 1992, 75 elderly and handicapped clients were on the average served by ten "home health aides" a month. Bush estimates that these services cost the agency \$405,000. In contrast, Bush further estimates that a nursing home placement cost \$2,300 a month per person. Thus, if only half (38) of the 75 persons served by the agency's home health aides had been sent to nursing home, the cost would have been \$1,048,800 for the year. According to his calculations, the saving produced by the agency's home health aides amounted to \$643,800 (or \$1,048,800 minus \$405,000 = \$643,800). For such a small program, this is a substantial one-year savings to the state of Ohio. And such savings could be expected year in and year out. Clearly then, one of the important lessons of the OHHA program is that there is a need to go beyond such small efforts as represented by OHHA and expand government support for home health aides, to make these jobs permanent and adequately compensated jobs, and, as a consequence, to reap yet larger savings for the state and society in future years. The price is right. The services are needed. The elderly and handicapped people who are served benefit. Home health aides provide cost-effective services, even when they are paid an adequate wage. There is no better deal around.

Some implications

One of the major challenges for those who are interested in genuine welfare reform is to recognize that the principal sources of poverty are rooted in institutional arrangements that place some people at a disadvantage in the competition for decent jobs. Agencies such as the ACDHS have demonstrated that there are many AFDC clients who are willing and able to work and to provide the community with useful, important, and cost-effective services. However, there are simply not enough decent jobs overall across the nation for all of those who need and want them, a fact that is well documented in the literature (e.g., see Sheak

1995). Some areas of the nation are more affected by the relative lack of decent jobs than others, but this is a problem that to some extent affects virtually all areas. Without a decent job, the chances of being poor and in need of public assistance go way up.

The clear implication of these facts is that if adult welfare clients, the overwhelming majority of whom are women, are going to be able to leave the welfare rolls and have a good chance of achieving genuine self-sufficiency (i.e., leaving poverty), then wages and crucial benefits for those who are employed in low-wage jobs must be subsidized by the government, the minimum wage must be raised, policies must be developed that help to improve part-time and contingency jobs, and government policies must be forthcoming that will promote unionization among workers, especially among those earning relatively low wages. However, such reforms would not address the whole issue of work. Beyond making existing jobs pay, there is also a need to commit ourselves to a full-employment policy that would ensure that there are useful jobs available to all those able and willing to work. The literature on government job creation establishes that it has a long history in this country (Skocpol 1995, chapter 7), that job creation in the 1970s produced efficient and beneficial results for participants and communities (Levitan and Gallo 1991 and 1992; Johnson 1985; Rose 1995, 183 and chap. 5), and that when well designed can be cost effective (Harvey 1995).

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