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TECHNICAL  
R E P O R T

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Results from the First  
California Health and  
Social Services Survey

ELAINE REARDON, CHRISTINE DEMARTINI,  
JACOB KLERMAN

TR-121-CDSS

January 2004

Prepared for the California Department of Social Services



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**PREFACE**

In response to national welfare reform legislation—the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act, which was signed in August 1996 and went into effect in January 1997—California passed legislation that replaced the existing Aid to Families with Dependent Children and Greater Avenues to Independence with the California Work Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids (CalWORKs) program. Following an open and competitive bidding process, the California Department of Social Services (CDSS), which administers CalWORKs, awarded a contract to the RAND Corporation to evaluate the CalWORKs program.

RAND's evaluation of CalWORKs is made up of an impact analysis to gauge the effect of the reform on welfare recipients and field work to assess the institutional aspects of reform. The household survey was fielded as part of the impact analysis, to gather the kinds of information not readily available in other data sources, such as family well-being and attitudes toward welfare reform. The survey collects data from 2,905 current and former CalWORKs recipients in six counties: Alameda, Butte, Fresno, Los Angeles, Sacramento and San Diego. This document presents an overview of the results from the first wave of the California Health and Social Services survey. Results from the second, final wave will be available in the coming year. For more information about the evaluation, see <http://www.rand.org/CalWORKs> or contact:

Jacob Alex Klerman  
RAND  
1700 Main Street  
P.O. Box 2138  
Santa Monica, CA 90407-2138  
(310) 393-0411 x6289  
[klerman@rand.org](mailto:klerman@rand.org)

Aris St. James  
CDSS  
744 P Street, MS 12-56  
Sacramento, CA 98514  
(916) 657-1959  
[astjames@dss.ca.gov](mailto:astjames@dss.ca.gov)



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## **SUMMARY**

To meet the requirement for a legislatively mandated independent evaluation of the State's California Work Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids (CalWORKs) program, the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) awarded a contract to the RAND Corporation to analyze the implementation of CalWORKs and to assess the program's effect on welfare recipients' transition to work and self-sufficiency.

As part of the evaluation focusing on assessing the program's effect on welfare recipients, RAND fielded a household survey—the California Health and Social Services Survey (CHSSS)—in the six focus counties identified in the original Request for Proposals: Alameda, Butte, Fresno, Los Angeles, Sacramento, and San Diego. This document reports the results from the first wave of the two-wave survey that RAND fielded in 2000 and 2001. Because the survey includes only six counties, the results do not represent outcomes for the State as a whole; however, the six counties surveyed accounted for 58 percent of the State's welfare families in January 2000.

In this document, we provide information about the surveyed population, beginning with respondents who were on aid at the time of the survey. We discuss their knowledge of CalWORKs rules; their attitudes toward the program; the work, training, or educational activities they engage in (if any); and their outcomes while on aid, such as earnings, income, poverty, hunger, and housing. We then discuss the same outcomes for those who have left the aid rolls. Next, we describe family and child outcomes, including household characteristics, child care, health, and substance abuse among survey respondents. Finally, we briefly discuss our next step, which will be to analyze results from the second, follow-up wave of the survey conducted with the same respondents in 2001.

A few of our key findings are organized by important outcomes of interests and summarized below. Except where noted, summary findings pertain to both aided and former recipients.

**Respondents' Knowledge of CalWORKs Rules and Their Attitudes Toward the Program**

- We found that 51 percent of the respondents on aid understood that the 60-month or 18-24-month time limits apply to duration of CalWORKs services for adults.
- We found that 86 percent of the respondents believed that welfare provides the help families need and that they have been treated fairly. In addition, a large majority (73 percent) agreed that welfare is generally on the right track in the way that it tries to help people get off aid.

**Respondents Earnings and Income; Household Poverty Rate; Food Availability; Housing; and Family and Child Well-Being**

- We found that individuals on aid averaged about \$296 in earnings per month themselves and resided in households that earned \$738 a month on average. After other, non-earnings sources of income are included, household income rises to \$1,559 per month.
- We found that leavers earned \$818 per month on average and reported household earnings of \$1,660 a month. In addition, 72 percent of leavers' households also receive other government support, such as health insurance or Food Stamps, and average household income was \$2,010 per month.
- We estimate that 69 percent of aided households surveyed are in poverty, compared with 41 percent of leaver households. Regarding food availability, we asked respondents to classify their own food security status by choosing how often they or their children missed meals. Respondents chose from one of these four responses: "Never," "Rarely," "Sometimes," and "Often." We found that 72 percent of aided adults reported that they never missed meals, compared with 77 percent of adult leavers. Further, 85 percent of aided children never missed meals, compared with 88 percent of children of leavers. We also found that 28 percent of aided adults reported rarely, sometimes, or often missing meals, compared with 23 percent of adult leavers. Finally, we found that 15 percent of children on aid rarely, sometimes, or often missed meals, compared with 12 percent of children of leavers.

- While there were some reports of housing instability and substandard housing, the majority of respondents, approximately 90 percent, did not report housing instability or substandard housing.
- We found that 46 percent of the sample reported having a child in child care due to their work, school, or training schedule. Seventeen percent of the respondents on aid reported having quit a job in the year prior to the survey because of child care problems. However, respondents on aid who used child care reported missing approximately one day of work in the last 30 days because of child care problems.
- We found that 43 percent of aided respondents, compared with 50 percent of leavers, lived in households in which someone, either an adult or a child, is uninsured. The lack of insurance appears to be an adult phenomenon because only 14 percent of aided respondents, compared with 12 percent of leavers, shared a household with an uninsured child.
- We found that 63 percent of the respondents reported that they do not use alcohol, and 32 percent reported drinking but no drinking problem.

Numerous important findings pertaining to other critical outcomes of interest are not mentioned in this summary for purposes of brevity. These other findings, regarding health care, substance abuse, attitudes toward welfare, and child outcomes, are described in more detail in the body of the report.



**ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

The survey on which this report is based was due to the combined efforts of the RAND CalWORKs team, including Patricia Ebener, Paul Steinberg, Kirsten Becker, Judith Perlman, Jan Hanley, Rodger Madison, Laurie McDonald, and Deborah Wesley. Florencia Jaureguiberry provided research assistance. Christopher Dirks helped prepare the graphics and their revisions.



**ACRONYMS**

<b>Symbol</b>	<b>Definition</b>
AFDC	Aid to Families with Dependent Children
CalWORKs	California Work Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids program
CDSS	California Department of Social Services
CHSSS	California Health and Social Services Survey
CPS	Child Protective Services
EDD	Employment Development Department
EITC	Earned Income Tax Credit
FG	Family Group
MEDS	Medi-Cal Eligibility Data System
SSI	Supplemental Security Income
UP	Unemployed Parent
WTW	Welfare-to-Work



**INTRODUCTION**

***Results from the California Health and  
Social Services Survey***

**Elaine Reardon, Christine DeMartini, Jacob Klerman**

**RAND  
Santa Monica, California**

**February 2002**



To meet the requirement for a legislatively mandated independent evaluation of the State's California Work Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids (CalWORKs) program, the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) awarded a contract to RAND to analyze the implementation of CalWORKs and to assess the program's effect on welfare recipients' transition to work and self-sufficiency. Results from this ongoing evaluation can be found at <http://www.rand.org/CalWORKs>.

As part of the evaluation focusing on assessing the program's effect on welfare recipients, RAND fielded a household survey—the California Health and Social Services Survey (CHSSS)—in the six focus counties identified in the original Request for Proposals: Alameda, Butte, Fresno, Los Angeles, Sacramento, and San Diego. This document reports the results from the first wave of the two-wave survey that RAND fielded in 2000 and 2001. Because the survey includes only six counties, the results do not represent outcomes for the State as a whole; however, the six counties surveyed accounted for 58 percent of the State's welfare families in January 2000.



## I. SURVEY METHODS

### ***Outline***

- **Survey methods**
- **Survey content**
  - Knowledge and attitudes toward CalWORKs
  - Activities while on aid
  - Outcomes while on aid
  - Outcomes for welfare leavers
  - Family and child outcomes
- **Next steps**



The rest of this document is organized as follows. We begin with an overview of our survey methodology and summary statistics for our sample. We divide our analysis of the survey into two sections, to provide information about (1) respondents who were on aid at the time of the survey and (2) respondents who had left aid. For the population on aid, we analyze their responses to questions about CalWORKs rules and regulations and their attitude toward CalWORKs. We then move on to an analysis of their activities while on aid, focusing in particular on the welfare-to-work component of CalWORKs. Next, we analyze their outcomes while on aid, to study earnings, income, poverty, hunger, and housing. The next section of the document turns to studying the same outcomes for welfare leavers. The final section of our data analysis tabulates responses to a series of questions about family and child well-being, including household structure, child care, health, and health insurance. Where the differences are of interest, we tabulate responses separately for those on aid and for leavers; in other cases, we combine the information. We conclude the document with a discussion of the next steps in the survey, which will be to analyze results from the second, follow-up wave of the survey conducted with the same respondents in 2001.

***A Household Survey Can Provide Information on Topics Administrative Data Systems Can't Provide***

- **Child and family health and well-being**
- **Attitudes toward welfare**
- **Hours of work and types of employment**
- **Food security and housing**
- **Outcomes for those who left the aid rolls**



The primary data for conducting RAND's evaluation of the impact of CalWORKs are state and county administrative welfare data systems and information on earnings from unemployment insurance and tax filings. However, these data sources are incomplete. Information in the administrative records is relatively good for studying welfare system outcomes (such as whether program participants receive cash aid, Food Stamps, and Medi-Cal) and on the details of participation in welfare-to-work (WTW) activities. The information in these administrative data records on the transition to self-sufficiency (such as other sources of income, child support, and the use of child-care subsidies) tends to be incomplete. The information in the records on family well-being (such as domestic violence, health status, or the use of community-based services) is missing altogether.

The CHSSS was designed to capture information about current and former welfare recipients that is not readily available in the administrative data systems being analyzed as part of the overall evaluation. In particular, as shown on the above chart, the CHSSS will help fill in information about the health care of the family, how useful participants found Job Club and other WTW programs, what kind of jobs recipients find, what kind of child care they rely on, whether families are going hungry, and outcomes for families who have left the aid rolls.

### ***Household Survey: Sample Description***

- **The sample frame was 4,500 current and former FG and UP aid cases in six focus counties:**
  - Alameda, Butte, Fresno, Los Angeles, Sacramento, San Diego
- **Sample was drawn from MEDS data for those ever on aid between 2/99 and 3/00**
- **We oversampled UP households by a factor of two**
- **We conducted phone interviews, with field follow-up, in English and Spanish**



The sample frame consisted of 4,500 welfare cases, or assistance units. (For example, a mother and her child constitute a welfare case if they receive a single check to cover both of them.) We selected cases, and then an adult within a case, to interview. Seven cases proved to be invalid between the time we sampled the data and received corrected updated data, leaving us with a sample of 4,493 adults.

We drew the initial sample in early 1999 from the Medi-Cal Eligibility Determination System (MEDS). We selected any case that had been on aid in a 12-month window from early 1999 to early 2000 (see the Appendix for exact details). For most of that period, the caseload was divided into Family Group (FG), usually a single mother and her child(ren), and Unemployed Parent (UP) cases--usually a married couple with one or more children. To allow samples large enough to compare FG and UP responses, we oversampled UP cases. Since that time, the classification of the caseload has changed. Nevertheless, this sample was selected based on UP/FG, and we continue to use that terminology here. Due to cost considerations, the survey was conducted only in English and Spanish. Therefore, we only sampled cases that, according to the MEDS, had an aided adult and spoke English or Spanish, and had someone over the age of 18 associated with it. Our first interview attempts were by phone; in person interviews were conducted with those we could not reach by phone.

Overall, we completed interviews with 2,905 cases, 64.7 percent of the initial sample. We completed interviews with almost everyone we contacted, for a refusal or ineligible rate of 7.1 percent of the sample. Despite intensive phone and in-person efforts, we were unable to contact 28.2 percent of the sample. Response rates were higher for open cases (for which the contact information was likely to be more current) and for UP cases (for which there were likely to be two adults we might be able to contact). Response rates were highest in Butte and Fresno Counties and lowest in Los Angeles and Sacramento County.

The exact number of responses used to compute the tabulations reported in the body of this report vary from tabulation to tabulation. Reasons for this variation include item non-response and the fact that the responses were only relevant for some of the respondents. Throughout the text, we indicate the unweighted number of responses contributing to the tabulations in parentheses. For example, if the entire sample was included in a tabulation, we would note "(n=2905)." Note that this is the unweighted count for the entire tabulation, but, in questions with multiple responses, it is not the number of responses for each individual item.

The tabulations reported in the body of this document are weighted to represent the six counties in which the survey was conducted. This weighting corrects for stratified sampling, differential response (according to observed characteristics), and variation in county size. Thus, because Los Angeles is much larger than the other counties, pooled results give more weight to responses in Los Angeles County. See the Appendix for a discussion of response rates and weighting. Once weighted, Los Angeles accounts for 67 percent of the sample, San Diego for 10 percent, Fresno for 8 percent, Alameda and Sacramento for 7 percent each, and Butte County for 2 percent. (These numbers sum to 101 percent due to rounding error.)

For all analyses, we explored the possibility that responses vary by county. Our samples in individual counties are only of moderate size. Thus, we can only detect moderately large differences. We only report county-specific results when we can statistically reject the hypothesis that the results are the same across the six counties at the 95 or 90 percent significance level. When inter-county differences are only significant between 90 and 95 percent, we so note; otherwise, all noted differences are significant at least at the 95 percent level.

**Household Survey: Sample Summary Statistics**

Category	Percentages
Percent on aid	66
Percent female	96
Never married	52
Sep./Wid./Div.	29
Married	18
Hispanic	45
Black	25
White	18
Asian	4
Other race	9
Average education	11 years

 Statewide  
**CalWORKs**  
Evaluation

We created survey weights to account for sample design, non-response, and county size, as detailed in the Appendix. Using these weights, we find that about 66 percent of the sample was on aid at the time of the interview. This percentage is computed based on 2905 (unweighted) observations. Hereafter, we note this simply as "(n=2905)." Note that 2905 is the number of people used in computing the percentage, not the number of people actually on aid. Our strategy was to interview the mother of the aided child when possible, resulting in 96 percent of our sample being female (n=2872, again this is the total number of people with a valid value for sex, both males and females, from which the percentage of women was then calculated; it is not the number of females). Thus, although both men and women are welfare recipients, given that almost all respondents are female, when we use a singular pronoun to describe our results, we will use "she" and "her."

Considering the entire sample together (i.e., both those on aid and those off of aid), a majority was never married (52 percent) and another 18 percent are currently married (n=2885). Forty-five percent of the sample reports being Hispanic; another 25 percent report their race/ethnicity as black; 18 percent as (non-Hispanic) white; and Asians and "Other" races account for 13 percent of the sample (n=2905). The average education was 11 years (n=2883), and average age was 35 years old, with 2.6 children (not shown on chart).



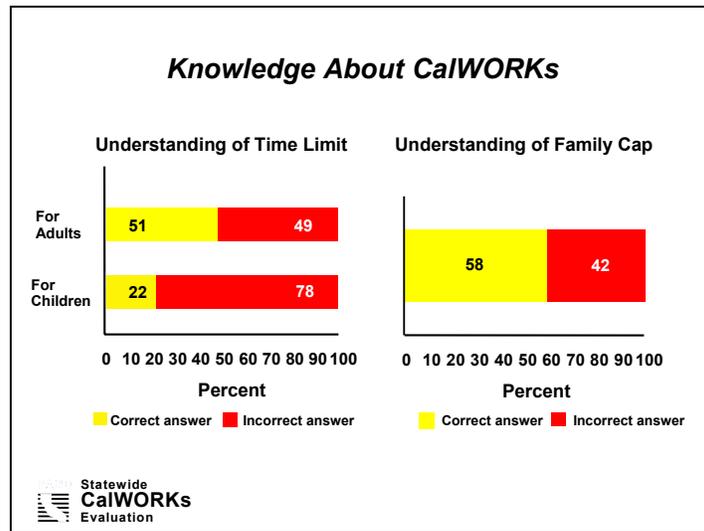
## II. SURVEY CONTENT

***Outline***

- Survey methods
- **Survey content**
  - **Knowledge and attitudes toward CalWORKs**
  - Activities while on aid
  - Outcomes while on aid
  - Outcomes for welfare leavers
  - Family and child outcomes
- Next steps

 Statewide  
**CalWORKs**  
Evaluation

Having described our survey, we turn to the substantive results of the survey, starting first with a description of respondents' knowledge of CalWORKs rules and a description of their attitudes toward the program.



**KNOWLEDGE AND ATTITUDES TOWARD CalWORKs**

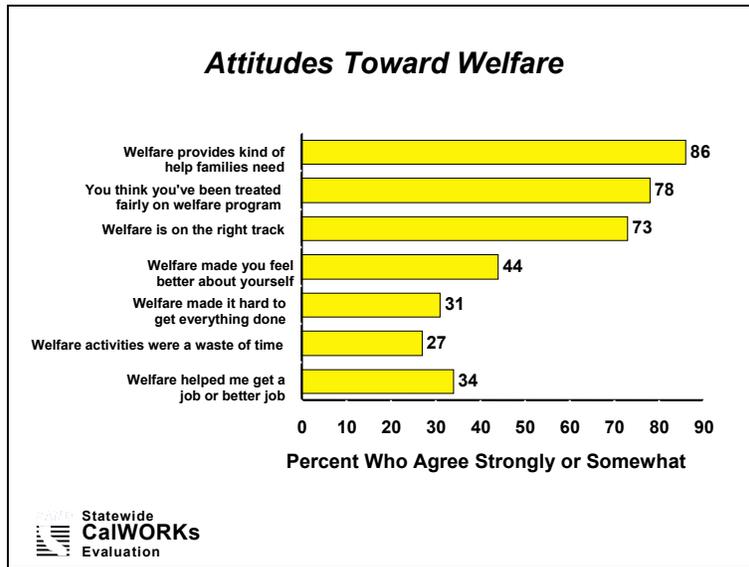
One of the most important changes in welfare policy from the earlier Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) to CalWORKs was the institution of time limits for adults. Adults are limited to 60 months of aid in their lifetime. The idea behind time limits is that recipients will make a concerted effort to gain the skills they need to find work and leave the aid rolls. Thus, the extent to which recipients are aware of the time limits is an indication of the extent to which CalWORKs has been successful in conveying the new message that aid is temporary. While on aid, they are limited to 18 or 24 months of WTW services such as training after signing a WTW plan. Thereafter, in order for the adult to receive cash assistance, she must either work or participate in community service. Existing cases were given 24 months and new cases were extendable from 18 to 24 months if the statutory conditions were met.

The time limit provisions do not apply directly to dependent children because they are not parents or caretaker relatives. Furthermore, even when adults would time-limit off of welfare after 60 months, payments for the children would continue. We note that, when the child becomes an adult (usually age 18, under some circumstances slightly later), payments for him or her cease (unless he or she has his/her own children).

For this analysis, we included only those in a case currently on aid in the survey. Respondents were coded as giving a correct answer about time

limits for adults if they said 60 months or 18-24 months. Fifty-one percent (n=1736) provided a correct answer. (Again, 1736 is the total number of observations answering the question, not the number answering correctly. In addition, since the 51 percent figure is a weighted calculation, the number of unweighted observations providing the correct answer cannot be computed as 51 percent of 1736.) Regarding a time limit for children, age 18 or "no time limit" were both accepted as correct answers. Twenty-two percent of respondents (n=1904) gave a correct answer. The survey was administered in 2000, well before any adult would reach the CalWORKs 60-month time limit (i.e., January 2003); the fraction answering incorrectly may change as those deadlines approach. We will be able to measure how much knowledge has changed in the second round of the survey.

Another change from AFDC (occurring shortly before CalWORKs) was in the imposition of a maximum family grant (a "family cap"): If a woman has another child while on aid, her aid check does not increase. Fifty-eight percent of the sample (n=1903) answered this question correctly.



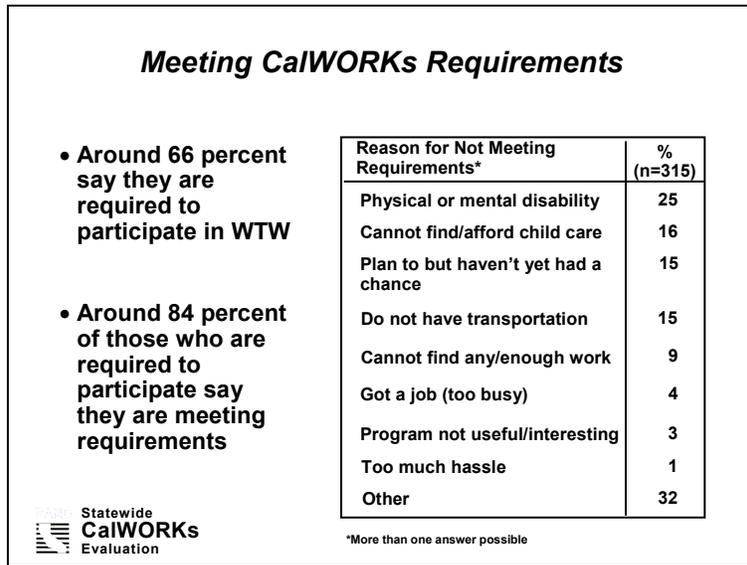
Combining both those on aid and off aid at the interview, attitudes toward CalWORKs are positive. A clear majority believe that welfare provides the help families need (n=2848) and that they have been treated fairly (n=2854). Slightly less than half (n=2804) thought that welfare made them feel better about themselves. A sizeable minority (about a third, n=2626) agreed that “welfare activities made it hard for me to get all the things done that I needed to do each day.” Only 27 percent (n=2599) felt that welfare activities were a waste of time, in keeping with the 73 percent (n=2814) who believed welfare is on the right track. Finally, only about a third (n=2642) agreed that welfare helped them get a job or get a better job.

### **Outline**

- Survey methods
- **Survey content**
  - Knowledge and attitudes toward CalWORKs
  - **Activities while on aid**
  - Outcomes while on aid
  - Outcomes for welfare leavers
  - Family and child outcomes
- Next steps

### **ACTIVITIES WHILE ON AID**

The central thrust of the CalWORKs reform was to implement a near-universal welfare-to-work program. Job Club programs were put in place to help recipients assemble a résumé, hone their interview skills, build their confidence, and find employment. Training programs with a strong vocational or employment component were also counted toward activity requirements. Most recipients were expected to work or enroll in training as a condition of aid. If only the child was aided, perhaps because the parent did not meet eligibility requirements for cash aid, then the adult, in this case, is not required to participate. But the bulk of the caseload is required to participate in WTW activities. We thus turn to our data on WTW activities and employment among respondents currently on aid.

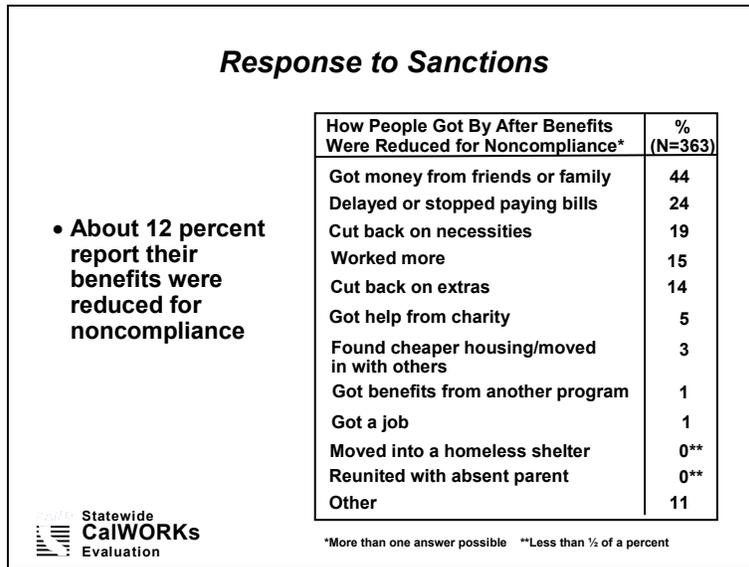


Roughly two-thirds of aided respondents (n=1887) reported they are required to participate in WTW activities. This percentage rises to 72 percent if we exclude respondents who are not required to participate because they are not eligible for aid (i.e., undocumented immigrants). The differences are statistically significant across counties. In Alameda, 65 percent reported that they are required to participate; in Butte 61 percent; in Fresno 61 percent; in Los Angeles 68 percent; in Sacramento 63 percent; and in San Diego 53 percent. Excluding undocumented immigrants, 67 percent of respondents in Alameda reported that they are required to participate; in Butte 60 percent; in Fresno 67 percent; in Los Angeles 78 percent; in Sacramento 64 percent; and in San Diego 60 percent.

Most (84 percent, n=1203) of those who say they are required to participate (regardless of immigration status) also reported that they are meeting the requirements, whether through their own work, a spouse's work, training, or the use of mental health and substance abuse services. This also varies by county: 85 percent in Alameda, 94 percent in Butte, 86 percent in Fresno, 82 percent in Los Angeles, 88 percent in Sacramento, and 91 percent in San Diego.

This, of course, raises the question of why the other 16 percent who know they are supposed to be participating are not meeting the requirements. The table on the right side of the chart shows the reasons listed for not

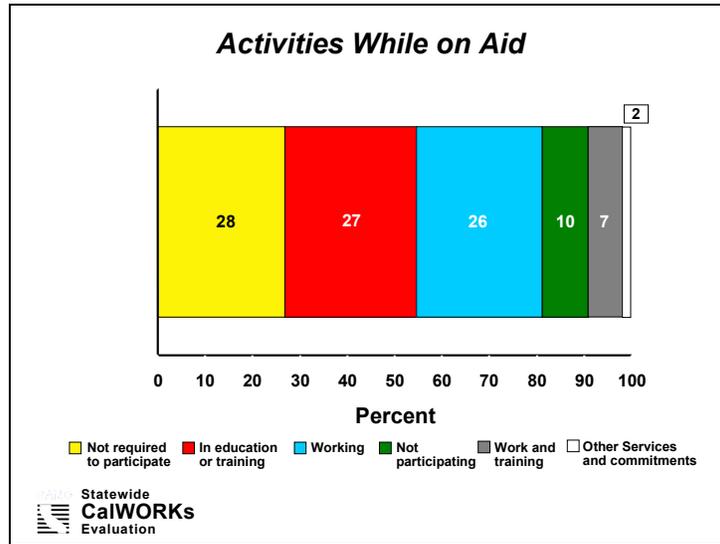
meeting requirements among the 16 percent. (Note that respondents can list more than one reason.) Twenty-five percent of that 16 percent group (in other words, 25 percent of 315 people, n=146) reported that a physical or mental disability prevents them from meeting requirements, 16 percent mentioned problems with child care, 15 percent indicated they planned to meet the requirements but had not had the chance yet, and 15 percent do not have transportation. Four percent reported they were too busy to meet requirements because they were working. Similarly, only very small numbers of people reported not meeting requirements because the programs were boring or too much hassle.



We also asked respondents about reductions to their benefits for not following the rules--a sanction or a penalty. The sanction or penalty for not meeting requirements (WTW requirements or other requirements such as child immunization) is the loss of the adult portion of the grant, or for a family of three, \$121 out of a \$626 grant. About 12 percent of aided respondents (n=1904) reported that their benefits were reduced for noncompliance with WTW requirements in the 12 months prior to the interview. This varied widely among counties, with 10 percent reporting a sanction for noncompliance in Alameda; 6 percent in Butte; 12 percent in Fresno; 13 percent in Los Angeles; 6 percent in Sacramento; and 12 percent in San Diego.

We then asked those who had been sanctioned about how they managed after their grant was reduced. (As with the data presented on the previous chart, respondents (n=170) here could list more than one strategy they used to get by.) Forty-four percent received money from family and friends, and 24 percent delayed paying bills or did not pay them. Some responded by working more (15 percent), but few responded by finding a job (1 percent).

Other, more major, responses to sanctions were rare: Relatively few respondents reported relying on charities, moving in with friends, or going to a homeless shelter. This could be because the sanction only applies to the adult portion of the grant. Then again, it may be that prolonged sanction could lead respondents to find work, or to more extreme adjustments.



Most recipients are required to participate in WTW activities. Individuals can be determined to be exempt from participation in WTW activities for reasons such as pregnancy or another disability that precludes participation, caring for a child under one year of age, caring for an ill or incapacitated family member, or caring for a child who is at risk of being placed in foster care and needs a level of care that prevents the adult from being out of the home. About a quarter reported they are not required to participate. A quarter of those not required to participate are in school, and a quarter are working, with another 7 percent who combine work with training or education (n=1459).

Compared with administrative data, more respondents reported being in school and fewer reported not participating at all. There were no statistically significant differences in the distribution of activities across counties.

### ***Employment While on Aid***

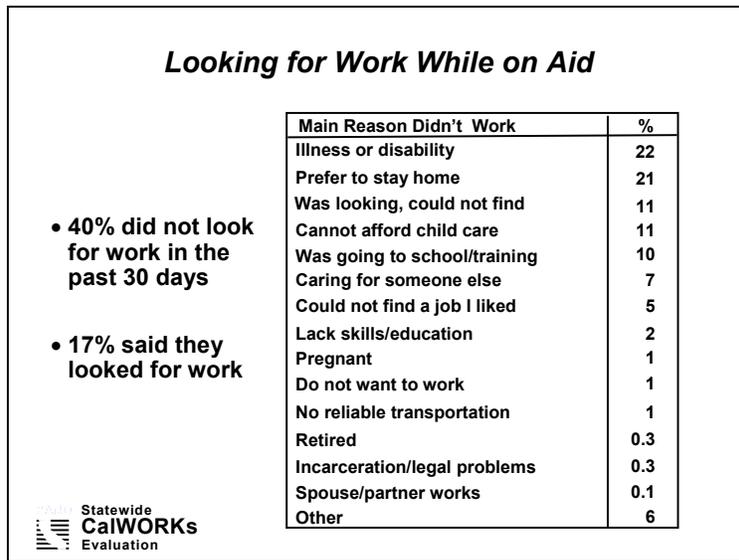
- **42% of respondents are working of whom:**
  - **Average wage: \$7.42**
  - **Average hours: 29.3**
  - **50% worked 32+ hours at main job**
  - **25% work at temporary jobs**
- **Respondents held an average of 1.13 jobs**
- **Average job duration was 1.21 years**
- **In 27 percent of the cases, the employer offered health insurance**



CalWORKs is designed to move recipients into work and self-sufficiency. Our survey asked for information for up to three jobs in the month prior to the interview. Forty-two percent of aided respondents (n=1904) reported working. We find differences across the counties in the fraction of recipients working at the 90 percent level--40 percent reporting work in Alameda and Butte, 33 percent in Fresno, 43 percent in Los Angeles, 45 percent in Sacramento, and 42 percent in San Diego.

On their main job, defined as the job at which they worked the most hours, average wages were \$7.42 (n=444), and on average they worked 29.3 hours a week (n=637). Half (50 percent) of those working reported working 32 or more hours (n=637), the number of hours required to meet CalWORKs participation regulations; about a third (32 percent of all respondents) reported working an average of at least 40 hours per week. According to the CalWORKs statute, those working fewer than 32 hours should make up the difference with other WTW activities; however, our interviews with caseworkers and our analyses of administrative data suggest that this requirement is not often enforced. Respondents could also hold two or more jobs to meet the hours requirement, but most only have one job in that month; the average for the sample (n=732) was 1.13 jobs. The fraction working 32 or more hours only rises to 54 percent if all jobs, as opposed to just the main job, are counted.

There was and is considerable concern that recipients would only find poorly-paying jobs, or temporary ones. Our findings in this regard are mixed. Median job duration was 0.6 years and 25 percent of working aided recipients (i.e., 25 percent of the 42 percent who are employed, n=784) work in temporary jobs. At the same time, mean job duration was 1.21 years, considerably longer than the median duration (n=687). While most of the sample has relatively short job durations (under a year), there is another group who have remained at the same job for a long time. Roughly a quarter were offered health insurance through their employer (n=683). Except for health insurance, the differences across counties were not statistically different. Forty-two percent of respondents in Alameda reported that their employer offered health insurance, 27 percent in Butte, 27 percent in Fresno, 25 percent in Los Angeles, 35 percent in Sacramento, and 21 percent in San Diego.



Forty percent of the sample (n=1904)--in this case, respondents on aid at the time of the interview--were not working, nor were they looking for work. This is almost as large as the fraction who reported working (42 percent). Another 17 percent did not work but looked for work. The survey asked the 1718 nonworkers (n=1117) for the main reason they did not work. Slightly over 20 percent reported an illness or disability. A similar fraction reported that they preferred to stay home. This does not seem to be because a spouse or partner works; only 0.1 percent gave this as a reason for not working. Only small fractions reported barriers such as child care, transportation, lack of skills, or lack of jobs. The distribution of reasons across counties was fairly similar, although some counties were more concentrated among a few answers. For example, 39 percent of nonworkers in Butte listed illness or disability, as did a third in both Sacramento and San Diego. The fraction who prefers to stay home was lower in Alameda and Butte.

### ***Outline***

- Survey methods
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#### **OUTCOMES WHILE ON AID**

Next, we present survey results on well-being (earnings and income, hunger, emergency assistance, and housing) for respondents who were on aid at the time of the interview.

### ***Earnings and Income For Those on Aid***

- **Respondent earnings averaged \$296 / month, household earnings \$738 / month, and household income \$1,559 / month**
- **40 percent filed or will file taxes, most of whom used or expect to use EITC**
- **43 percent of respondents own a car**
- **On average, they have \$47 in the bank and are \$2,288 in debt (excluding car loans)**



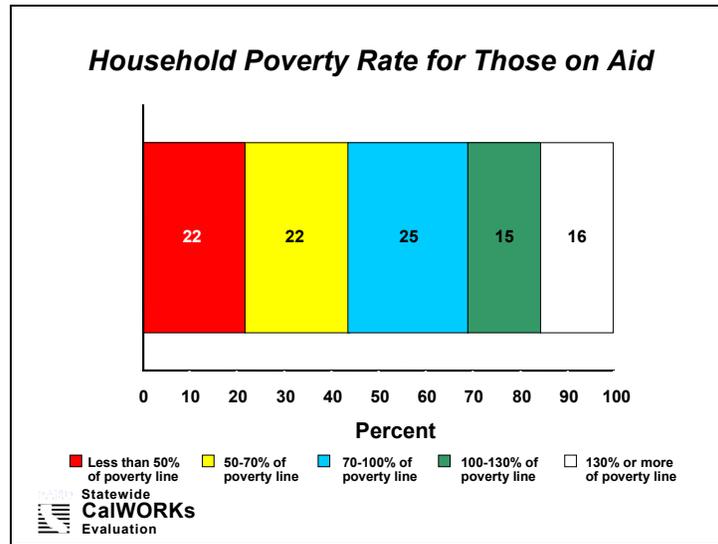
Respondents need not rely solely on their own earnings or welfare for support; other household members may contribute. Twenty-two percent reported a spouse or partner in the home (and the fraction is higher--about a third--in Butte and Fresno.) Considering both workers and nonworkers (who are assigned zero earnings), average earnings were \$296 per month (n=1904). Average household earnings were higher, at \$738 per month. And earnings were not the only source of support. Once government financial aid (welfare, unemployment insurance, Social Security, etc.) is included, as well as nongovernmental aid, such as a pension, child support, or gifts from friends and family outside of household, household income averaged \$1,559 per month. Some will also receive tax refunds using the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) for low-income families: 40 percent filed or will file taxes (n=1867) and most anticipate using the credit (n=790). Based on EITC rules for 2000, we estimate that the average amount families with earnings would be refunded is \$2,256.<sup>1</sup>

Respondents did not report many assets. Forty-three percent reported owning a car (n=1900) (similar across counties, except in Butte, where 74 percent reported owning a car). Car owners reported that their car is worth

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<sup>1</sup>We based this estimate on total household earnings and the number of children in the household. We did not account for relationships between household members or for some more-arcane tax rules, such as disability retirement income that counts as earned income (but is rare in our sample).

\$2,621, and the average car debt is \$631. On average, respondents (n=1904) reported having only \$47 dollars in a bank account and \$2,288 in debts other than a car loan (i.e., credit cards, student loans, unpaid bills or loans).



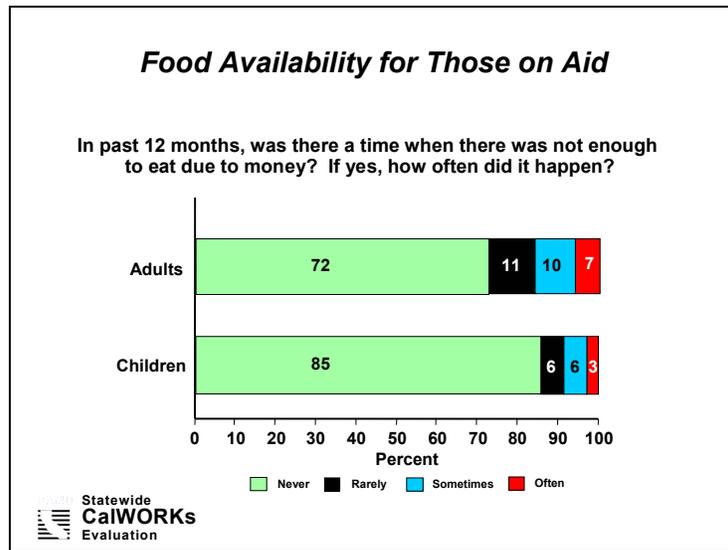
We estimated poverty rates for the household by adding the reported amounts of the following income sources across the household: earnings, unemployment assistance payments, Supplemental Security Income (SSI), welfare payments, child support payments, disability, and pension payments (but not the value of child care, ancillary services, transportation, or Medi-Cal). We then multiplied this by 12 to calculate an annual income against which to compare to the federal poverty thresholds published by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services by household size and composition for the year 2000.

There are a number of critiques of the way poverty is measured. Poverty is measured before taxes, and because taxes have increased over time on the poorest households, some have argued that only the after-tax income available to support consumption should be measured against the poverty line. Others argue that the monetary value of public subsidies such as Food Stamps and public housing should be included as income, as well as EITC tax refunds. Still others argue that allowances should be made for geographic differences in the cost of living. There is no well-established and accepted solution to these issues yet. Thus, for our purposes, we treat the poverty thresholds as a barometer of household well-being but not as an absolute standard that one is either above or below. Instead, we present the entire distribution, from households well below the poverty level to well above it.

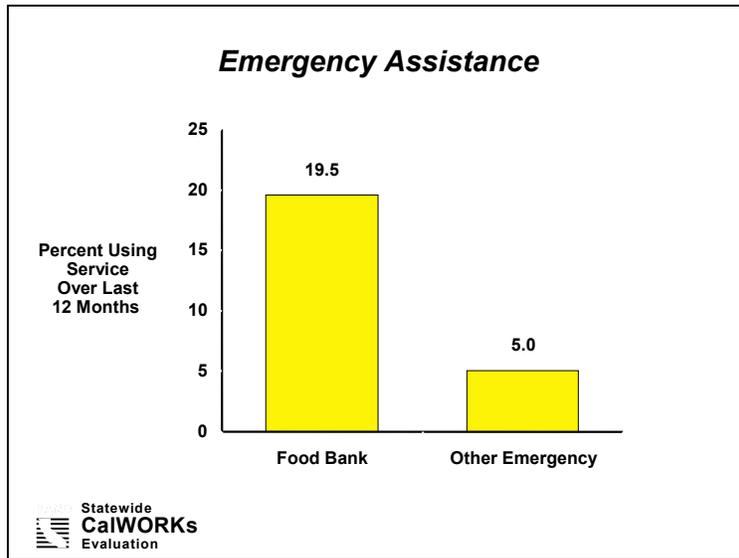
Almost 70 percent of aided respondents live in poor households according to this measure. Another 16 percent live in households that are 30 percent or more above the poverty line. The differences are statistically significant across counties. The variation across counties is shown in Table 1.

**Table 1**  
**Poverty Rates Across Counties For Respondents on Aid (Percent) (n=1904)**

<b>County</b>	<b>Percent of the Poverty Line</b>				
	<b>Less Than 50%</b>	<b>50-70%</b>	<b>70-100%</b>	<b>100-130%</b>	<b>130% or higher</b>
Alameda (n=330)	23	22	18	15	22
Butte (n=374)	20	14	22	21	23
Fresno (n=359)	27	19	26	16	12
Los Angeles (n=326)	22	23	25	15	18
Sacramento (n=289)	20	16	27	18	19
San Diego (n=226)	15	20	24	19	22

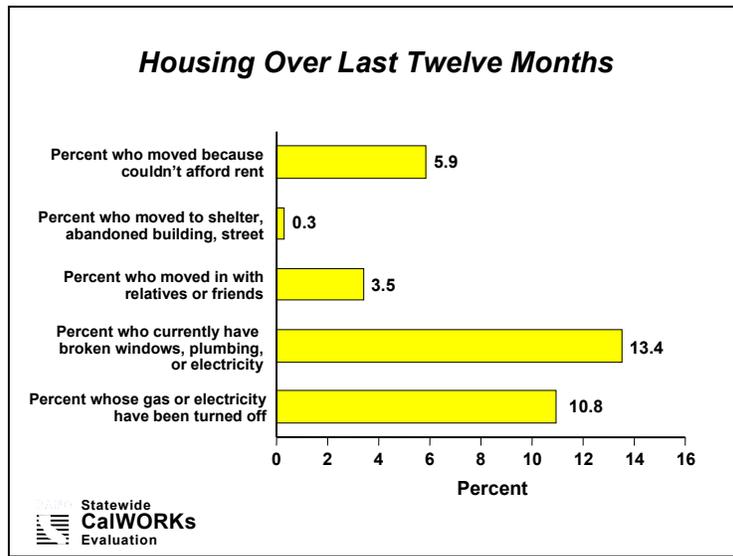


While there is always debate about how to measure poverty threshold, there is less controversy about two components of a family's basic needs: food and shelter. The U.S. Department of Agriculture uses an official concept of food security. We could not include all the required questions due to survey length constraints. Instead, respondents were asked to classify their own food security status by listing how often they or their children miss meals: never, rarely, sometimes, or often. We found that on the whole, hunger was not common (which is not to say it is not higher than many would like). Adults appear to go without food before their children do. Still, a sizeable fraction did report problems with food availability: 17 percent of adults reported sometimes or often going hungry, with the number at 9 percent for children (n=1903). The differences across counties were not statistically significant.



To better understand food insecurity, the survey also asked about the use of food banks and other emergency aid. Almost 20 percent of respondents (n=1903) reported relying on a food bank for food at least once in a 12-month period. This varied significantly across counties, with 24 percent of respondents in Alameda reporting the use of a food bank in the 12 months prior to the interview, 37 percent in Butte, 26 percent in Fresno, 16 percent in Los Angeles, 34 percent in Sacramento, and 24 percent in San Diego. These numbers can also be difficult to interpret, because they combine supply and demand. For example, the fraction using a bank could be low because there was no need or because there were not many food banks to provide help.

A much smaller fraction (n=1903) rely on emergency assistance like clothing, cash, or housing assistance from a church or other aid organization. This, too, varied significantly by county in a statistical sense, with 5 percent of respondents reporting the use of emergency assistance in Alameda, 15 percent in Butte, 7 percent in Fresno, 4 percent in Los Angeles, 8 percent in Sacramento, and 7 percent in San Diego.



One of the fears some observers had about welfare reform prior to its implementation was that it would increase hardship and homelessness. We do not have evidence regarding an increase per se, but we do not find widespread evidence of homelessness in the year prior to the survey. Note, however, that currently, homeless individuals would have been less likely to be located by our field interviewers. We do find sizeable fractions (n=1904) who reported substandard housing (this means plumbing that doesn't work, broken windows, or exposed electrical wires or other electrical problems). This varied significantly by county at a 90 percent confidence interval: Twelve percent reported substandard housing in Alameda; 19 percent, in Butte; 17 percent, in Fresno; 13 percent, in Los Angeles; 16 percent, in Sacramento; and 18 percent, in San Diego. There were also statistically significant differences across counties in the fraction whose utilities had at some point been shut off because they could not pay the bill (n=1903). Overall, 10.8 percent of the sample reported that this had happened, but the fraction varied across the counties: 6 percent in Alameda, 11 percent in Butte, 8 percent in Fresno, 12 percent in Los Angeles, 10 percent in Sacramento, and 6 percent in San Diego.

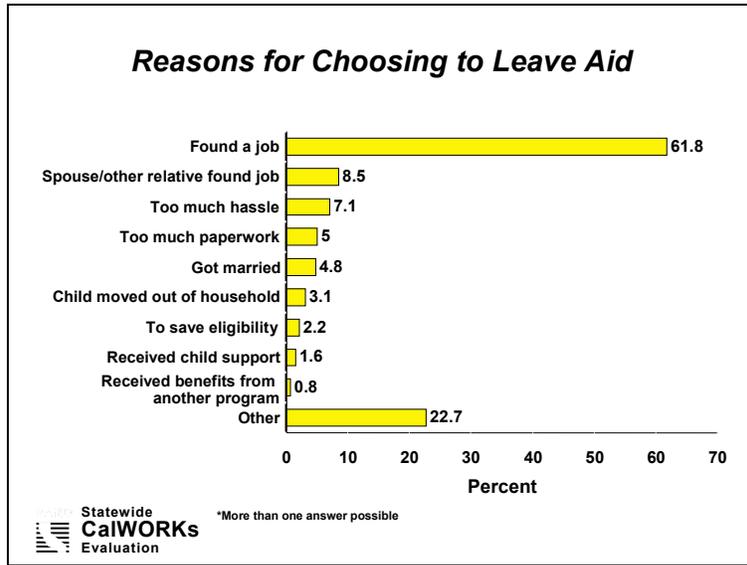
Almost 6 percent moved to a less expensive place to live, and another 3.5 percent moved in with friends and family. The variation across counties was not statistically different. Well under 1 percent reported moving to a homeless shelter, abandoned housing, or the street (n=1904).

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#### **OUTCOMES FOR WELFARE LEAVERS**

At the time of the interviews, 34 percent of respondents (n=1001) were no longer on aid. We turn next to outcomes for these respondents, i.e., welfare leavers.



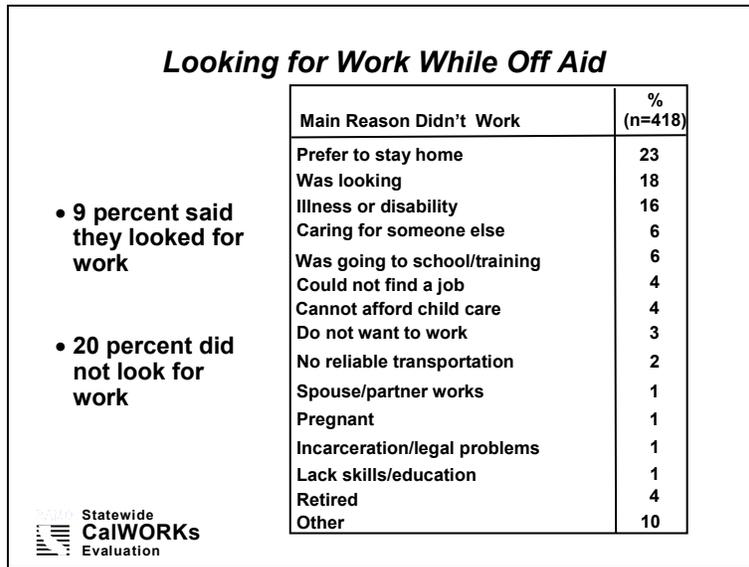
Those who leave welfare are not required to and often do not contact their caseworker upon doing so; thus, administrative data rarely record the reason someone left the rolls. The survey results (n=599) show that a majority left because they found a job, and another 8.5 percent left because their spouses found a job. Few said they leave the rolls because the program was too much of a hassle. More than one answer is possible, so someone could have left because the program was a hassle and, after leaving, found a job; but based on their answers, that appears not to have been a prime motivation. Even fewer mentioned leaving to save their months of eligibility (i.e., preserve time against time limits). The “other reason” category is large, but we do not have any additional information on these respondents.

### ***Employment Characteristics of Leavers***

- **72% of respondents are working of whom**
  - **Average wage: \$8.78**
  - **Average hours: 36.1**
  - **74% worked 32+ hours**
- **Respondents held an average of 1.2 jobs; 13% working at temporary jobs**
- **Average job duration was 1.24 years**
- **In about 53 percent of the cases, the employer offered health insurance**

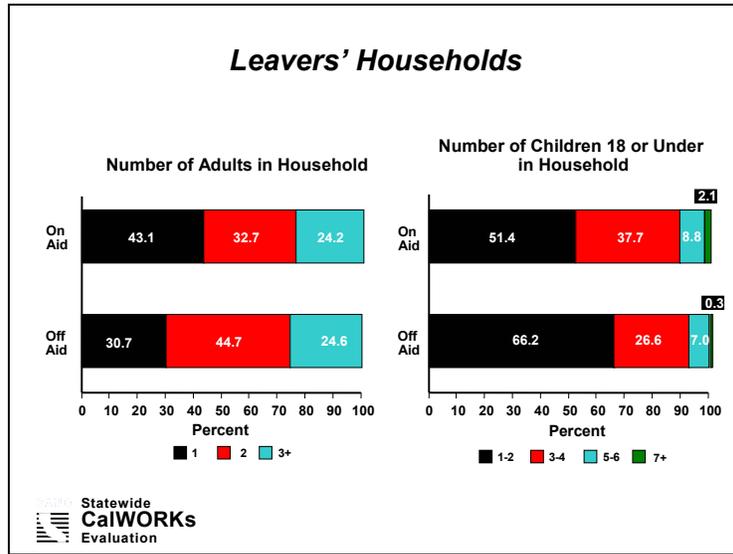


Almost three quarters of leavers (n=989) were working (as opposed to 42 percent of respondents still on aid), earning an average wage of \$8.78 on their main jobs (n=340), well above the minimum wage of \$5.75 in 2000. Three-quarters worked full time (n=608); and, as was true of those still on aid, most held only one job in the month prior to the interview (n=665), with a mean job duration of 1.24 years (n=631) (median job duration was 0.9 years). Over half were offered health insurance from their employer (n=635), though many did not accept the offer. Of those who did not accept, nearly half (42 percent) reported that the plan was too costly, and nearly a quarter reported that they were not eligible or the plan had a waiting period. None of the differences between counties were statistically significant.



Twenty-nine percent of leavers (n=1001) did not work at all in the month prior to the interview. Nine percent of leavers said they looked for work, a fraction that varied significantly by county: Alameda, 5 percent; Butte, 4 percent; Fresno, 13 percent; Los Angeles, 11 percent; Sacramento, 4 percent; and San Diego, 3 percent. Twenty percent of leavers did not work and did not look for work.

The reason most often given for not working is that they preferred to stay home (23 percent), as shown on the right side of the chart. Eighteen percent of nonworking leavers reported looking for work, and another 16 percent reported that an illness or disability prevented them from working. Very few reported that they do not work because their spouses or partners work, though this may be related to why nearly a quarter reported preferring to stay home (n=302). The results were not statistically significant across counties, which given the small sample of nonworking leavers, is not surprising. Across all six counties, only 418 respondents were nonworking leavers. Most leavers (72 percent) were working.



On average, leavers are more likely to have another adult in the household (36 percent reported being married or having a partner) and to have fewer children (n=1904 and n=1883). Both characteristics are commonly associated with shorter durations on aid.

The differences in household size across counties are statistically significant, and are shown in Table 2.

**Table 2**  
**Household Size Across Counties, on Aid Versus off Aid (Percent)**

	One Adult	Two Adults	More Than Two Adults	One-Two Children	Three-Four Children	More Than Four Children
<b>On Aid</b>						
Alameda	59	27	24	61	32	7
Butte	44	44	12	65	30	5
Fresno	43	40	17	53	34	13
Los Angeles	41	31	28	50	39	11
Sacramento	55	34	13	49	40	11
San Diego	41	40	19	51	34	15
<b>Off Aid</b>						
Alameda	40	45	15	68	24	8
Butte	27	59	24	69	25	6
Fresno	25	50	25	69	29	2
Los Angeles	27	44	29	68	24	8
Sacramento	43	46	11	57	38	5
San Diego	38	44	18	62	33	5

### ***Earnings and Income of Leavers***

- **Respondent earnings were \$818 / month, household earnings were \$1,660 / month, and household income was \$2,010 / month**
- **76 percent filed or will file taxes, most of whom used or expect to use EITC**
- **68 percent own a car**
- **On average, they have \$225 in the bank and are \$4,387 in debt (excluding car loans)**



As expected, leavers tend to earn more and have higher income and assets than those still on aid. Leavers' (n=1001) average monthly earnings were \$818; adding in the earnings of other adults in the household brings household earnings to \$1,660 per month. (About a third of leavers reported a spouse or partner in the house. In Butte and Fresno this proportion was higher, almost 50 percent.) Adding in other sources of support brings household income to \$2,010 a month. Most also anticipated filing taxes (n=986) and applying for the EITC (n=667), which would raise household income even further. As we did for those on aid, we estimated average EITC refunds for households with earnings. For leavers, the average was \$1,641, about 75 percent as much as for (lower-earning) welfare recipients.

Some analysts concerned about "pushing" people off the aid rolls hypothesized that some leavers may be worse off than they were while on aid. However, on average, these results show that leavers have higher earnings and higher total income than those on aid. This may change in a recession as layoffs rise, and leavers do not have many assets to fall back on in an emergency. Note also that while our weighting strategy took non-response into account, it may remain true that those we could not locate are worse off on average than those we did locate. (See the Appendix for more detail.) Almost 70 percent of leavers own a car (n=991) worth about \$4,100 on average, and the average debt on car loans was \$2,100. Leavers (n=1001) do not have a

lot of money in the bank (\$225), and on average, they are \$4,387 in debt before taking car loans into account.

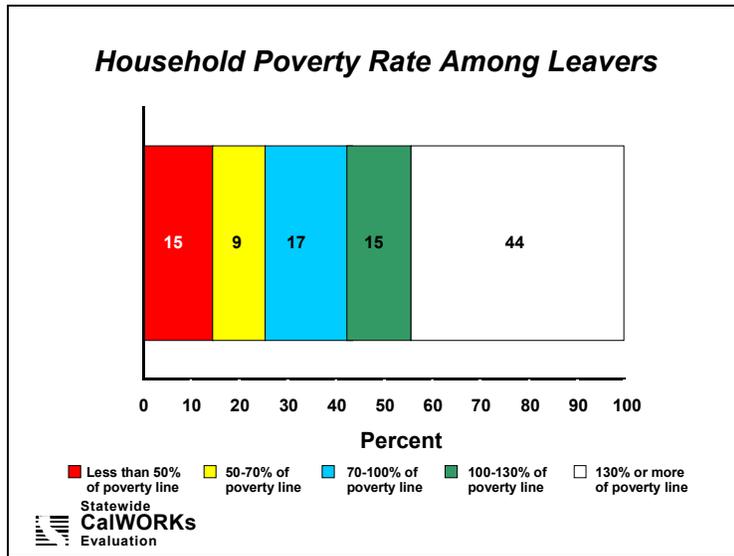
### ***Other Support While Off Aid***

- **72 percent of households receive other government support**
  - Health Insurance: 65%
  - Food Stamps: 14%
  - SSI: 9%
  - Social Security Disability: 8%
  - Unemployment Insurance: 6%
  - Welfare: 5%
- **18 percent receive child support**

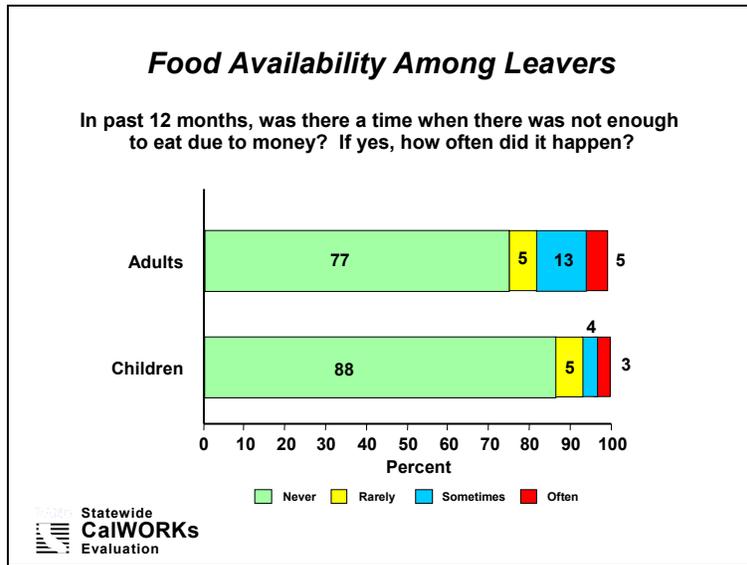


However, leavers are still dependent on government assistance: Seventy-two percent live in households that receive some kind of support (n=992). More specifically, of those who receive other support, 65 percent receive health insurance (n=982) (primarily Medi-Cal, but also Medicare, Healthy Families, and CHAMPUS/VA care or other military plan), 14 percent receive Food Stamps (n=990), and less than 10 percent reported any single other kind of assistance. Among leavers (n=990), 18 percent reported their household receives child support, either directly or through a government collection program. Five percent reported that someone in their household receives welfare payments (n=991).

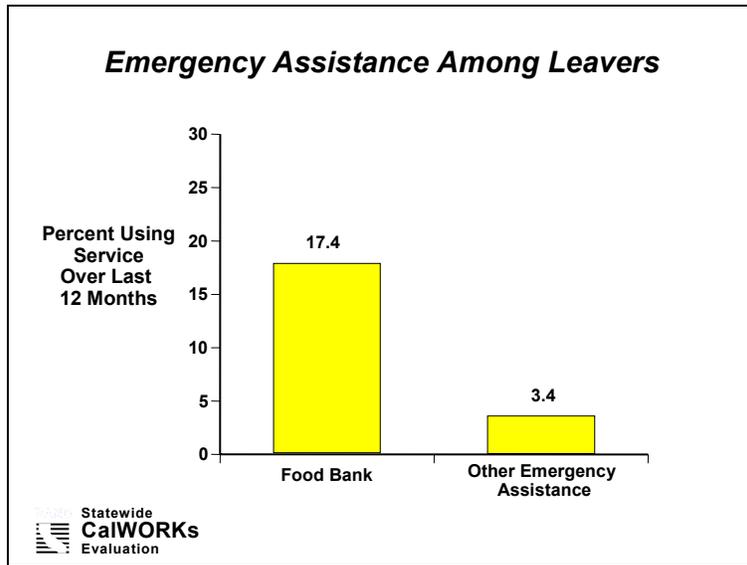
Reliance on government support varied by county: 64 percent in Alameda, 68 percent in Butte, 78 percent in Fresno, 76 percent in Los Angeles, 62 percent in Sacramento, and 64 percent in San Diego. The prevalence of government-provided health insurance also varied by county: 57 percent in Alameda, 62 percent in Butte, 77 percent in Fresno, 67 percent in Los Angeles, 60 percent in Sacramento, and 58 percent in San Diego. Food Stamp take-up did not differ statistically by county; however, child support did: 15 percent in Alameda, 22 percent in Butte, 20 percent in Fresno, 17 percent in Los Angeles, 11 percent in Sacramento, and 23 percent in San Diego.



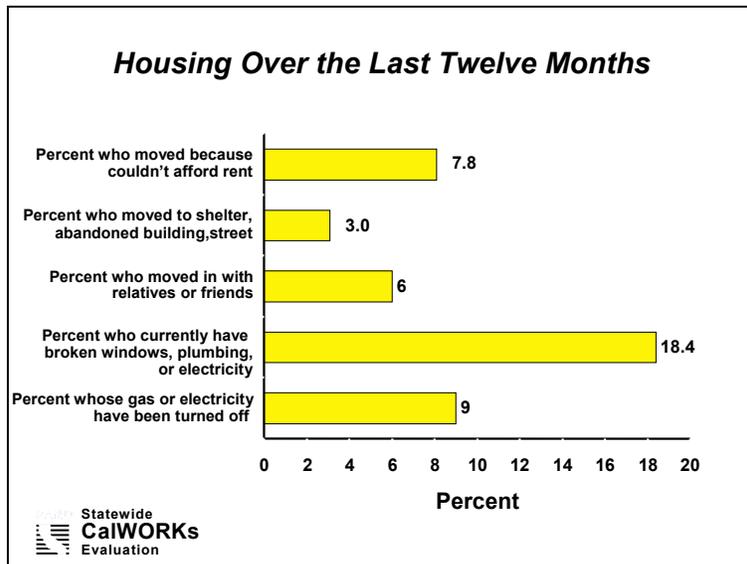
Finally, leaving aid does not mean leaving poverty. Just as we did for those on aid, we measured poverty among leavers' households (n=1001) by comparing household income to the federal poverty guidelines. Forty-two percent of leavers reside in households with income below the poverty line, as opposed to almost 70 percent of those on aid. Unlike for respondents on aid, the differences are not statistically significant at the county level.



The survey also asked about other measures of well-being, such as hunger and housing. The survey asked respondents if over the past 12 months there was a time they did not eat because of a lack of money and, if so, how often did it happen. The percentage of leavers reporting food insecurity is very similar to respondents still on aid. Eighteen percent of leavers still reported food insecurity sometimes or often for adults (n=993) versus 17 percent for aided respondents, and 7 percent reported the same for children (n=992) (9 percent among those on aid). The fractions do not differ significantly by county.



Almost 18 percent of leavers (n=994) have relied on a food bank for food in the previous year, a similar percentage as those on aid reported (19 percent). This was not statistically significant across counties, though it was lowest in San Diego at 16 percent and highest in Butte at 26 percent. Only 3.4 percent (n=994) reported relying on other forms of emergency assistance (versus 5.0 percent of those on aid). This did differ statistically by county: 3 percent in Alameda, 11 percent in Butte, 8 percent in Fresno, 2 percent in Los Angeles, 8 percent in Sacramento, and 4 percent in San Diego.



Leavers reported more housing instability than did respondents still on aid. Eight percent (n=998) reported moving to a less expensive place to live (versus almost 6 percent on aid), and 6 percent (n=1001) reported moving in with relatives or friends (versus under 4 percent on aid). Many more leavers (n=1001) reported homelessness: 3.0 percent versus 0.3 percent of aided respondents. 18 percent (n=997) reported substandard housing and 9 percent (n=997) that their utilities were turned off (versus 13 percent and 11 percent for those on aid). Like the earlier results, these suggest that while most leavers did not report serious housing problems, there is a minority who did.

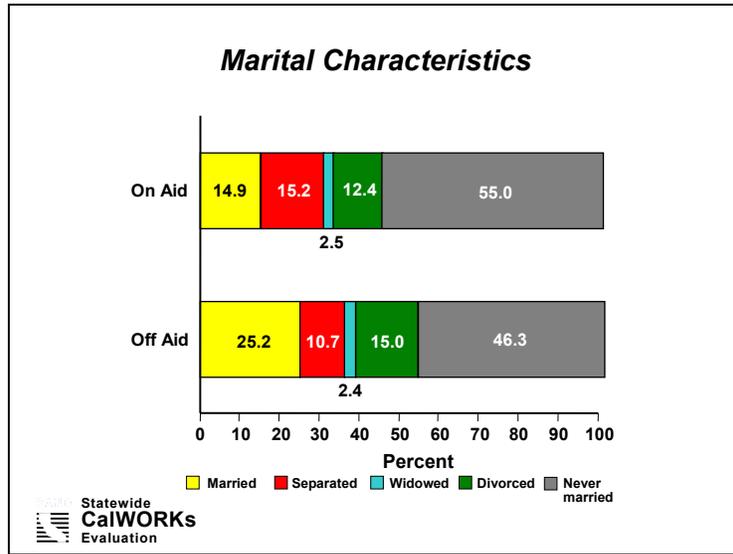
The only statistically significant differences across counties were in substandard housing (broken windows, etc.) and in utility shutoffs. Fourteen percent of leavers in Alameda reported broken windows, plumbing or electricity, 20 percent in Butte, 11 percent in Fresno, 21 percent in Los Angeles, 12 percent in Sacramento, and 15 percent in San Diego. Utility shutoffs were reported by 4 percent of leavers in Alameda, 13 percent in Butte, 7 percent in Fresno, 11 percent in Los Angeles and Sacramento, and 4 percent in San Diego.

### ***Outline***

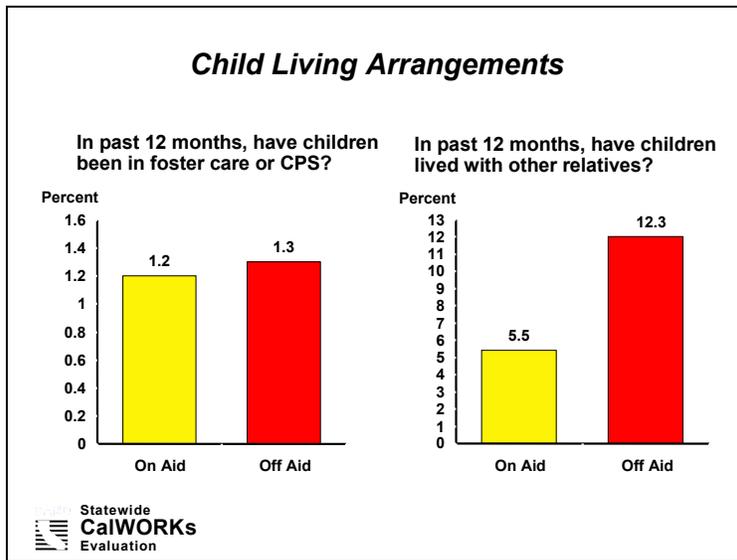
- Survey methods
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### **FAMILY AND CHILD OUTCOMES**

The survey also asked about household structure, child care, various child outcomes, health care, and domestic violence and substance abuse. In this section, we present survey results for these family and child outcomes, for both aided families and leavers.

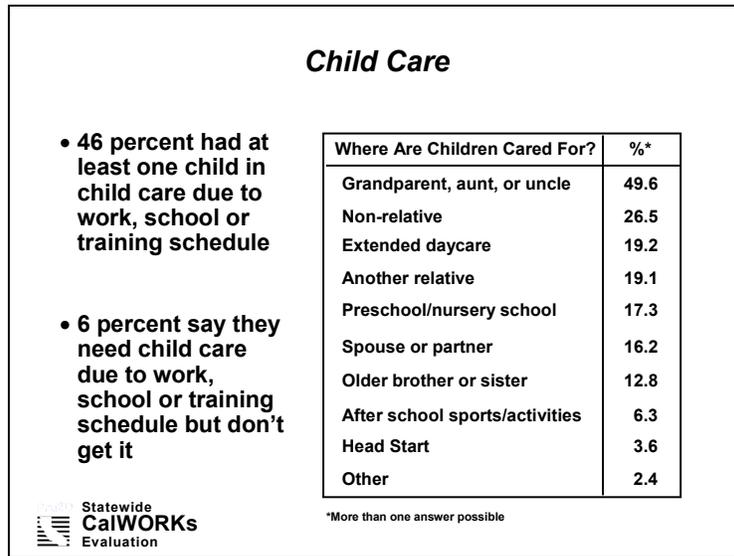


Leavers (n=985) were more likely to be currently married than respondents on aid (n=1900); they were also more likely to have ever been married. The differences across counties are statistically significant. Pooling those on aid and leavers, 16 percent of the respondents in Alameda reported being currently married and 56 reported never having been married. The corresponding percentages in the other counties are 29 percent and 29 percent in Butte, 25 and 47 percent in Fresno, 17 and 56 percent in Los Angeles, 20 and 43 percent in Sacramento, and 23 and 38 percent in San Diego.



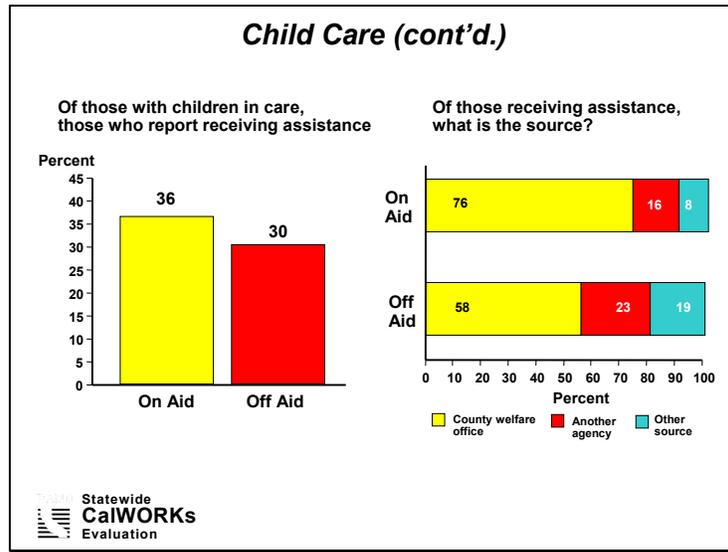
The survey asked about household structure. In addition to recording information about current members of the household, it also asked about children who may not live in the household at the time of the interview. On the order of 1 percent of the sample (n=2793) reported that within the last 12 months their children have been or are now in foster care or involved with child protective services (CPS). These are mostly similar across counties, except for families on aid in San Diego, 4 percent of whom reported a child in foster care or CPS.

Considerably more--12 percent in the case of leavers (n=925)--reported that their children have lived or are living with other relatives. This, too, varies by county only for families on aid: 10 percent in Alameda, 14 percent in Butte, 7 percent in Fresno, 4 percent in Los Angeles, 10 percent in Sacramento, and 11 percent in San Diego.



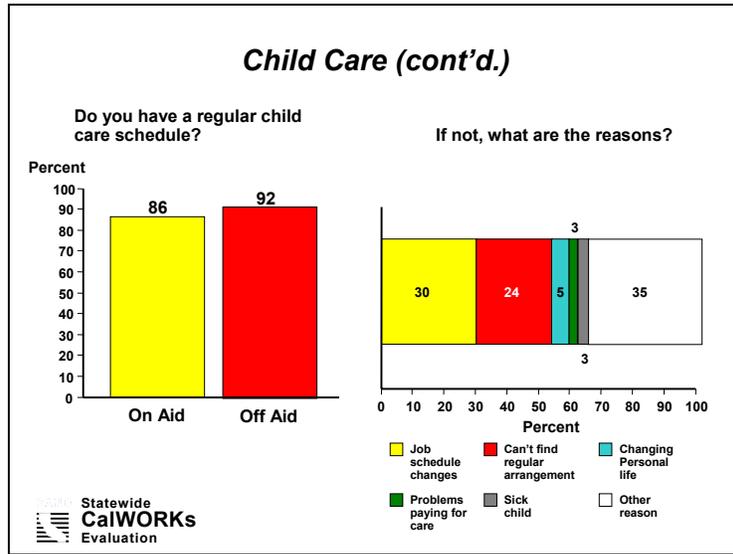
The survey also asked about child care for children living in the home at the time of the interview, but only for child care used while the respondent was at work, in school, or training. Almost half had at least one child in child care (2,066 respondents, n=1847), while another 6 percent said that they needed child care but did not receive it (n=1848). This “needed but did not get” response varies significantly by county: 5 percent in Alameda, 7 percent in Butte, 5 percent in Fresno and Los Angeles, 6 percent in Sacramento, and 9 percent in San Diego.

The column on the right side of the chart (n=1282) indicates that relatives do the bulk of child care. Almost half left their child with a grandparent, aunt, or uncle. (Note the conditional nature of the percentage: Half of the 46 percent of the sample who use child care reported relying on a grandparent, aunt, or uncle.) Nineteen percent reported care from another relative and 16 percent from a spouse or partner. More than one answer is also possible, which means that someone could rely on both a grandmother and spouse. An older sibling provided care for 13 percent of respondents who use child care for work, school, or training. Non-relatives (babysitter, home day care operator, etc.) cared for a child of 27 percent of the sample.

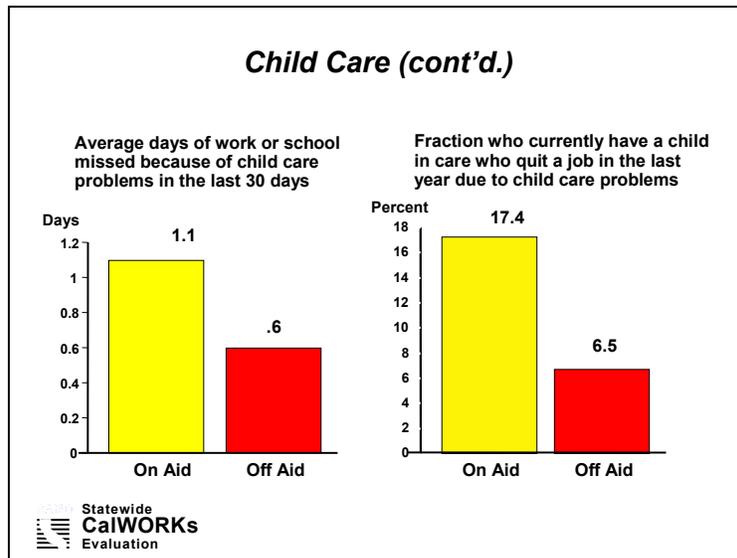


Only about a third of respondents who use child care (n=1273) reported receiving financial assistance for that care, although some respondents may not realize that their child care is subsidized. Nonetheless, given the reliance on relatives for care (perhaps unpaid), this is perhaps not surprising. Moreover, recall that only 46 percent of the sample used child care; thus, one third of 46 percent is about 15 percent of the overall sample. Of those who receive assistance, three-quarters of those on aid and two-thirds of those off aid reported receiving assistance from the county, some from some other agency or from other (nongovernmental) sources. It should be noted that in many counties, child care is contracted out to other agencies or nonprofits, so those receiving child care assistance may not associate the assistance with the county welfare department.

These numbers vary by county. For those on aid, 50 percent of respondents on aid and using child care in Alameda reported receiving assistance, 48 percent in Butte, 36 percent in Fresno, 32 percent in Los Angeles, 51 percent in Sacramento, and 46 percent in San Diego. Among leavers using child care, 39 percent in Alameda reported receiving assistance, 33 percent in Butte, 24 percent in Fresno, 27 percent in Los Angeles, 42 percent in Sacramento, and 38 percent in San Diego.

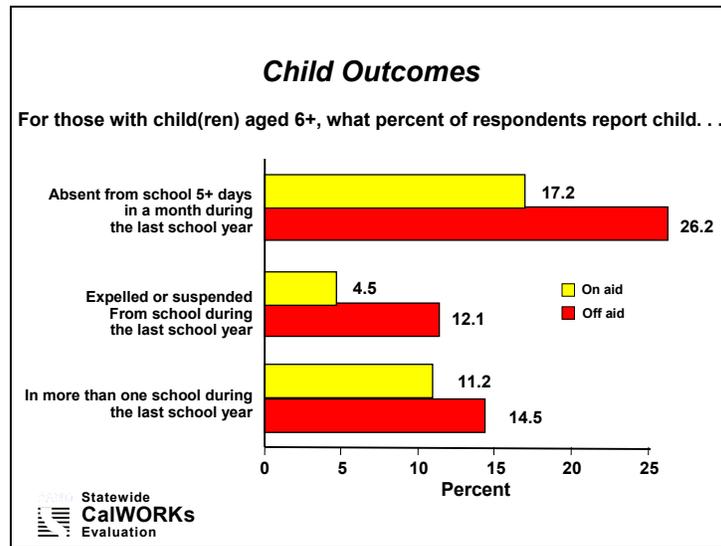


Most parents on and off of aid (n=1279) consider their children to have had a "regular schedule for your children's child care over the past 30 days" (as defined by the respondent; the survey did not define "regular schedule"). Of those who did not have a regular schedule (n=154), job scheduling changes and not being able to find a regular source of care were two of the most common reasons (with unspecified "other" also a large category). That said, this is a small group of people: Only 233 people fall into the category "use child care for work or school and do not have a regular schedule."



On average, respondents who use child care (n=1278) reported missing less than one day of work in the last 30 days because of child care problems. 17.4 percent (n=777) reported quitting a job in the last year because of child care problems, especially among those on aid at the time of the interview.

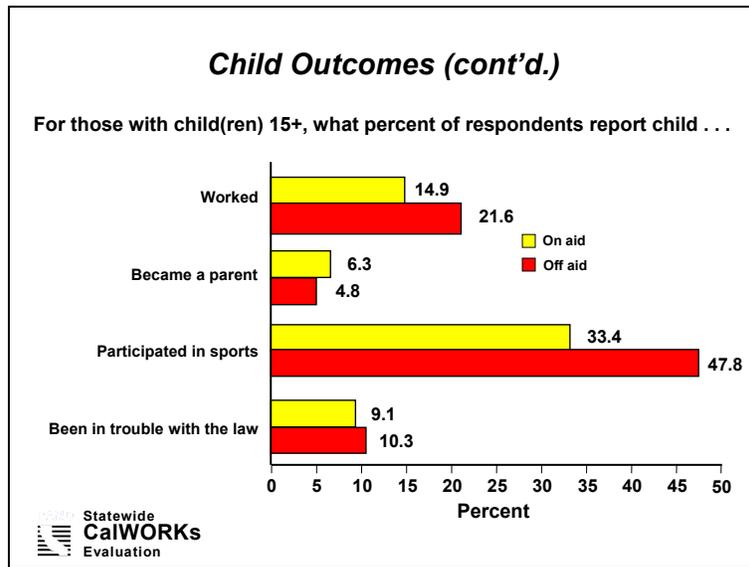
The only statistically significant differences across counties were among leavers who reported having a child currently in care and having quit a job because of child care problems (the rightmost column in the above chart). While the mean overall is 7 percent, the percent varies among the counties as follows: 24 percent in Alameda, 19 percent in Butte, 7 percent in Fresno, 4 percent in Los Angeles, 14 percent in Sacramento, and 7 percent in San Diego.



The survey also asked about other outcomes for children over the age of 6. (Questions are asked of all children, not a specific child.) Many respondents reported that their child or children missed more than 5 days of school in a month during the last school year (n=1491), and a fair number reported having a child who was suspended or expelled during the last school year (n=1495). Finally, a sizeable fraction reported that their child attended more than one school during the year (n=1495), which is not surprising considering the earlier chart that showed how many children lived with relatives in the past year.

Some results were statistically significant across counties. Pooling those on and off aid, 14 percent of respondents in Alameda reported a child who had been expelled or suspended in the last school year, 20 percent in Butte, 14 percent in Fresno, 4 percent in Los Angeles, 13 percent in Sacramento, and 10 percent in San Diego County.

Again pooling those on and off aid, 10 percent of respondents in Alameda reported that a child was in one or more schools during the year, 19 percent in Butte, 18 percent in Fresno, 11 percent in Los Angeles, 18 percent in Sacramento, and 10 percent in San Diego.



The survey asked additional questions about children older than 15.<sup>2</sup> Children of leavers (n=221) were more likely to work than the children of aided respondents (n=437) in the twelve months prior to the survey, less likely to become a parent, more likely to play on a sports team, and were slightly more likely to have been in trouble with the law (although this difference is not statistically significant).

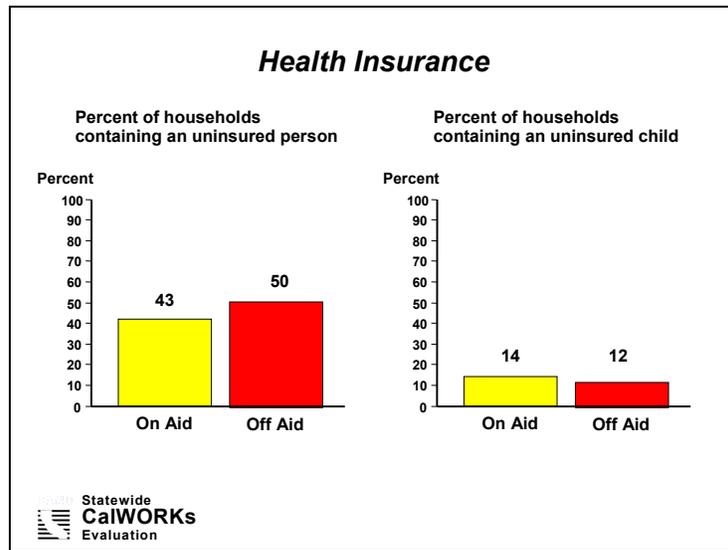
Pooling those on and off aid, 21 percent of respondents in Alameda reported a child who worked during the previous 12 months. In Butte, 25 percent of respondents reported this, 21 percent in Fresno, 13 percent in Los Angeles, 27 percent in Sacramento, and 29 percent in San Diego County.

Respondents' children becoming parents themselves speaks to one of the goals of welfare reform: reducing intergenerational transmission of welfare receipt. We find differences across counties in the extent of parenting at a 90 percent confidence interval, but only for aided respondents: 6 percent in Alameda, 5 percent in Butte, 14 percent in Fresno, 6 percent in Los Angeles, 2 percent in Sacramento, and 0 percent in San Diego.

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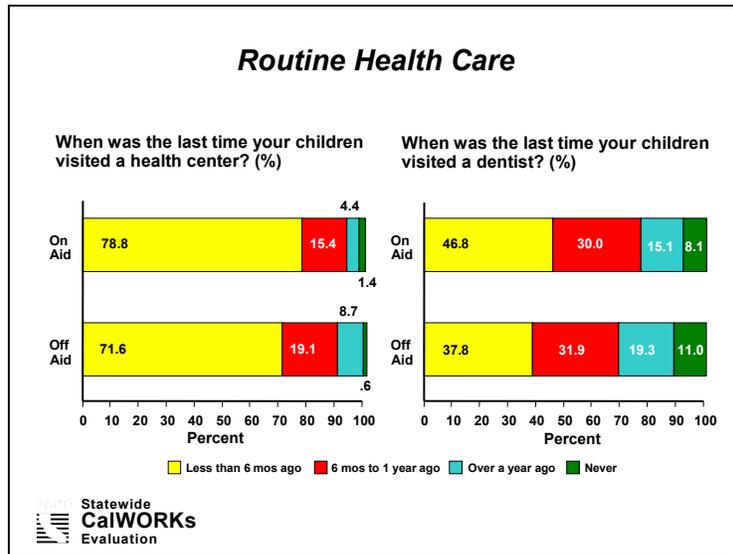
<sup>2</sup>The survey asks respondents to consider their children 10 or older. The analysis looks at families with children 15 or older. If the family has a child aged 10 to 14 and a second child 15 or older, it is possible that the answer to the question applies to the younger child, e.g., a respondent would be asked the question because she has an 14-year-old and a 16-year-old, but it could be that the question applied to the 14-year-old.

Again pooling those on and off aid, 27 percent of respondents in Alameda reported that a child participated in sports, 38 percent in Butte, 39 percent in Fresno, 37 percent in Los Angeles, 47 percent in Sacramento, and 47 percent in San Diego. These differences were statistically significant at a 90 percent confidence interval.

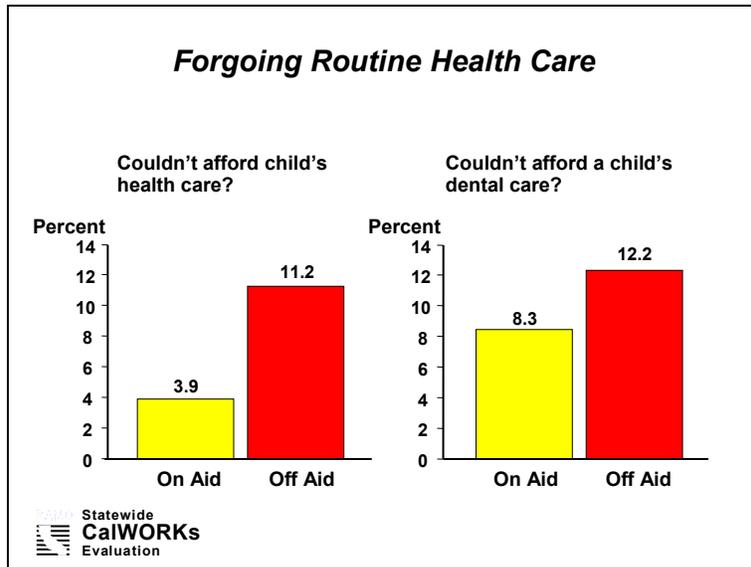


In addition to asking about health, the survey asked about health insurance. This includes not only government-provided insurance but also employer-provided insurance for the respondent and for other persons in the household. The results show that 43 percent of aided respondents (n=1883) live in households in which someone--adult or child--is uninsured. Fifty percent of leavers (n=932) live in households in which someone is uninsured. However, the lack of insurance appears to be largely an adult phenomenon: Only thirteen percent of respondents (n=2622) share a household with an uninsured child.

The counties differ significantly in terms of health insurance. Pooling those on and off aid, 30 percent of respondents in Alameda live in a household with an uninsured adult. The corresponding numbers for the other counties are 31 percent in Butte, 39 percent in Fresno, 49 percent in Los Angeles, 33 percent in Sacramento, and 50 percent in San Diego. Again, pooling those on and off aid, 8 percent of respondents in Alameda live in a household with an uninsured child. The corresponding numbers for the other counties are 6 percent in Butte, 8 percent in Fresno, 15 percent in Los Angeles, 9 percent in Sacramento, and 14 percent in San Diego.



A small fraction of respondents reported that their children had not been to a doctor for routine care (including check-ups and immunizations) in the past year, almost 6 percent of aided respondents (n=1894) and almost 10 percent of leavers (n=976). A much higher fraction reported that their child had not seen a dentist for routine care in the last year or more: 23.2 percent of those on aid (n=1899) and 30.3 percent of leavers (n=976). The fraction of respondents who reported their children had never seen a dentist varies dramatically by county: 13e percent in Alameda, 17 percent in Butte, 14 percent in Fresno, 7 percent in Los Angeles, 4 percent in Sacramento, and 10 percent in San Diego. The numbers are more similar for those off aid: 14 percent in Alameda, 15 percent in Butte, 17 percent in Fresno, 10 percent in Los Angeles, 6 percent in Sacramento, and 14 percent in San Diego.



One explanation for why respondents' children had not seen a doctor or dentist in the last year is lack of money to pay for the care. Despite the fact that aid recipients are on Medi-Cal, 3.9 percent of aided respondents (n=1901) reported forgoing a child's health care because of money, and 8.3 percent (n=1898) reported forgoing dental care. Dental services are covered by Medi-Cal for children under age 21, with a small co-payment of about \$1 to \$5. However, the Medi-Cal Policy Institute reports that only 40 percent of dentists accept Medi-Cal, largely because of low reimbursement rates.<sup>3</sup> Perhaps recipients are having trouble finding a dentist who will accept Medi-Cal. Larger fractions of leavers reported that their child needed medical (n=987) or dental (n=985) care but did not get it because they could not afford it: 11.2 percent reported forgoing medical care and 12.2 percent reported forgoing dental care.

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<sup>3</sup>Medi-Cal Policy Institute, "Medi-Cal and Dental Health Services," Medi-Cal Facts, Number 6, January 1999.

### ***Mental Health and Domestic Violence***

- **In past 12 months, have you had 2+ weeks of feeling sad or depressed?**
  - On aid: 31%
  - Off aid: 32%
- **In past 12 months, has a non-stranger been physically violent towards you?**
  - On aid: 4%
  - Off aid: 5%



Approximately a third of the sample reported (n=2898) having been sad or depressed for two or more weeks over the last year. Pooling those on aid with those off aid, the numbers are fairly similar across counties, except for Butte: 31 percent in Alameda, 43 percent in Butte, 36 percent in Fresno, 31 percent in Los Angeles, 34 percent in Sacramento, and 32 percent in San Diego. (The differences are statistically significant at a 90 percent confidence level.)

Approximately 4 percent of the sample reported (n=2899) having been physically abused by a non-stranger in the past year. Again, pooling those on aid and off aid, 5 percent of respondents in Alameda reported physical abuse, 10 percent in Butte, 7 percent in Fresno, 3 percent in Los Angeles, 8 percent in Sacramento, and 6 percent in San Diego.

***Alcohol and Drug Use in the 12 Months  
Prior to the Interview***

- **63% of respondents responded that they do not drink alcohol**
- **32% of respondents report drinking, but no drinking problems; 2% report two or more problems**
- **7% of respondents reported illegal drug use**
  - **On aid: 6% reported use**
  - **Off aid: 9% reported use**



The survey asked five questions about problems using alcohol, including whether the respondent thought she or he was an excessive drinker, if friends and relatives had complained about her drinking, if she sometimes takes a drink when she first gets up, if she had been told that she had done or said something while drunk that she could not remember, and whether she sometimes felt she needed to cut down on her drinking. Two-thirds of respondents (n=2887) reported that they did not drink, and another third reported no problems with their drinking (i.e., they answered no to all five questions). Only 2 percent reported two or more “yes” answers, the most common of which were not being able to remember things and sometimes feeling the need to cut down on alcohol consumption.

The survey also asked about illegal drug use in the 12 months prior to the interview. The first question asked about using painkillers, sedatives, tranquilizers, or other prescription drugs without a prescription or in a non-prescribed manner. The second question asked about the use of marijuana, methamphetamines, cocaine, LSD, or other drugs. If respondents answered “yes” to either question, they were coded as having answered yes to drug use. The issue is how to treat missing responses; non-response is unlikely to be randomly distributed across drug users and non-drug users, because drug users have an incentive to hide their behavior, especially users who are still under the scrutiny of the welfare system (i.e., who are on aid). Respondents who refused either or both questions were coded as missing (i.e., a person

who stated she does not misuse prescription drugs but refused to answer a question about other controlled substances such as marijuana or LSD would be treated as missing in our calculations. Only 12 people answered one but not both questions. Another 5 answered neither question.) We group these missing responses with the negative drug use responses. Thus, our results are likely to underestimate drug use in two ways, first, by respondents answering untruthfully, and second, by treating some refusals as not reporting drug use (n=2892).

Nonetheless, we find that 7 percent of respondents reported illegal drug use and that this was higher among those off aid (9 percent) than among those on aid (6 percent). (The difference may only be a reporting phenomenon, in that those off aid may have less incentive to hide drug use because they do not report to a welfare caseworker). The fraction reporting illegal drug use varied significantly across counties: 17 percent of respondents in Sacramento County answered "yes" to drug use, 12 percent in Butte, 9 percent in Alameda, 8 percent in Fresno, 7 percent in San Diego, and 4 percent in Los Angeles.

Three percent of the sample reported having received treatment in the last 12 months for drugs or alcohol—2 percent in Alameda, 5 percent in Butte, 3 percent in Fresno, 2 percent in Los Angeles, 4 percent in Sacramento, and 6 percent in San Diego—of whom approximately one-third reported that the welfare office arranged or paid for their treatment.

### III. NEXT STEPS

**Outline**

- Survey methods
- Survey content
  - Knowledge and attitudes toward CalWORKs
  - Activities while on aid
  - Outcomes while on aid
  - Outcomes for welfare leavers
  - Family and child outcomes
- Next steps

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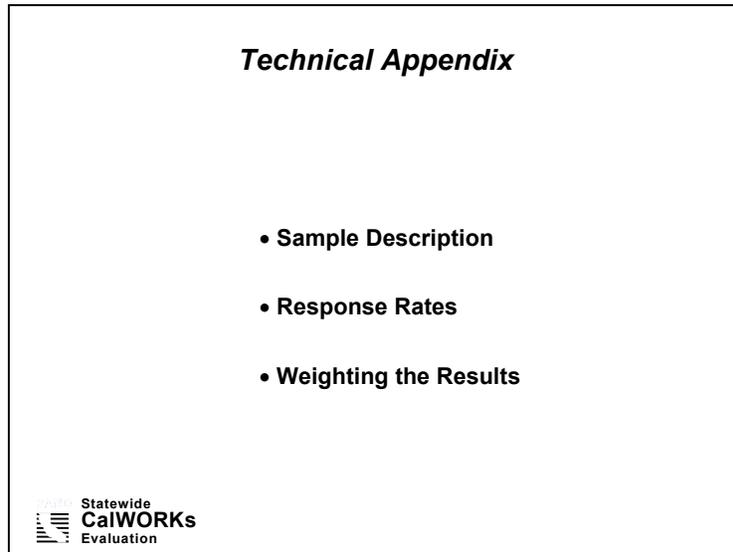
The second wave of the survey, which re-interviewed the same respondents, was fielded beginning in June 2001. Table 3 shows the roll-out dates by county for the second wave in relation to the first wave. The re-interviews were "batched" between June and August, so that respondents we interviewed early in the round-one field period were contacted first. The survey is out of the field and the data are being prepared for analysis. Thus, we will be able to track outcomes not only for those on aid and those off aid, but for those whose status has changed, either because they have recently returned to the aid rolls or because they recently left aid.

**Table 3**  
**Roll-Out of CHSSS**

<b>County</b>	<b>Sample Frame</b>	<b>Baseline Field Period</b>	<b>Follow-up Field Period</b>
Alameda	2/99-1/00	6/00-3/01	6/01-11/01
Butte	2/99-1/00	6/00-3/01	6/01-11/01
Fresno	4/99-3/00	7/00-3/01	6/01-11/01
Los Angeles	2/99-1/00	10/00-3/01	6/01-11/01
Sacramento	2/99-1/00	9/00-3/01	6/01-11/01
San Diego	4/99-3/00	8/00-3/01	6/01-11/01



**TECHNICAL APPENDIX**



**SAMPLE DESCRIPTION**

The survey sample (i.e., those whom we tried to contact) consisted of 4,500 adults who were members of current or former welfare cases in the six counties. We first selected cases, then an adult within a case.

The eligible cases were either Family Group (FG) cases or Unemployed Parents (UP), sampled from the Medi-Cal Eligibility Data System (MEDS); cases were selected from those who were on aid in a 12-month window. We sampled only cases whose language was English or Spanish and which contained an adult. We also oversampled UP cases.

Logistically, we could not field the survey simultaneously in all six counties and so we rolled out the survey over time. Thus, rather than fix a constant sampling frame window, we staggered the sampling window to accommodate updated MEDS and county administrative data. (Serious concerns about our ability to locate respondents using addresses from less-than-current administrative data records led us to use the most up-to-date data possible.) The 12-month window, or “sample frame,” in each county was listed in Table 3, as is the period over which we fielded the survey.

Regardless of how many months cases were on aid during that window, they only appear once on the sample frame (i.e., the probability of selection

was independent of the number of months on aid during the window). Cases that split or merged over the 12-month window were listed separately if both were on aid in the relevant window, so that either or both could be sampled. We ignored the fact that someone may have received aid in two (or more) counties (e.g., both Butte and Sacramento) within a 12-month period and so could possibly appear in our sample twice.

After selecting a case, we identified a person to interview, looking for the main caregiver of the child receiving aid. We used county administrative data to select the oldest female payee between the ages of 18 and 58. If there was no such payee, we selected (in order) the oldest female between 18 and 58, the oldest male payee 18-58, the oldest male 18-58, or the payee regardless of age (usually a grandparent).

Actual interviewing proceeded by a mixed-mode approach. Respondents were first contacted by phone. If we could not conduct a phone interview in up to 10 tries (usually because we could not reach the sampled individual by phone, not because they refused once we contacted them), we attempted an in-person interview. On average, the interview lasted an hour.

<b>Category</b>	<b>Response Rate (%)</b>
<b>Overall</b>	<b>64.7</b> <b>(2,905 completed interviews)</b>
<b>Open Case</b>	<b>69</b>
<b>Closed Case</b>	<b>50</b>
<b>FG Case</b>	<b>63</b>
<b>UP Case</b>	<b>68</b>
<b>Alameda</b>	<b>67</b>
<b>Butte</b>	<b>72</b>
<b>Fresno</b>	<b>70</b>
<b>Los Angeles</b>	<b>60</b>
<b>Sacramento</b>	<b>56</b>
<b>San Diego</b>	<b>62</b>

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**RESPONSE RATES**

As shown in top of the above chart, we achieved an overall response rate of 64.7 percent, with 2,905 completed interviews. (Although we sampled 4,500 cases, we excluded seven cases because of poor administrative data, such as a case from MEDS that disappeared when more up-to-date MEDS data files were used.)

As shown in the middle of the above chart, our response rate for open cases was higher than for closed cases, perhaps because open cases (i.e., cases still on aid) tended to have more up-to-date contact information in the administrative data. The most serious issue we faced was not in the interviewee’s willingness to complete the survey (only 147 of those located refused to participate, 3.3 percent of the initial sample), but in locating the sample members in the first place (1,269 cases, 28.2 percent of the initial sample). The response rate for FG and UP cases was fairly similar.

The county response rates, shown in the bottom half of the chart, differed largely because of hurdles we encountered in fielding the survey in different counties. In Los Angeles and Sacramento counties, we experienced delays in obtaining county assurance that survey information would be used for research purposes only (in particular, that survey responses could not be used in prosecutions for fraud). In Los Angeles, our access to additional data was limited. In Sacramento, we never received such assurances; thus, we

did not use any information from county files to obtain more up-to-date locating information. The combination of a late start and older data lowered response rates in these counties relative to the others.

### ***Household Survey: Weighting the Results***

- **The basic sampling weight is simply the inverse of the initial overall selection probability**
- **This is composed of three parts:**
  - **The likelihood a sampling unit is selected**
  - **The likelihood a cluster is chosen**
  - **The likelihood that a particular person in the cluster is sampled**



#### **WEIGHTING THE RESULTS**

The tabulations reported throughout this report are weighted. The basic sampling weight equals the inverse of the overall selection probability. This overall selection probability is composed of three parts: the likelihood a sampling unit is selected, the likelihood a cluster is chosen, and the likelihood that a particular person in the cluster is sampled. The sampling weight accounts for the UP oversample; when the data are pooled, counties are weighted proportional to the size of their caseloads. Thus, our tabulations are representative of the total English- or Spanish-speaking caseload in the six focus counties.

To sample cases, we first grouped the cases in each county into clusters based on last known zip code *while on aid in the county*. We then randomly selected from among these clusters of zip codes. Cases were then sampled based on their last known address in the 12-month sample window. Our intent was to reduce the amount of time an interviewer would have to travel between interviews, thus reducing survey costs. We attempted to interview people who moved out of a cluster (or county or state, for that matter), regardless of their current address.

### ***Household Survey: Weighting the Results***

- **Cluster size was set at a minimum of 120 cases**
- **Clusters were assigned sampling units based on their size**
- **Next, sampling units were selected at random**
- **Cases were then selected at random within clusters**



We wanted to sample 750 cases per county, with UP cases oversampled by a factor of two. At the time the sample was drawn, UP cases were 17 percent of the state's CalWORKs caseload, which implied choosing 510 FG cases and 240 UP cases in each county. Rather than grouping cases into clusters separately by UP and FG, we chose a minimum cluster size of 120 so that a cluster would have enough UP cases, assuming a 72 percent response rate and taking into account the poor quality of language coding in the MEDS data: Some cases on the sample list would turn out to be ineligible for an interview and would need to be replaced with an eligible case. (The MEDS code "English" can mean that *someone* in the household can talk to the caseworker in English, not that the person we wanted to interview speaks English.)

The next step was to determine the number of cases per zip code (last known zip code inside the county, based on the MEDS address). Zip codes with fewer than 120 cases were combined with the nearest zip code in the county (geographic proximity) that also had at least one case, until the cluster had at least 120 cases.

When every cluster had at least 120 cases, we assigned sampling probabilities to each. Clusters with 120 to 239 cases were assigned 1 sampling unit. Clusters with  $n$  cases, where  $n$  is some number above 239, were assigned a sampling unit of  $n/120$ , rounded down to the nearest whole number. We then selected 30 sampling units proportional to size. Within clusters, we

then randomly sampled cases separately by aid type, selecting 8 cases at random from the UP caseload, and 17 FG cases.

### ***Household Survey: Weighting the Results***

- The non-response adjustment is designed to reduce biases due to differential response rates among population groups
- We use regressions to estimate who responded to the survey
- We then stratify the scores into deciles and assign weights to respondents to account for non-respondents allocated to the same cell
- The regressions employ administrative data on:
  - Welfare use
  - Employment
  - Demographics (sex, age, race, number of children, etc.)



It is straightforward to design weights that take this sample design into account. However, these weights would not take into account the fact that--conditional on being sampled--some people are systematically less likely to be interviewed (e.g., closed cases, for whom address and telephone information in county welfare department files is more likely to be out of date), and that their non-response introduces bias into survey estimates. Because we sampled from administrative data, we have information on non-respondents, which we can use to augment the sample design weights and reduce biases resulting from differential response rates among population groups.

We have monthly data on welfare receipt and case characteristics from MEDS. We also have quarterly data on earnings from the Employment Development Department (EDD). We model non-response using an unweighted logistic regression of responses (yes/no) on sex, age, race, aid code (FG or UP), number of children in the household, number of adults in the household, months on aid since 1992, number of episodes on aid since 1992, whether on aid at the time of the interview period,<sup>4</sup> employment history over the last year and over five years, earnings history over the last year and three years, and county.

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<sup>4</sup>We cannot use interview date as our cutoff for calculating periods, because non-respondents do not have one, so we used the 1st quarter of interviewing by county (e.g., the third quarter 2000 for Fresno, Sacramento and San Diego).

We use the regressions to estimate propensity scores (probability of responding to the survey) for respondents and non-respondents. We then stratify the scores into deciles and assign weights to respondents that account for non-respondents allocated to the same decile.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup>See Roderick J. A. Little and Donald Rubin, *Statistical Analysis with Missing Data*. New York: Wiley and Sons, Inc. 1987, pp. 57-58.

### ***Household Survey: Weighting the Results***

- **The final weight is the product of the sampling weight and the non-response adjustment**
- **When the data are pooled, counties are weighted proportional to the size of their caseloads**
- **The results apply only to the six counties sampled, not the entire state**



The final weight is the product of the sampling weight and this non-response adjustment. We also scale the weights so that their sum equals 4,500, preserving the proportional sizes of the counties. Most of the results we present here pool the counties. Thus, because the caseload in Los Angeles is much higher, Los Angeles County receives more weight than does Butte County.

We report county differences only when there are statistically significant differences across counties at a 95 or 90 percent confidence level,<sup>6</sup> using the Cochran-Mantel-Haenszel statistic to assess raw mean score differences. Finally, note that these results are representative only of the six counties we sampled, not of the entire state.

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<sup>6</sup> Reported county differences are significant at the 95 percent level unless otherwise noted to be at a 90 percent level.

**Sample Summary Statistics**

Category	Statistics		
	Unweighted	Weighted (1)	Weighted (2)
Average education	11 years	11 years	11 years
Percent on aid	65.5%	69.8%	65.6%
Married	29%	19%	18%
Sep./widow./div.	29%	30%	29%
Never married	41%	51%	52%
White	32%	19%	18%
Black	21%	23%	25%
Hispanic	34%	47%	45%
Asian	3%	3%	4%
Other race	10%	9%	9%

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The first column of numbers shows the sample statistics when no weights are applied (not even for the sample design). The second column shows averages for the sample after the sample design weights have been applied. As shown on the above chart, applying the weights does not affect average education, and the effect on the fraction of the sample on aid is not large. However, it does change the marital status distribution somewhat, placing less weight on married respondents and more on never-married respondents. This was to be expected given our oversample of UP (i.e., married) cases. It also changed the racial distribution somewhat, again as expected, as pooling the counties and scaling for county caseload size places more weight on Los Angeles County, which, in turn, has a higher fraction of Hispanic families on aid than some of the other counties.

The third column shows averages for the sample after the non-response weights have also been applied, in other words, our final weights. As expected, the fraction on aid declines: Our response rate was higher for persons on aid (for whom administrative data contained a current address, making them easier to locate), in this case exactly undoing the first set of weights. The other sample characteristics did not change much.