

# **Capabilities of State Automated Systems to Meet Information Needs in the Changing Landscape of Human Services**

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# Topics to be Covered

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- Increased demands on automated systems due to shifting human services landscape
  - Capabilities of state automated systems to meet information needs
  - Conclusions regarding the need for systems modernization
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# Shifting Landscape Has Expanded Information Needs

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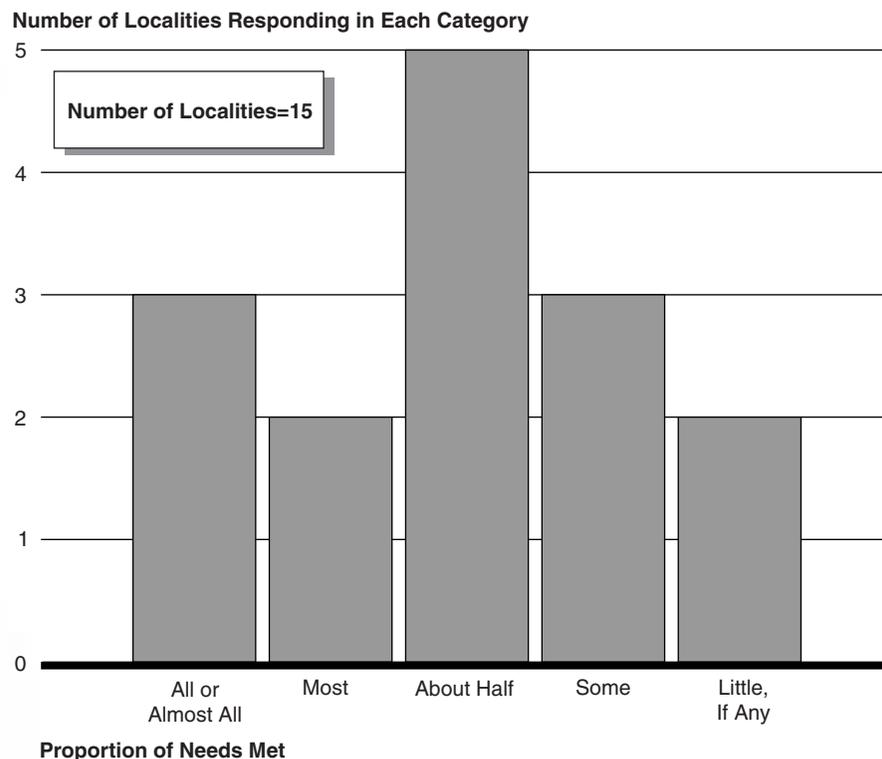
- Dramatic shift in program objectives and policies due to welfare reform
  - Expanded efforts to partner with other organizations
  - Devolution of responsibility to localities
  - Increased focus on accountability for results
  - Higher stakes for families and states
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# Scope and Methodology of GAO Study

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- Welfare Reform: Improving State Automated Systems Requires Coordinated Federal Effort (April 2000)
  - In-depth work at state and local levels in six states--Georgia, New Jersey, Ohio, Texas, Washington, and Wisconsin
  - Survey of these six and nine additional states and some of their localities on several key topics (in collaboration with Rockefeller Institute field researchers)
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# To What Extent do Automated Systems Meet Info Needs for Case Management?



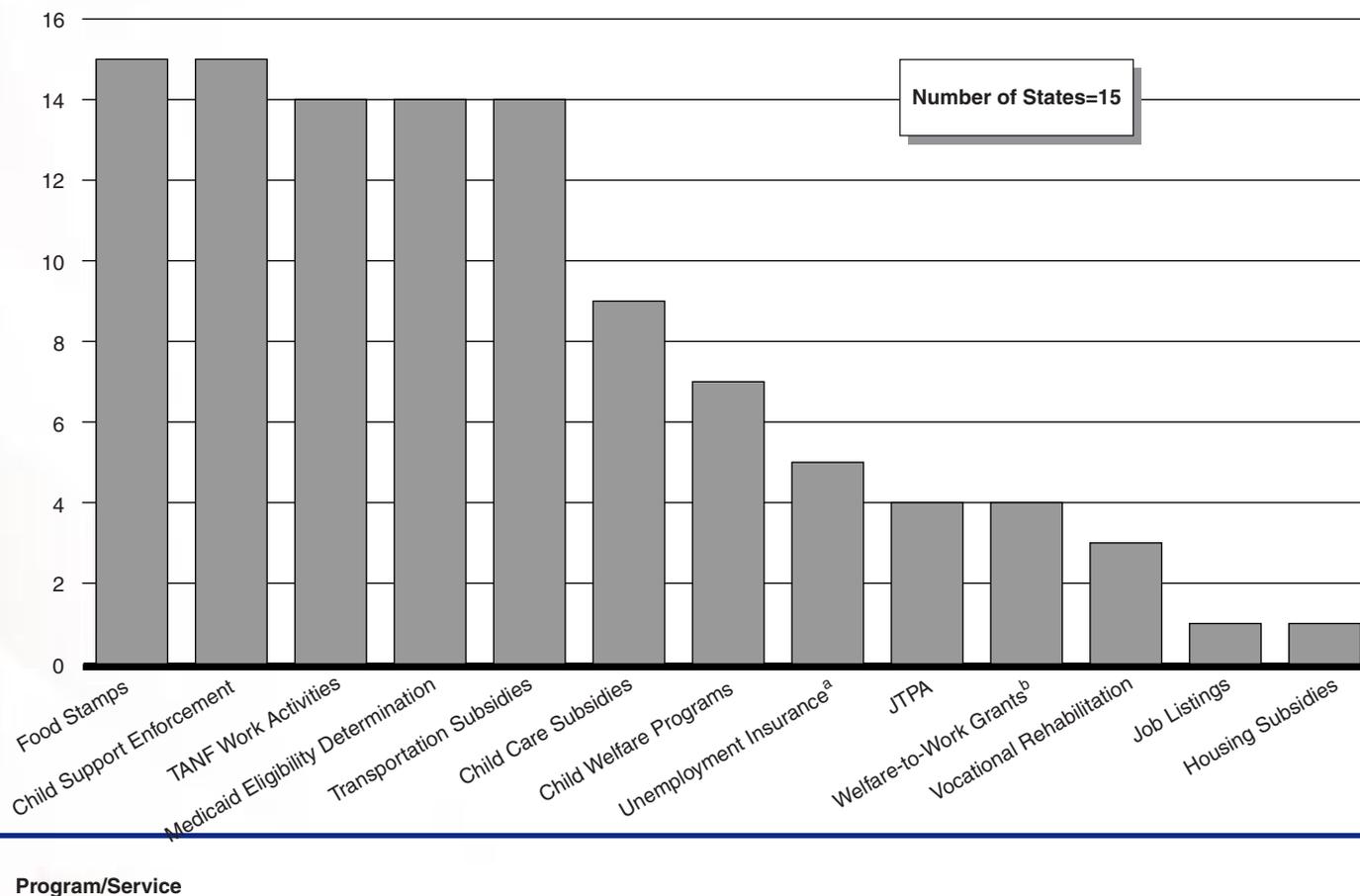
# To What Extent do Automated Systems Meet Info Needs for Case Management?

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- Major shortcoming cited: systems for different programs do not share data in some cases
    - Constrains ability of case managers to arrange and monitor delivery of services
    - Leads to multiple entry of same data in different systems
  - Certain case management activities are not supported by some automated systems
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# Which Systems Share Data With the Systems Used for TANF Eligibility?

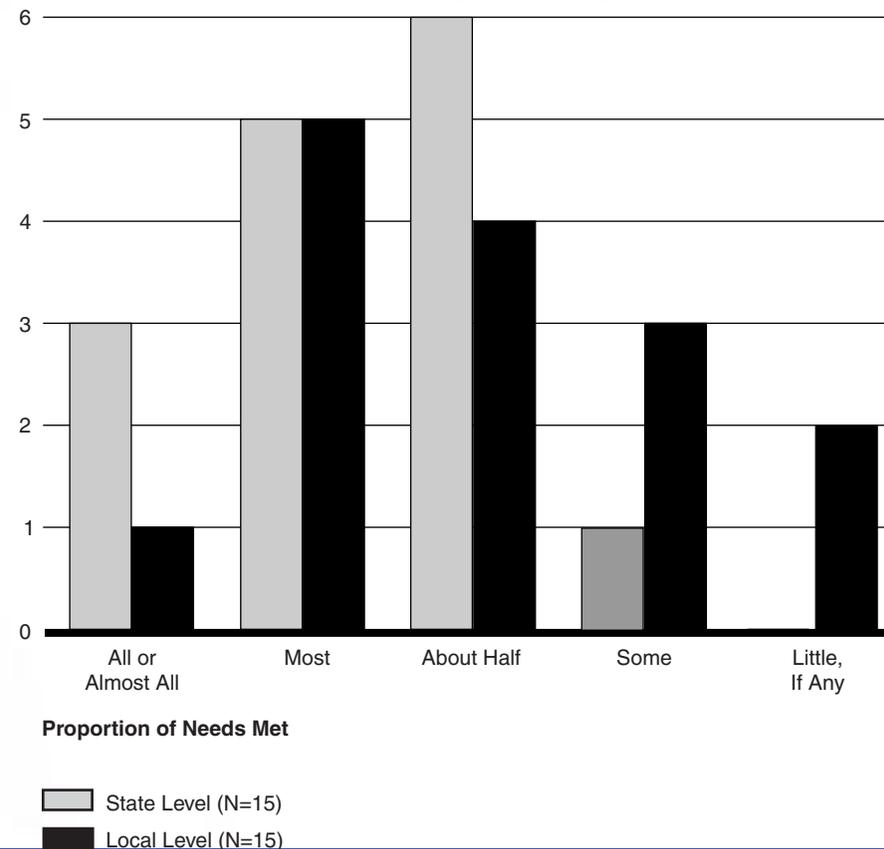
Number of States Responding in Each Category



Program/Service

# To What Extent do Automated Systems Meet Info Needs for Service Planning?

Number of States and Localities Responding in Each Category



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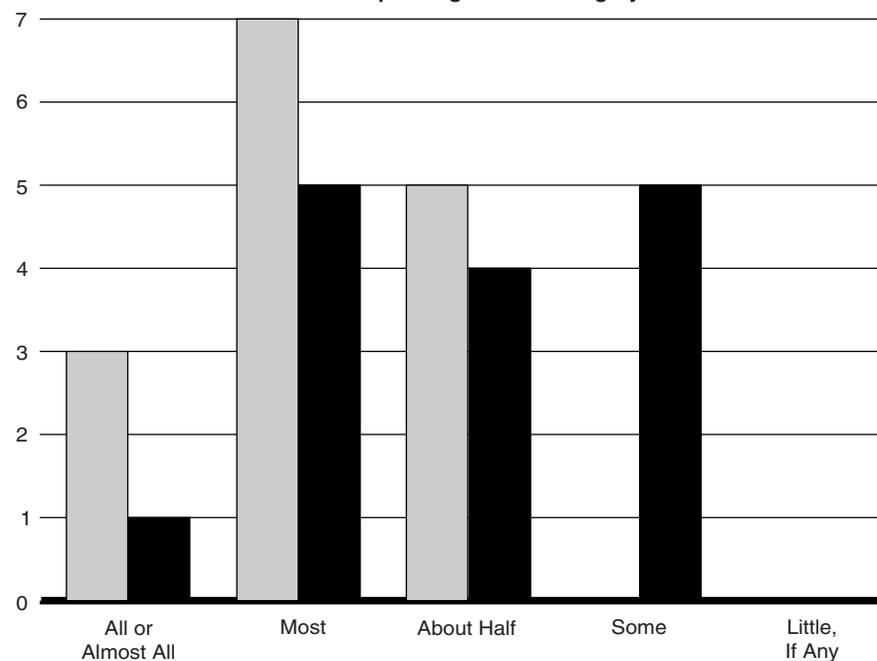
# To What Extent do Automated Systems Meet Info Needs for Service Planning?

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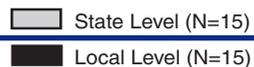
- Major shortcoming cited (especially at local level): limited ability to query systems to obtain needed information about overall caseload
  - Examples of caseload characteristics difficult to obtain in some cases:
    - number of adults with no prior work experience
    - number of adults who have cycled on and off welfare
  - Prior work by Rockefeller Institute also found lower automated capabilities to obtain information on potential employment barriers of families
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# To What Extent do Automated Systems Meet Info Needs for Program Oversight?

Number of States and Localities Responding in Each Category



Proportion of Needs Met



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# To What Extent do Automated Systems Meet Info Needs for Program Oversight?

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- Local officials reported lower capabilities than state officials to monitor job retention and wage progression
  - Officials in several localities reported problems obtaining accurate and timely information on work participation rates for their caseloads
  - Monitoring recipients' use of other programs after leaving TANF:
    - Officials vary in capabilities to track receipt of Medicaid and food stamps
    - Officials generally cannot track placement of former TANF children in foster care
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# Conclusions

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- Our work highlights the need for systems modernization
    - Overall assessments of systems by state and local officials reveal major gaps in capabilities
    - Key areas identified for improvement: need for more data sharing across programs and expanded capabilities to query automated systems
  - Systematic, collaborative effort needed to identify the most promising approaches to overcoming obstacles to systems modernization
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