Family Economic Well-Being Following the 1996 Welfare Reform: Trend Data from Five Non-Experimental Panel Studies

Abstract

This analysis summarizes trends in family economic well-being from five non-experimental, longitudinal welfare-to-work studies launched following the passage of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 (PRWORA). The studies include a sizable group of parents and other caregivers who received TANF at the point of sample selection or shortly thereafter, and share a wide range of similar measures of economic well-being. This analysis provides descriptive information on how these families are faring over time. Our results confirm what has been found by previous studies. Many families remain dependent on public benefits, and are either poor or near-poor, despite gains in some indicators of economic well-being. We caution that these aggregate statistics may mask important heterogeneity among families.

The full article is available at www.sciencedirect.com, Children and Youth Services Review. 29(6): 698-720.