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Welfare Reform: Implications for Professional Development in Social Work

Ronald K. Green, JD, and Richard L. Edwards, PhD

Introduction

To quote from Bob Dylan's 1960s anthem, "the times they are a changin'." For those involved in providing social work education and professional development or training activities in the human services arena, the so-called "devolution revolution" and recent welfare reform legislation have dramatically altered the landscape. Clearly, we have entered a new era where changes in funding patterns and locus of control mean social work education and professional development programs must find ways to adapt to the new realities if they are to take advantage of the opportunities presented by these new times.

The devolution revolution refers to the shifting of many responsibilities away from the federal government to state and local levels of government (Nathan, 1995). Involved in this shift is "the decentralization of service control; the geographic and demographic 'localizing' of the provision of services; and, usually, greater consumer sovereignty through providing consumers with more choices" (Cooke, Reid, & Edwards, 1997, p. 233). The devolution revolution concept was, to a large extent, reflected in many provisions of the Republican Party's "Contract With America" (House Republican Conference, 1994). Subsequently, the devolution revolution term was frequently used during the 1996 election campaigns by both the Republican and Democratic candidates for President. To a large extent, the devolution revolution can be seen as a response by political leaders of both major parties "to a common set of economic and social forces and assumptions that are driving them to seek solutions to the federal budget deficit, rampant increases in expenditures for various entitlement programs, and decades of growth in federal regulations that affect almost every aspect of Americans' lives" (Edwards, Cooke, & Reid, 1996, p. 469).

The devolution revolution is, in many respects, the philosophical underpinning for the welfare reform effort that led to the passage of The Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996. Passed by Congress and signed into law by President Clinton, this law dramatically changed public welfare programming in the United States by eliminating the entitlement basis for many services, as well as by giving the states more policy and management responsibilities. What was formerly the Aid to Families With Dependent Children (AFDC) program has been replaced with a program called Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF). However, the legislation also included a reduction in federal funding to the states.

As a result of the welfare reform legislation, state and local government units must redesign their local human services infrastructures and delivery systems (Cooke, Reid, & Edwards, 1997). However, the changes wrought by the welfare reform legislation, while certainly very significant and far-reaching, were not quite as dramatic as they might at first glance appear. In fact, many of the changes embodied in the welfare reform legislation were already taking place in a number of states as a result of waiver requests. In addition, in some states, other changes were taking place as a result of judicial consent decrees. It is also important to bear in mind that the welfare reform legislation did not affect all federal human services programs. Title IV-E, for example, continues as an entitlement program.

While the full force of welfare reform is yet to be felt, it is clear that we are in a period characterized by a great lack of clarity. The impact of such features as time limits and an emphasis on employment of recipients is yet to be seen, as are the implications of the fact that eligibility for so many other federal programs was tied to eligibility for

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ethics, human rights recognition, and training are of particular interest as governments engage in social planning and formulate social policies. We will encourage scholarly articles as a medium for such an exchange of ideas and experiences.

This is a new experience for us, here at the Center for Social Policy and Community Development at Temple University, and we are heaving a collective sigh for having gotten out Volume One, Number One. We have learned much and have come to appreciate the enormous task involved in the publication of such a journal as this. I am grateful to the staff of CSPCD and especially to Rebecca Thomas who labored with me in the darkness of journal publication. I am happy to report there is a bit of light at the end of Volume One.

The task of publication was made easier because of the preceding work of Thomas Kenny of the State University of New York, Albany, who had the vision to publish the journal under the original title of *Journal of Continuing Social Work Education*. His energy, along with the support of the National Association of Continuing Education Directors paved the way for this new effort. To all members of the prior editorial board, we give thanks from this new enterprise.

I want to applaud the members of our new editorial board, Paul Campbell, Nancy Dickinson, Ronald Green, Michael Kelly, and Raymond Meyers, who reviewed articles at short notice and provided vision, support, and enthusiasm to spur this publication forward. I feel fortunate to have so many talented colleagues help advance the journal's excellence. Thanks also to Albert E. Wilkerson, Professor Emeritus, School of Social Administration at Temple and Assistant Editor of *Administration in Social Work*, who lent his skill and wisdom and youthful vigor which inspired us all. Finally, special thanks to Curt Leonard, Dean of the School of Social Administration, who was most supportive of the publishing opportunity.

We are certain that the rising of this phoenix out of the ashes will bring you the latest developments and research in the social work profession. We invite educators and practitioners to participate in the on-going dialogue by submitting articles and letters to the editor. Your willingness to help by volunteering for the Editorial Advisory Board and by promoting the journal in your agency or college is most appreciated. Most important, to all of us who are about this enterprise, is that you read the journal and let us know your take on it.

Welcome to Professional Development.

welfare entitlements. Further, the welfare reform legislation is being implemented when our nation is in a situation of relative prosperity. Virtually every state is currently experiencing a surplus of revenues over expenditures, and it appears the federal government also may have at least a small surplus this year. A full employment scenario characterizes our economy, and many employers simply cannot hire enough people to meet their labor force needs.

However, there are many things we simply do not know at this time. For example, we do not know what will happen when our economy takes a downturn, as it almost surely must. And, we do not know what will be the real impact when welfare time limits begin to be applied to large numbers of recipients.

What we do know is that social work education and professional development programs are being confronted with some major challenges. Among these are the following:

- the shift to block grant funding erodes set-asides for training, thus eliminating some of the incentives for states to provide training;
- changes in funding mechanisms reduce the advantages of public universities as providers;
- the demands for accountability are increased, with a greater emphasis on outcome-based measurements; and
- the states will have less money, which, among other things, will likely result in increased concerns about administrative costs associated with training activities.

Given the challenges currently confronting social work education and professional development programs, it is useful to keep in mind that such programs have previously experienced both highs and lows. For example, in the mid- to late-1970s social work professional development programs across the country greatly expanded the scope of their activities due to the availability of Title XX training funds. In contrast, many of those same professional development programs suffered when Congress placed limits on Title XX training funds in 1979 and subsequently when the Reagan administration took steps that further reduced the availability of training funds. Yet, those professional development programs that were creative and adaptable were able to survive. The same is likely to be true now for those programs that are able to seize the opportunities inherent in the current welfare reform situation and develop creative responses.

Overview of the Welfare Reform "Milieu"

The recent rush to reform basic elements of the federal financial assistance support programs for children and families, which have been in place since the mid-1930s, appears to be driven by the convergence of at least six factors in our socio-political environment. These factors include the following:

- resurgence of a belief in the Protestant Ethic (Weber, 1958) and Social Darwinism (Sumner, 1940);
- an increase in a "blame the victim" (Ryan, 1971) and Theory X (McGregor, 1960) attitude toward welfare recipients;
- a focus on "family values" as interpreted by the religious right;
- a rise in anti-government sentiment;
- the strengthening of a focus on outcomes and "bottom lines"; and
- an increasingly xenophobic or anti-foreigner attitude.

Separately, and in combination, each of the factors identified above has resulted in changes in the statutory and programmatic elements of Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC), now replaced by Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF). The major practice paradigm shifts represented by these changes create significant challenges for social work education generally and for the professional development field, in particular. Thousands of staff who have been working in positions related to the AFDC program at the county, state, and federal levels, and any new staff coming into the field, will have to be prepared for a significantly different

kind of practice. The effects of the socio-political context on statutory and program changes and the resultant changes in needed staff competencies are summarized in Figure 1.

Shifts in the Socio-Political Environment

While many of the factors in the socio-political environment that influenced and helped to shape the current welfare reform legislation and programs are not especially new, they appear to have gained much wider public acceptance following the election of Ronald Reagan in 1980. Richan (1983) suggests that the particular brand of new federalism promoted by Reagan included not only the devolving of planning and administrative responsibility to the state and local levels, but also the major financial burden along with it, with Reagan proposing that the private sector should step up and deal with the fiscal need.

Richan further suggests that "the ...fundamental principle guiding the president (Reagan) is that of unvarnished Social Darwinism," and that the two major underlying principles are the value of "local autonomy, and primary reliance on entrepreneurship for the provision of services" (p. 11). The concept of Social Darwinism goes hand in hand with the concept of the Protestant Ethic, which suggests that industriousness resulting in wealth is an indication of a person's inherent value by the Supreme Being. Over the last two decades, we have witnessed a sharply increased valuing by the body politic of industriousness that results in sufficient income to enable one to be "independent" as opposed to a public "charge."

A second set of factors impacting the shape of welfare reform is what appears to be a combination of a "blaming the victim" attitude (Ryan, 1971) with a "Theory X" view (McGregor, 1960) toward those who are unemployed and/or living in poverty. These concepts are quite compatible with the first set discussed in that they tend to place a moral value on the ability to generate income. A person who is in poverty, it is felt, must be there due to flaws in character, and that most people, if given a chance, would choose slothfulness over industriousness. These views suggest that a person who either is not working or is earning insufficient income to support himself or herself must be forced to work.

Figure 1 — Effects of the Socio-Political Context

Socio-political context	Statutory/Program Changes	Implications for Professional Development
Protestant Ethic/Social Darwinism	Work Requirements	Job Placement Skills, Psychosocial Motivation, Case Management, Concrete Services (child care, transportation, health care, etc.)
Blame the Victim/Theory X Mentality	Time Limits	Use of Authority, Tough Love
Family Values	Sanctions for Illegitimacy, Child Support Enforcement	Use of Authority, Tough Love
Anti-Government Sentiment	Devolution, Block Grants, Privatization	Contract Management Skills, Locality-Oriented Policy Practice
Outcome Focus	Performance-based Outcome Measures (% of clients to be working, % who can exceed time limits, etc.)	Performance Contracting, Establishing and Measuring Outcome Measures, Performance-based Evaluation
Anti-Foreigner Attitude	Foreigners Ineligible for Benefits	Necessity for Development of New Resources, Need for Bilingual Materials and Cultural Competence

A third factor influencing welfare reform is the ascendance of the definition of "family values" as promulgated by the religious right. These views place a high value on the "traditional" family, i.e., a family composed of a married husband and wife and their children. Illegitimacy, especially that which leads to public dependency, is viewed as completely unacceptable, and it is believed that legislators must remove any policies which are believed to encourage it. Aligned with this view is the belief that an individual's behavior is essentially the result of conscious decisions and that, by establishing limits and sanctions, behavior can be "shaped" to meet the values of those establishing the policies affecting those who need to bring their actions into line.

A fourth socio-political factor is the ascendance of an anti-government sentiment. Frequently, we hear such statements as "the less government, the better," "let's get government out of our lives," or "shift the control to the local level where people really know what's needed." There is a clear convergence between this belief system and the individualism found in the Protestant Ethic and Social Darwinism. The major role of government is viewed as guaranteeing a positive environment in which the individual entrepreneur can be successful and prosper. The intrusive role of government is accepted in those cases where the end result is viewed as shaping people's behavior in a way that will lessen public dependency.

A fifth factor is the strong emergence of the call for public accountability, with a focus on outcomes and "bottom lines." After several decades of discussion and demonstration regarding how to hold public welfare systems accountable, there now appears to be a general acceptance that there must be greater clarity as to what are the goals and objectives of social programs and a system of holding agencies accountable for meeting these. We now see a greater acceptance of sets of incentives and sanctions being applied to achieving program outcomes and a concomitant shifting of the risk of failure to meet established outcomes from the federal to the local levels of government.

A final factor in the socio-political environment is the re-emergence of a strong anti-foreigner attitude that is increasingly influencing the shape of social policies. With significant increases in immigration from Asia and Latin America, along with high birth rates of Hispanic Americans, it would appear that the historic Anglo-American privilege is being threatened. In response to this concern, as in other periods in our history, the body politic is accepting of sharp reductions in anything that is viewed as a social benefit for foreigners.

Statutory and Programmatic Changes Emerging from this New Environment

Specific statutory and programmatic changes in our public welfare system can be attributed to each of the six socio-political factors delineated above. It appears that the convergence of all these factors has produced the significant degree of support at both federal and state levels for the major change elements of welfare reform that have been put in place. This suggests that these changes are not likely to be transitional. Rather, they appear to represent a major shift in the public welfare practice paradigm to which social work educators and professional development professionals will be forced to respond over the long term.

The following welfare reform changes can be found both in the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 (P.L. 104-193) and in many of the state welfare reform demonstration projects operating under waivers granted by the U. S. Department of Health and Human Services. Grounded in the Protestant Ethic and Social Darwinism, the major focus in all these programs is one that will result in welfare recipients becoming gainfully employed. This uncompromising work requirement is at the heart of welfare reform. The role of public welfare now is clearly one of reducing public dependency rather than supporting it. With the basically negative view (blame the victim/Theory X) of the welfare client, all programs include stringent time limits, both periodic

and lifetime, on the client's ability to draw public assistance. The majority of programs include sanctions for illegitimacy and teen pregnancy and increased sanctions related to child support enforcement (family values).

A major impact of the anti-government feeling is seen in the devolution of the federal role in public welfare with the related utilization of block grants and the privatization of services. Devolution includes the concept of the federal government giving much greater discretion to the states and simultaneously significantly reducing its oversight of program implementation by the states (Videka-Sherman & Viggiani, 1996).

The devolution of the former welfare entitlements, coming in the midst of a federal cost cutting and budget-balancing frenzy, is a natural to be impacted by a focus on programmatic outcomes. The result is a range of outcome measurement requirements falling on the states, such as a specific percentage of the state welfare caseload to be in gainful employment within certain time periods. There are twelve specifically authorized penalties facing local agencies for not meeting performance standards, as well as performance awards for reducing out of wedlock births and for encouraging two-parent families, keeping children at home, and reducing public dependency (Harris, 1998). We also see a great increase in the use of performance measures by the states in their service contracts with nonprofit and for-profit organizations (Green, 1998).

The impact of the anti-foreigner attitude is seen in those provisions of the welfare reform legislation that rendered even legal immigrants ineligible for certain benefits. Although some of the most stringent of these provisions are being remedied, there still remains a significant reduction in the availability of benefits for legal and illegal immigrants.

An analysis of each of these welfare reform related changes will suggest the types of new practice competencies that will be required by staff persons working in welfare to work programs and demonstrates the scope of the challenge presented to the social work education and professional development community.

Implications of these Changes for the Professional Development Field

As Corbett (1994/1995) aptly states, "Laws can be passed and new programs launched with great fanfare, but if the individual experience at the point of client-system interface has not been fundamentally altered, the organizational culture remains unchanged." The overall challenge for social work educators and professional development professionals is how best to help agency leaders understand what a major undertaking it is to try to impact and change the cultures of their organizations and how best to address this effort.

A recent study of welfare reform demonstrations in five states emphasized the difficulties these programs faced in trying to change the attitudes and expectations of income maintenance staff who had been hired to determine and monitor eligibility. Presumably, these staff members were hired because of their competence at paying attention to detail, managing deadlines, and completing technical tasks (Pavetti & Duke, 1997). In contrast to this more technical focus, the practice knowledge, skills, and abilities needed in today's welfare to work programs call for a return to a casework process which involves the following:

- identifying those clients required to participate in job training and placement activities and motivating their participation;
- identifying participant barriers to employment;
- developing and carrying out a range of interventions, consistent with the clients' situations, required to remove these barriers;
- monitoring the progress of clients through the whole process;
- monitoring the performance of service providers; and
- providing post-program support and monitoring, if needed (Corbett 1994/1995).

Clearly, over and above the specific tasks and roles related to professional development activities, attention will have to be focused on issues of managing organizational change at all levels of the organization.

The new focus on work requirements for most clients, which requires changing the current life patterns of the clients, calls for social work skills. A study of eight local welfare to work programs identified the following social work skills and values as being critical to effective work:

- the capacity to build trusting relationships;
- a deep commitment to helping families bring about change in their lives; and
- the capacity to link families with community treatment resources (Pavetti et al., 1996).

In addition, we believe that not only is it critical for staff to have a commitment to helping families change, but that competence to help motivate individuals and families is at the core of this effort. The fact that at least sixty percent (60%) of the state public welfare agencies have required no social work education or experience for entry into income maintenance positions presents a real problem for public welfare agencies (Sanchirico, 1995). On the other hand, it may also represent a training opportunity for social work educators and professional development personnel.

A review of the research on barriers to employment identifies a number of common themes related to specific competencies that are required by welfare to work staff persons engaged in job placement efforts. One common theme identified by many who have studied the barriers to economic independence faced by those currently living in poverty is the lack of higher education (Brooks & Buckner, 1996; Kates, 1996; Marcenko & Fagan, 1996). In this age of information technology, jobs requiring a twelfth grade education or less are being lost. In fact, between 1970 and 1984, some 631,000 of these types of jobs disappeared in just four cities, New York City, Boston, St. Louis, and Atlanta (Caputo, 1989). A key factor in people being able to move from welfare to economic self-sufficiency is that there is a direct relationship between one's level of higher education and the amount of earned income (Kates, 1996). The implication for social work education and professional development programs is that staff in welfare to work programs are going to need the knowledge and the will to help clients find ways in which to pursue higher education while dealing with family responsibilities, job search, and job start activities.

A second major barrier to economic independence identified by researchers is the lack of available, adequate, reliable, and affordable, 24-hour, seven day a week child care (Brooks & Buckner, 1996; Marcenko & Fagan, 1996). Workers need to understand this reality and have the skills to be able to work with family and community resources on the development of these types of resources. If they do not exist in the community, at least some staff need to have the skills necessary to initiate the development of this critical element of the social support system.

A core role for the welfare to work staff person is that of job placement. This involves a very different set of skills than those related to eligibility determination. In job placement activities, the focus is external to the agency and involves the development and maintenance of relationships with a broad range of persons from work sites. It requires an understanding of what those from a job site are looking for in an employee and an understanding of what the client is going to require from the job. Some general understanding of this last issue has been gained from a study of 2,375 pregnant women to determine what type of workplace supports were most needed to support self-sufficiency. It was found that the following five supports were the most critical:

- health insurance;
- paid sick leave;
- wage replacement during family leave;
- assistance with finding and paying for child care; and

• flexible work schedules. (Piotrkowski & Kessler-Sklar, 1996).

This suggests that simply requiring the client to find "any old job" can end up being a short-range fix that guarantees failure. The welfare to work staff is going to need to be trained to take a far more sophisticated approach to job placement.

Another critically important factor in the lives of many of the welfare to work clients is family violence. A study of AFDC clients between 1992 and 1995 found that over ninety percent (90%) of the women that cycled on and off of AFDC had experienced family violence and had been victimized by violence (Salomon, Bassuk, & Brooks, 1996). This strongly suggests that all welfare to work staff need to be trained about the dynamics of family violence, how to recognize it, and how to make use of community resources to help clients who are suffering in violent relationships or who are suffering from the effects of past violent relationships.

A final set of skills required by the change to the work requirement relates to case management. Many welfare to work staff will be responsible for managing the planning and intervention efforts related to specific clients and their families. A national study of the Job Opportunities and Basic Skills (JOBS) programs found that only thirty-nine percent (39%) of the programs used social workers as JOBS case managers (Sanchirico, 1995). Since all clients in welfare to work programs will require case management, it appears that a major effort is needed to prepare a much larger number of staff to assume the case management role.

The implementation of work requirements, stringent time limits, sanctions for illegitimacy, and failure to meet child support responsibilities clearly are going to require welfare to work staff to learn how to use effectively the authority these requirements and sanctions provide them. A study of eight local JOBS programs demonstrated the importance of staff having the competence to use effectively limit-setting and financial sanctions to help families fearful of change begin to take initial steps (Pavetti et al., 1996). There is an important difference between the use of authority in the eligibility determination process related to AFDC, which affected the amount of the cash benefit, and the use of authority in the attempt to help a client become "self-sufficient." In the first case, the clients essentially played a passive role. As long as they could produce the right documentation, little change in the clients was required. In the new welfare to work system, clients are called upon to make major life shifts within a specific amount of time. In such a situation, the worker needs to be able to use authority appropriately, in an enabling way to help clients take active control of their lives. This requires a much higher degree of skill on the part of the welfare to work staff.

The impact of devolution, with its shift to the use of block grants and encouragement of privatization, has created at least two new challenges for local agency staff. First, the combination of the block grant, the broader range of services now required to help clients become self-sufficient, and interest in making maximum use of the private sector, mean a continued expansion of the use of purchase of service contracts by public agencies (Green, 1998). This expansion will require more staff to be trained to handle the negotiation and monitoring of purchase of service contracts.

The second challenge emanating from devolution is the shift of critical decision making from Washington, DC to the various state capitals. For decades, those interested in influencing the shape of social welfare policy have organized and focused their primary lobbying efforts at the federal level. Organizations such as the American Public Welfare Association, the Child Welfare League of America, the Children's Defense Fund, the National Association of Social Workers, and the Council on Social Work Education, to name just a few, have the bulk of their governmental affairs staff and supports in our nation's capital. Devolution now makes it necessary for the leadership and staff of local agencies to develop skills in locally-oriented policy practice. Because there is a much smaller

concentration of professional governmental affairs staff located in the state capitals, individuals concerned with influencing welfare policy at the state and local levels need to be trained in policy practice if they are to be effective in shaping welfare policy in this new environment of devolution.

The expansion of the use of performance-based outcome measures, such as those adopted by Riverside County in California where staff have minimum job placement requirements as well as target goals (Brown, 1997), creates the need for more agency staff to become skilled in all aspects of outcome measurement. These skills include the development of outcome measures, the development of data systems that allow for the tracking of these measures, the development and monitoring of performance contracts with outside provider organizations, and performance-based program evaluation. Among the challenges for social work education and professional development programs is to determine the degree to which the welfare to work staff need to develop the "soft" skills involved in forming relationships with clients that will enable those clients to change behaviors, as well as the "hard" skills involved in performance measurement.

A final set of challenges is presented by those welfare reform changes that render certain populations of foreigners ineligible for federally supported assistance. For some staff, this will require exercising those skills necessary to help develop and/or access new community resources. For others, it will require becoming familiar with immigration laws and community legal resources available to immigrants. For most, it will require the continued development of cultural competence, and for some, the development of bilingual skills.

Common Themes and Threads

For social work educators and professional development professionals, the various changes wrought by welfare reform and the devolution revolution suggest some common themes that must be taken into account in trying to identify training needs and opportunities. Under the new system, managers will need to be adept at managing change, as well as skilled at bringing about changes in organizational culture. In addition, since change is generally stressful, managers will need to develop their stress management skills.

The new welfare to work environment requires workers to develop new skills as job developers, case managers, and providers of technical assistance. In addition, they will need to develop contract negotiation and management skills, as well as skills in performance-based outcome evaluation. Schools of social work will need to assess their curricula to determine where these skills can most appropriately be taught in degree-oriented coursework. Likewise, professional development personnel will need to review their training and technical assistance activities to see how the skill needs of welfare to work staff can best be addressed.

Reframing Value Issues

In navigating the new welfare reform environment, social work educators and professional development personnel will be called upon to recognize and grapple with a range of issues that may appear to represent a repudiation of a number of traditional social work values. Various provisions of the welfare reform legislation clearly move away from such traditional social work values as "starting where the client is," "providing for client self-determination," "being non-judgmental about client values and life styles," and "the client's right to confidentiality." Concern about the extent to which the acceptance of government training funds impacts on the missions, modes of operation, and curricular responsibilities of schools of social work is certainly not new (Gibelman & Humphreys, 1982; Green & Edwards, 1982). However, the current welfare reform effort will again raise some of these issues and concerns.

In the welfare to work milieu, workers will be required to perform new roles involving helping clients understand the consequences of their own behaviors. There is critical need for workers and managers to adopt a strengths perspective to help

clients build on whatever strengths they have, while maintaining a clear focus on consequences of their behaviors.

Analysis of Emerging Professional Development Responses

As is to be expected in a time of great change, the social work education and professional development communities across the nation have responded to the changes brought about by welfare reform at varying speeds and different levels of comprehensiveness. Some, such as the training arm of the Arizona Department of Economic Security, have initiated professional development supports to the change effort itself, in the form of the development of videotapes and training materials, for use in training classes and through self-paced learning activities (Arizona Department of Economic Security, 1997). The approaches in these cases tend to focus on managing the organizational change process initiated by the major shift in the practice paradigm.

In Ohio, on the other hand, the focus has been more comprehensive, involving attempting to identify the complete set of practice competencies which are now going to be required by welfare to work line staff. This complete set will provide a comprehensive base for the development of new and/or expanded professional development opportunities for county agency staff. The sixteen major competency areas identified include the following:

- fundamentals of public human services;
- interpersonal helping skills;
- assessment and services planning;
- culture and diversity in human services;
- promoting employment and self-sufficiency;
- family violence;
- recognizing and assessing child maltreatment;
- serving minor parents;
- time and stress management and personal safety;
- recognizing and assessing developmental delay and disability;
- collaborative interdisciplinary services to families;
- employment related health services;
- mental illness in adults and families;
- substance abuse;
- computer skills; and
- writing skills for case documentation (Institute for Human Services, 1997).

This list of covers nearly all of the competencies identified earlier in this article (see section on implications). Among the competencies not included in the Ohio list are issues of contract management, performance contracting, and dealing with outcome measures. Perhaps these were considered too specialized a focus for the general line worker. Since the development of local and state policy practice competencies tend to be avoided by public agencies, they likely will have to be addressed through continuing education efforts by professional associations or higher education programs. Two other competency areas not addressed on the Ohio list are dealing with major changes in the organizational culture and making effective use of authority (fiscal sanctions, etc.) in the client change process.

Another very comprehensive approach has been taken by the Center for Human Services Training and Development at the University of California, Davis (1997, pp. 21-22). A series of over 65 workshops has been developed to provide professional development opportunities for county agency staff, at all levels, who are employed in welfare to work programs. The following is a listing of general subject areas covered and the number of workshops in each area:

- agency-wide training (dealing with the changing culture), 10
- collaboration approaches and skills, 13
- managing the transition to TANF, 10
- supervision and the transition to TANF, 3
- eligibility work: new and ongoing functions
- helping clients transition to TANF, 4

- client employment, 5
- service skills and referrals, 7
- organizational issues, 1
- California policies and programs, 3
- communications and client relations, 4
- job management for eligibility workers, 3
- fraud detection and prevention, 5

Because this training is aimed at all levels of agency staff, there is a strong focus on both managing and dealing with the change in organizational culture and on the development of those new competencies required by the new practice paradigm. This includes the area of contracting for outside services, although it is unclear whether this focus includes issues related to performance contracting and/or dealing with outcome measures. The Center does provide, apart from its workshop programs for county agencies, public policy institutes and training in political action, which address at least part of the need for professional development related to local and state policy practice (Center for Human Services Training and Development, 1997, p. 242).

These examples are in no way intended to be inclusive of all the welfare reform professional development activity going on. Rather, these examples are presented simply to provide a hint at the scope and comprehensiveness of some of the more developed approaches currently being developed and implemented throughout the nation.

Conclusion — Threats & Opportunities

To paraphrase what Victor Hugo wrote in *A Tale of Two Cities*, the current welfare reform milieu represents for social work education and professional development programs both the worst of times and the best of times. The welfare reform legislation, by eliminating state match requirements, removes much of the advantage of state public welfare agencies forming partnerships with university-based training and technical assistance programs to maximize the use of university match capability. Further, welfare reform has eliminated many of the previously existing set-asides for training. There is also greater emphasis on accountability through the implementation of outcome-based performance measures, at the same time there is a squeeze on administrative costs that will be allowed as part of training and technical assistance contracts.

On the other hand, welfare reform presents some new opportunities for social work education and professional development programs. Most of the states are experiencing budget surpluses because of the favorable economy, as well as because their welfare caseloads have been declining with no reductions in the block grants they receive from the federal government. As a consequence, at least in the short run, many states may have funds available to pay for training. Obviously, they will need to be convinced of the need for training.

Importantly, welfare reform has created a job environment that is more nearly aligned with social work education than was the case with its predecessor programs. Whereas AFDC tended to be viewed by social work educators and public welfare staff as on the periphery of social work, the focus of TANF is much more holistic and, as a result, the practice skills required of staff are much closer to the mainstream of social work. A review of the competencies and skill areas identified both in California and Ohio indicates they are, for the most part, very closely related to those skills typically taught in social work education programs.

It will be the task of social work educators and professional development personnel to examine their course offerings and training activities to determine how these relate to the competencies and skills demanded of welfare to work staff and to make curriculum modifications as necessary. In addition, social work educators and professional development personnel will need to engage in concerted action at the state and county levels to help policy makers see the need for and value of professional social work education and training. This task will be made easier if social work educators and professional development personnel are committed

to being involved in the public welfare arena and able to demonstrate that their services are truly relevant to the needs of the states and counties. In a sense, this task is made more difficult because there are now more players with whom to identify and cultivate relationships. Prior to the recent welfare reform legislation, most social work educators and professional development personnel were able to relate primarily to their state public welfare department. Now, much of the focus is shifting to the county level, requiring that relationships be developed with a much larger cast of policy makers.

Despite the challenges presented by welfare reform, social work education and professional development programs can continue to experience success in the new environment. What is required is that those confronted with adapting to the new environment need to be creative problem solvers, rather than handwringers.

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