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January 2004

SUPPORTS FOR LOW-INCOME FAMILIES

States Serve a Broad Range of Families through a Complex and Changing System

GAO-04-256

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GAO Accountability • Integrity • Reliability

Highlights

Highlights of GAO-04-256, a report to Chairman and Ranking Minority Member, Committee on Finance, U.S. Senate

Why GAO Did This Study

Over the last decade, the Congress has made significant changes in numerous federal programs that support low-income families, including changes that have shifted program emphases from providing cash assistance to providing services that promote employment and economic independence. As a result of some of the federal policy changes, the support system is more decentralized than before. This heightens the importance of understanding policy choices and practices at the state and local levels as well as those at the federal level.

To provide the Congress with information on this system, GAO agreed to address the following questions: (1) To what extent do states provide supports for low-income families? (2) How have states structured programs to support low-income families? (3) What changes have states made to supports for low-income families in recent years? Our review focused primarily on supports for which states make many of the key decisions about eligibility, benefit amounts, and service provision. To obtain this information, GAO conducted a mail survey of the social service directors in the 50 states and the District of Columbia; conducted site visits in New York, North Carolina, Oklahoma, Washington, and Wisconsin; and reviewed federal reports and other relevant literature.

www.gao.gov/cgi-bin/getrpt?GAO-04-256

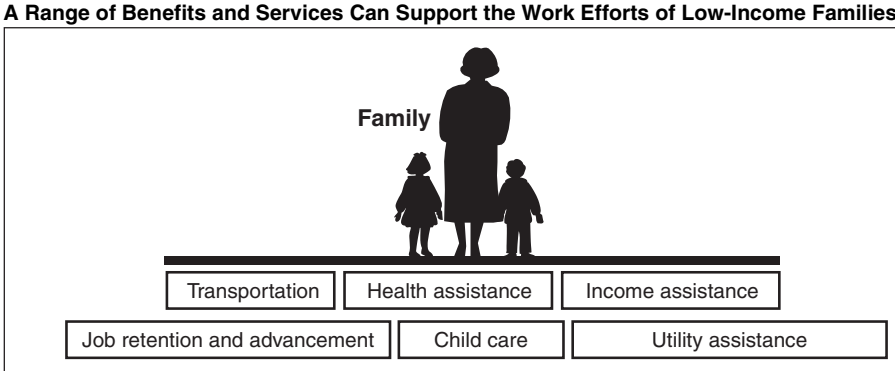
To view the full product, including the scope and methodology, click on the link above. For more information, contact Cynthia M. Fagnoni (202) 512-7215 or fagnonic@gao.gov.

What GAO Found

States use an array of federal and state funds to provide a wide range of benefits and services that can support the work efforts of low-income families, although the types of supports and coverage of the eligible population vary among the states and sometimes within states. For instance, most states subsidize several types of child care, subsidize use of public transportation, and offer employment services in at least one location in the state, but somewhat fewer states subsidize child care for sick children, assist with the purchase of used cars, or offer employment retention bonuses to parents who find and maintain jobs. The five states we visited structured the eligibility criteria and benefits of many supports in ways that allow them to serve a broad range of low-income families, including families on and off welfare and families who are working and those who are not currently working. The specific support structures vary, however, by state and type of support. These differences create a complex national picture of supports that provide an assortment of benefits and services to a range of populations.

Over the last several years, many states have expanded the availability of supports that promote employment and economic independence for low-income families. State officials reported that both the number of support services available and the number of recipients have increased. However, state officials express uncertainty about their continued ability to provide this level of support. As states plan for the future of supports in the current state fiscal environment, officials reported that they are considering changes that could limit the availability and provision of supports for low-income families. Overall, it its probable that the support system will continue to change as the federal and state governments further amend policies and respond to changes in the demand for services and cyclical fiscal conditions.

A Range of Benefits and Services Can Support the Work Efforts of Low-Income Families



Source: GAO.

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Abbreviations

OBRA	Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act
CCDF	Child Care and Development Fund
EITC	earned income tax credit
FPL	federal poverty level
LIHEAP	Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program
PRWORA	Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996
SCHIP	State Children's Health Insurance Program
SSBG	Social Services Block Grant
TANF	Temporary Assistance for Needy Families
WIA	Workforce Investment Act

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G A O
Accountability * Integrity * Reliability

United States General Accounting Office
Washington, DC 20548

January 26, 2004

The Honorable Charles E. Grassley
Chairman
Committee on Finance
United States Senate

The Honorable Max Baucus
Ranking Minority Member
Committee on Finance
United States Senate

The federal government expends over $100 billion annually to assist tens of millions of low-income families nationwide through numerous federal programs and block grants. Over the last decade, the Congress has made significant changes in this support system. These changes have (1) shifted program emphases from cash assistance to services that promote employment and economic independence and (2) provided states greater authority and flexibility to use funds and structure the design of program benefits and service delivery. Some of the more dramatic changes occurred with the passage of welfare reform legislation in 1996. Most prominently, this legislation ended the 61-year-old federal entitlement to assistance for eligible needy families with children and created in its place the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) block grant. TANF provides states with federal funds that are to be used along with states' own funds for programs and services that help low-income parents support their families and take steps toward employment. To emphasize the temporary nature of TANF assistance, the law restricts most families to a lifetime limit of 60 months of federal cash assistance. This legislation and other federal policy changes throughout the last decade also modified the Food Stamp Program, consolidated and expanded child care subsidy programs, revised and expanded health insurance for children and families, consolidated employment and training programs, and expanded support for low-income workers through the tax code.

As a result of some of these federal policy changes, the support system is more decentralized than before. This heightens the importance of understanding policy choices and practices at the state and local levels, as well as those at the federal level, in order to describe the nation's current support system for low-income families. To provide you with information on this system, we agreed with your staff to address the following

questions: (1) To what extent do states provide supports for low-income families? (2) How have states structured programs to support low-income families? (3) What changes have states made to supports for low-income families in recent years?

In addressing these questions, we focused on some of the many federal and state programs that provide assistance to low-income families.[1] We selected key supports that include not only those that assist low-income families by providing cash income but also those that subsidize some of the expenses associated with work outside of the home, such as child care and transportation, or help with work and family needs in other ways, such as by subsidizing utility expenses. Our review focused primarily on the following programs and types of supports, for which states make many of the decisions about eligibility, benefit amounts, and service provision:

- income assistance provided through TANF cash assistance, TANF diversion[2] assistance, and state tax credits;
- job retention and advancement services;
- Medicaid, State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP), and other health-related programs, including substance abuse, mental health, and domestic violence programs;
- subsidized child care;
- transportation support services; and
- utility assistance.

Our review also discusses the federal earned income tax credit (EITC), food stamps, and rental housing assistance to some extent because these are important components of the overall set of supports for low-income families.

For those programs about which states make key decisions, we obtained information through a mail survey administered to directors of social

[1]The Congressional Research Service has identified more than 80 programs that provide aid—in cash and noncash form—that is directed primarily to persons with limited income. See Congressional Research Service, *Cash and Noncash Benefits for Person with Limited Income: Eligibility Rules*, *Recipient and Expenditure Data*, *FY1998-FY2000* (Washington, D.C., 2001).

[2]TANF diversion programs provide low-income families who are eligible for TANF cash assistance with short-term cash or in-kind benefits, on a case-by-case basis, in lieu of TANF cash assistance.

services in all 50 states and the District of Columbia[3] in spring 2003, and through site visits between December 2002 and March 2003 in five states (New York, North Carolina, Oklahoma, Washington, and Wisconsin). For our site visits, we selected states that demonstrated an effort to assist low-income families with support services and that, as a group, were geographically and programmatically diverse. For those programs about which states make key decisions, we obtained information directly from state officials because limited information is collected at the national level on states' provision of support services. For other programs, we relied on a review of federal reports and other relevant literature. In both the survey and the site visits, we asked officials about recent programmatic changes that had occurred in their support programs, which we defined as changes that occurred in these programs since 2000. Although the fiscal climate in many states changed during this time period, we chose this time period only to capture program changes that had occurred in the last few years, not specifically to capture changes related to the fiscal climate. Because of the changing fiscal conditions, however, some states were in the process of making programmatic changes at the time of our survey and site visits. Although we asked officials to report on decisions that had already been made and, in the site visits, to report on their expectations for the future, we cannot comment on any actual changes that may have occurred after our fieldwork was completed in spring 2003. We conducted our work from December 2002 through November 2003 in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards.

Results in Brief

States use an array of federal and state funds to provide a wide range of supports to low-income families, although the types of supports and coverage of the eligible population vary among the states. States indicated during our site visits that they have used their increased flexibility to modify supports in ways they believe more effectively promote employment and economic independence. For instance, to better enable parents to work, states have subsidized not only child care for preschool-age children, but many have also subsidized evening and weekend child care and care for infants. However, our 50-state survey showed that variation in the ways that states have chosen to exercise their increased

[3]Forty-nine states and the District of Columbia responded to our survey, although they did not all respond to every survey question. Michigan did not respond at all, because of lack of staff time. The survey was addressed to the state social service agency directors and instructed them to have the staff members most knowledgeable about their states' support programs complete the survey.

flexibility has resulted in differences across states, and sometimes within states, in the specific supports that are offered and in coverage of the low-income population. For example, subsidized child care for sick children is offered in fewer states than other types of subsidized child care. Further, in the area of transportation support services, in most states that provide bus passes or other assistance with public transportation, almost all eligible families who seek this assistance receive it, but in a number of states that provide help with car repair expenses, less than half of the eligible families seeking this assistance receive it.

Each of the five states we visited structured supports to serve a broad range of low-income families in a coordinated manner. The five states we visited structured eligibility criteria and benefits to serve a broad range of low-income families, including families on and off welfare and families who are working and those who may be seeking employment. These states established eligibility criteria for several support services, such as subsidized child care, transportation support services, and job retention and advancement services, to assist families with incomes up to 200 percent of the federal poverty level. (Two hundred percent of the federal poverty level is about $31,000 for a family of three.) States structured some of the benefits so that families with higher incomes receive smaller benefit amounts or must contribute some of their income toward the cost of a service. In addition, our selected states took steps to deliver services in a coordinated manner to facilitate families' access to supports. In all of the states we visited, families can gain access to multiple supports in a single local office, and in some of the states, families can gain access to multiple supports through a single caseworker.

Most of the changes states have made to supports for low-income families since 2000 have expanded the availability of supports, although state officials expressed concern about the future of supports. Though many federal policy changes affected supports over the past decade, welfare reform played an integral role in changing a variety of supports for low-income families. Since 2001, state officials reported that the number of support services available and the number of recipients have increased. Further, states have also made changes in support structures, such as income eligibility criteria, that allow a broader range of working parents to gain access to supports. Although many of the changes expanded the availability of supports, some officials reported changes that limit the availability of some supports for low-income families. Given the fiscal crises that states currently face, officials reported that they are considering future changes that would likely limit the availability of supports for low-income families. Many officials expressed concern that

these changes may erode the progress they have made in recent years to promote employment and economic independence.

Background

Supports for low-income families are funded, designed, and administered by a combination of federal and state governments. Recent changes to federal laws have modified supports for low-income families in many ways and, in some cases, have altered the roles of the federal and state governments in the provision of these supports. Changing economic conditions have also affected the provision of supports for low-income families.

Roles of Federal and State Governments in Providing Supports for Low-Income Families

Both the federal and state governments are involved in the provision of supports for low-income families, but the relative roles that the federal and state governments play with regard to funding and design vary by the type of support. Specifically, supports for low-income families vary in terms of whether they are funded with federal funds, state funds, or a combination; whether funding is fixed; and the extent to which the federal government, state governments, or a combination is responsible for determining eligibility rules, availability, and benefit structures. In addition, some supports, such as food stamps and Medicaid, are entitlements, for which eligible applicants are guaranteed receipt. For other supports, such as subsidized child care and transportation assistance, provision of the supports is not mandatory and receipt is not guaranteed. Table 1 illustrates the relative roles of the federal and state governments in the funding and design of supports, and indicates whether the supports are entitlements.

Table 1: Roles of Federal and State Governments in Selected Supports for Low-Income Families

Support	Funding[a]	Design[b]	Entitlement
Federal EITC	All federal	All federal	Yes
Section 8 rental housing	All federal	Mostly federal	No
Food Stamp Program	Mostly federal	Mostly federal	Yes
Medicaid	Federal/state	Federal/state	Yes
SCHIP	Federal/state	Federal/state	No
Utility assistance	Federal/state	Federal/state	No
TANF cash assistance	Federal/state	Some federal/more state	No
Subsidized child care	Federal/state	Some federal/more state	No
Health-related services (substance abuse and mental health)	Federal/state	Some federal/more state	No
Domestic violence programs	Federal/state	Mostly state	No
Job retention and advancement services	Federal/state	Mostly state	No
Transportation support services	Federal/state	Mostly state	No
State tax credits	All state	All state	Yes

Source: GAO.

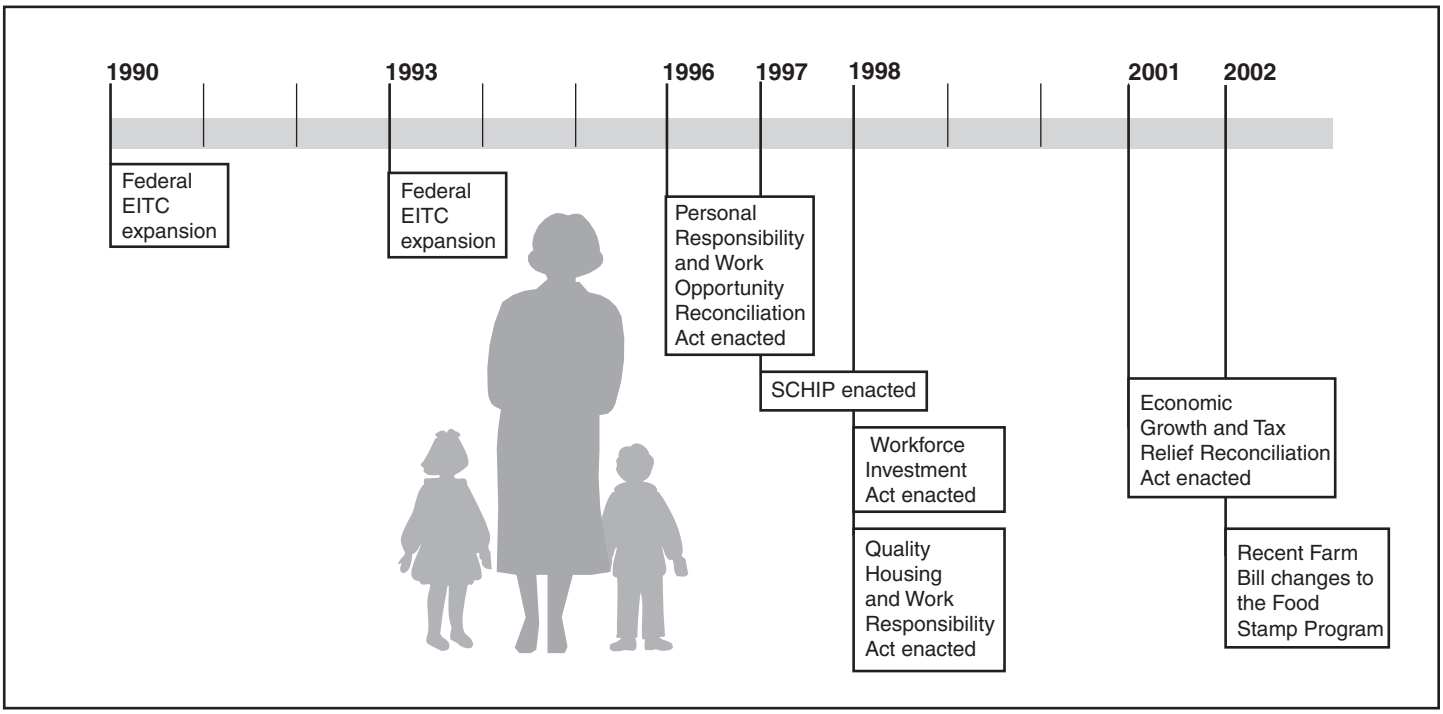
[a]Defined as the level of government that supplies the primary source of funding for the support.

[b]Defined as the level of government that is primarily responsible for availability, eligibility, and benefit amount determination.

Changes in Programs for Low-Income Families

Several federal programs for low-income families have been enacted or significantly revised in the last decade, as detailed below and in figure 1:

Figure 1: Time Line of Changes in Programs for Low-Income Families



Source: GAO.

- **1990—Federal EITC expansion—**In 1990, as part of the Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act (1990 OBRA), the Congress changed the qualification standards and substantially increased the size of the EITC, at least in part to increase the progressivity of the overall federal tax system by reducing the federal tax burden of qualified low-income workers. In 1991, the first year that these changes were in effect, the number of families receiving the EITC increased by 1.4 million families to a total of 13.9 million, and they claimed a total of $11.2 billion in credits, which was an increase of $3.8 billion over 1990.

- **1993—Federal EITC expansion—**As part of the August 1993 Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act (1993 OBRA), the Congress increased the size of the maximum EITC for families with children, beginning in 1994, and extended coverage to very-low-income workers without children. The number of taxpayers claiming the EITC and total program costs increased steadily between tax years 1990 and 1994, partly because of both the 1990 and the 1993 OBRA expansions.

- **1996—PRWORA—**With the enactment of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 (PRWORA), the Congress made sweeping changes to federal welfare policy for needy families. PRWORA ended the Aid to Families with Dependent Children program and authorized the TANF block grant to states at $16.5 billion annually. TANF provides temporary cash assistance and emphasizes work and responsibility over dependence on government benefits. PRWORA also combined several existing child care programs into one program designed to provide states with more flexible funding for subsidizing the child care needs of low-income families who are working or receiving education or training in preparation for employment. In fiscal year 2003, the Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) provided states with up to $4.8 billion in federal funds for these purposes. In addition, PRWORA severed the link between cash assistance and Medicaid benefits and restricted legal immigrants' access to public welfare benefits.

- **1997—SCHIP—**The State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP) was created under Title XXI of the Social Security Act for states to offer coverage to children in families with incomes up to 200 percent of the federal poverty level (FPL) who do not qualify for Medicaid. Congress appropriated $40 billion in federal funds over 10 years (from fiscal year 1998 to 2007), to provide each state an annual allotment, which can be spent over 3 years, for SCHIP expenditures. State SCHIP expenditures are matched by federal payments up to the state's annual appropriated allotment. The federal share of each state's SCHIP expenditures ranges from 65 to 83 percent; the federal share of total SCHIP expenditures is about 72 percent. In designing their SCHIP programs, most states chose to establish separate, stand-alone components, often concurrent with a Medicaid expansion.

- **1998—WIA—**The Workforce Investment Act (WIA) was passed in 1998 to consolidate services of many employment and training programs, mandating that states and localities use a centralized service delivery structure – the one-stop center system – to provide access to most federally funded employment and training assistance. Under WIA, the federal government appropriates funds to states each year, and states have three years to spend those funds. In each fiscal year from 2000 to 2002, approximately $3.9 billion in federal WIA funds was appropriated to the states.

- **1998—Quality Housing and Work Responsibility Act—**Under the 1998 Quality Housing and Work Responsibility Act, provisions were put in place to provide public housing agencies with increased flexibility while also increasing accountability. In addition, the Act facilitated the

implementation of mixed-income communities, aimed to reduce the concentrations of poverty in public housing, and created incentives and opportunities for residents to work and become self-sufficient. Further, the Act introduced a new Section 8 housing voucher program designed to be more market-driven and accommodated the replacement or revitalization of severely distressed public housing projects. Most provisions in the Act became effective October 1, 1999.

- **2001—Economic Growth and Tax Relief Reconciliation Act—**As part of the 2001 Economic Growth and Tax Relief Reconciliation Act, the Congress introduced several marriage tax penalty relief provisions, including one that affects the structure of the EITC. This provision increased the EITC phase-out start and end points for married couple joint tax returns by $3,000, with the increase phased in over a 7-year period starting in calendar year 2002.

- **2002—Farm Bill Changes to Food Stamps—**The Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002, reauthorized the Food Stamp Program through fiscal year 2007. The law also introduced a variety of changes to the Food Stamp Program, including the expansion of eligibility for certain groups of noncitizens, the addition of a provision that allows states to provide "transitional" food stamp benefits for up to 5 months for families leaving TANF, and the addition of a number of other state options to ease access to the program and administrative burdens on applicants/recipients and program operators.

Changing Fiscal Conditions

Though the last decade brought significant economic expansion across the country, recently states have dealt with changing fiscal conditions, and consequently, states are now facing one of their most challenging budgetary situations in years. Most states are required to balance their operating budgets, and since their revenues have been much lower than forecast, state officials have struggled to bring expenditures into line with available resources. A state's need to cut spending or increase revenues can be mitigated if it has accumulated surplus balances in reserve. States accumulated significant reserves during the late 1990s. However, these reserves have dropped appreciably as states address their fiscal crises. Because of the recent fiscal changes at both federal and state levels, support programs have also undergone cyclical spending changes in recent years. For example, because the amount of the TANF block grant is fixed, as caseloads decline—as they did in all states through the late 1990s—states have additional resources to expand their programs and create reserves. However, as caseloads increase—as they have in some

states since 2000—or other factors cause program costs to rise, states bear most of their TANF program's fiscal risks.

States Provide a Wide Range of Supports to Low-Income Families although Extent of Receipt Varies

States draw on a mixture of federal and state funds to provide low-income families with a wide range of supports, although the specific types of supports offered and the extent to which eligible families are able to receive the supports they seek vary by state and sometimes within states. The supports available to low-income families range from those that address basic needs to those intended to promote economic independence, and include subsidized child care, cash assistance, transportation support services, utility assistance, health services, job retention and advancement services, and tax credits, as well as various other supports. As shown in table 2, state officials responding to our 50-state survey reported using state funds and federal TANF funds for most or all of the supports listed, but they also used other federal funding sources specific to each type of support. In particular, states used Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) and Social Services Block Grant (SSBG) funds for subsidized child care, Job Access and Reverse Commute (JARC) funds for transportation support services, Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) funds for utility assistance, and WIA funds for both job retention and advancement services and transportation support services. State officials also reported that county or local funds were used for transportation support services. Clearly, of the supports listed in the table, transportation support services draw on the largest number of different funding sources,[4] and of the federal funding sources identified, TANF funds appear to be the most flexible, as states are using them to provide several different types of supports in addition to cash assistance.

[4]In addition to the funding sources listed in table 2, Medicaid and SCHIP are both significant sources of funding for transportation to and from medical services for low-income populations.

Table 2: Most Common Public Funding Sources, by Type of Support

Funding sources	Subsidized child care	Job retention and career advancement services	Transportation support services	Utility assistance
TANF block grant	●	●	●	●
WIA funding		●	●	
SSBG	●			
CCDF	●			
JARC grants			●	
LIHEAP				●
State funding	●	●	●	
County/local funding			●	

Source: GAO survey, spring 2003.

Note: Not all states responded to each question.

Supports for low-income families are also administered at different levels of government within each state. In most states, officials reported that supports were administered at the state level, although in some states, county or local governments administered supports, as shown in table 3.

Table 3: Number of States in Which Administrative Authority for Each Type of Support Is at the State or County/Local Level

	Entity with administrative authority				
Type of support	State	County/local	Other[a]	Don't know	Total respondents[b]
Subsidized child care	43	3	2	0	48
Job retention and advancement	29	9	3	1	42
Transportation support services	33	9	7	0	49
Utility assistance	39	4	5	0	48
TANF cash assistance	40	6	4	0	50

Source: GAO survey, spring 2003.

[a]Examples of "other" responses include responses from the District of Columbia and those from states in which administrative authority differs depending on the specific support provided. For instance, a state might provide some types of transportation support services, while its counties provide other types of transportation support services.

[b]Not all states responded to each question.

States offered a wide variety of supports, although not every specific type was offered in every state, according to officials responding to our 50-state survey. (See table 4.) For example, most states subsidized several types of child care, subsidized individuals' public transportation costs, and offered employment services in at least one location in the state, but somewhat fewer states subsidized child care for sick children, assisted with the purchase of used cars, or offered employment retention bonuses to parents who found and kept jobs. Many of the state officials responding to our survey also indicated that when their states do provide supports, the supports are often not available in all areas of the state, although most officials reported that there were not differences in access to supports in urban and rural areas. In several instances, state officials were not able to provide complete information on the extent to which supports were offered.

Table 4: Number of States Offering Specific Types of Services in at Least One Location in the State

Type of service	Offered	Not offered	Don't know	Total respondents[a]
Child care subsidies				
Infant care	49	0	0	49
Daytime child care	49	0	0	49
Before/after school care	49	0	0	49
Evening/weekend child care	49	0	0	49
Special needs child care	46	2	0	48
Child care for sick children	29	14	2	45
Transportation support services				
Public transit subsidies (e.g., bus passes)	43	4	2	49
Van/shuttle service	39	5	3	47
Car repairs	43	3	0	46
Car insurance	37	2	2	41
Fuel vouchers	33	7	6	46
Establishment of public transit route	30	8	6	44
Used cars	31	11	2	44
Carpool matching	17	14	10	41
Job retention and advancement services				
Employment services (e.g., job search)	44	1	1	46

Type of service	Offered	Not offered	Don't know	Total respondents[a]
Post-employment case management	43	1	1	45
Training	42	3	1	46
Education	40	4	1	45
Mentoring and peer relationships	31	9	4	44
Employment retention bonuses	23	19	3	45
Utility assistance				
Heating	46	1	2	49
Electricity	41	2	3	46
Telephone	27	7	9	43
Air conditioning/home cooling	30	11	3	44
Weatherization/conservation	44	1	4	49
Water	17	17	9	43
Plumbing/septic	8	21	11	40
Health assistance				
Domestic violence program	42	2	0	44
Mental health treatment	45	1	0	46
Substance abuse treatment	44	2	0	46

Source: GAO survey, spring 2003.

[a]Not all states responded to each question.

According to data collected through our survey, although states may offer supports, not all eligible families who apply for supports receive them, as illustrated in figure 2. For the most part, state officials who could provide the data reported that a majority of eligible families who applied for supports did receive them, especially subsidized child care and utility assistance. However, it is worth noting that officials in some states reported that less than half of eligible applicants received certain types of transportation support services and job retention and advancement services. For nearly every type of support, an official in at least one state reported that less than half of eligible applicants received that type of support. The most common reasons cited for eligible applicants not receiving supports were an insufficient supply of services, insufficient state or federal funding, and the applicants' physical or logistical difficulties gaining access to the supports that were offered. Figure 2 also illustrates that several officials responding to our survey did not know the extent to which eligible applicants received some types of supports. The officials reported, most frequently, that the reasons they did not have this

information were that services varied broadly by locality and that data were not available or not complete at the state level. Further, figure 2 refers only to the eligible families who apply for supports and does not include families who would be eligible but who do not apply for them.

Figure 2: Number of States That Provide Selected Supports, by Type of Support Provided and Share of Applicants Who Receive the Support

Support service		Number of states Proportion of eligible applicants who receive supports All or almost all (86-100%)	More than half (61-85%)	About half (41-60%)	Fewer than half (16-40%)	Almost none (1-15%)	Don't know	Total respondents[a]
Subsidized child care	Infant care for children (0-2 years)	20	6	1	1	2	16	46
	Daytime child care for children (2-5 years)	19	7	0	1	2	15	44
	Before/after school child care	19	6	1	1	2	15	44
	Evening and weekend child care	18	6	0	1	2	17	44
	Special needs child care	17	5	0	1	2	17	42
	Child care for sick children	11	3	0	0	2	10	26
Transportation assistance	Public transit subsidies	13	3	3	0	2	19	40
	Van/shuttle service	11	1	2	2	3	18	37
	Car repair	10	2	3	4	5	17	41
	Car insurance	10	2	0	3	4	18	37
	Fuel vouchers	7	2	4	1	4	13	31
	Establishment of public transit route	4	2	0	1	3	19	29
	Used cars	2	2	2	2	6	16	30
	Carpool matching	2	0	0	2	3	10	17
Job retention and advancement	Employment services	24	4	1	1	0	10	40
	Post-employment case management	14	6	1	6	3	8	38
	Training	12	6	1	9	2	9	39
	Education	11	6	2	6	2	10	37
	Mentoring and peer relationship	7	1	2	6	6	8	30
	Employment retention bonuses	4	4	1	2	4	6	21
Utility assistance	Heating	15	12	2	4	0	12	45
	Electicity	11	12	1	3	0	13	40
	Telephone	8	1	2	2	0	13	26
	Air conditioning/home cooling	6	5	2	4	0	12	29
	Weatherization/ energy conservation	5	6	5	6	5	16	43
	Water	4	3	0	2	0	7	16
	Plumbing/septic	1	1	1	1	0	4	8
Domestic violence programs		16	3	1	2	0	22	44
Mental health treatment programs		12	5	1	3	0	26	47
Substance abuse treatment programs		9	9	0	2	1	22	43

Source: GAO survey, spring 2003.

Note: Figure 2 provides information on the extent to which states serve families who apply for and are eligible for supports under the states' eligibility criteria, set within federal guidelines. For example,

while states are allowed to set income eligibility thresholds for subsidized child care up to 85 percent of state median income, most states set thresholds at lower levels. Figure 2 does not include families who would be eligible but who do not apply for supports.

[a]Not all states responded to each question.

In some cases, whether a family receives support services may depend on whether the family is receiving cash assistance. In the past, receipt of support services sometimes was linked to receipt of cash assistance, and as a result, cash assistance recipients may have been more likely to receive supports than other low-income families. However, as the emphasis of support programs has shifted toward promoting employment and economic self-sufficiency for a broader population, states have targeted some supports to low-income families who are not receiving cash assistance. In our 50-state survey, only a limited number of state officials were able to provide information on the extent to which low-income families receiving each type of support were also currently receiving TANF cash assistance. Among those who did provide this information, most reported that transportation support services and job retention and advancement services were received primarily by families also receiving TANF cash assistance, while subsidized child care and utility assistance were received primarily by families not receiving TANF cash assistance.

In addition to the supports discussed above, states offer several other supports to low-income families. In particular:

- TANF cash assistance is provided in all states for eligible low-income families.

- Short-term cash benefits are provided to low-income families in 39 states, according to our survey. These benefits are provided through TANF diversion programs, state emergency assistance programs, or other programs. TANF diversion programs provide low-income families who are eligible for TANF cash assistance with short-term cash or in-kind benefits, on a case-by-case basis, in lieu of TANF cash assistance. State emergency assistance programs provide similar short-term support outside of TANF.

- State tax credits for low-income families were offered by almost half of the states in 2002, according to our survey, with the most frequently provided type of state tax credits—child care tax credits—provided by 23 states. In addition, 19 states reported offering a state earned income tax credit, and 7 states reported offering a housing credit.

- While Medicaid and SCHIP services are offered in nearly all states, 12 states reported in our survey that they offered additional health insurance

programs so that low-income families not eligible for Medicaid or SCHIP could obtain health insurance for a reduced fee.

- Some other key supports for low-income families are available nationally, such as food stamps, the federal EITC, and housing assistance.

In our site visits, several states mentioned other supports they consider to be important for low-income families, namely, before- and after-school programs and child support enforcement programs. Oklahoma contracts with several different organizations to provide after-school programs that focus on mentoring, teen pregnancy prevention, drug abuse prevention, and the overall goals of promoting child well-being and strengthening families. Several states consider child support to be a significant income support for welfare families. Wisconsin has established a unique program through waivers that allows welfare recipients to receive the entire amount of child support collected on their behalf each month. Though several states mentioned before- and after-school programs and child support efforts as important supports for low-income families, some of the states we visited noted supports that were more distinctive. For example, Oklahoma has gained national prominence because of its efforts to create programs that focus on supporting marriage and family formation through welfare reform.

Selected States Have Structured Supports to Serve a Broad Range of Low-Income Families in a Coordinated Manner

On the whole, the five states we visited structured their supports to serve a broad range of low-income families in a coordinated manner, although the specific structures varied by state and type of support. Officials reported that they structured the eligibility criteria and benefits of many supports in ways that allow them to serve families with different levels of income and employment. For example, while the income eligibility criteria for supports like TANF cash assistance typically limit receipt to families with the lowest incomes, the states we visited reported that for other supports, such as subsidized child care and transportation support services, the maximum income eligibility thresholds are often set at higher income levels in order to provide support for a broader range of low-income families, including some with earned income. Families with higher incomes, though, might receive smaller benefit amounts or might be required to pay for part of the cost of a service. State officials in the five states we visited also reported that they have made efforts to deliver supports to low-income families in a coordinated manner, such as by allowing families to access multiple supports through a single caseworker or a single application form.

States We Visited Have Structured Supports to Serve a Broad Range of Low-Income Families

The five states we visited established income eligibility criteria that allow a broad range of families with different levels of income to gain access to supports. Because each state establishes its own maximum income eligibility levels for many supports, such as subsidized child care and utility assistance, the population eligible for each support differs across the states.[5] As shown in table 5, in Oklahoma, families with incomes below 110 percent of the FPL are eligible for utility assistance, while in Wisconsin, families with incomes up to 150 percent of the FPL are eligible for this support. Overall, the five states we visited set the maximum income eligibility levels for many supports at 200 percent of the FPL or higher, as shown in table 5. In fiscal year 2003, 200 percent of the FPL was equivalent to approximately $31,000 for a family of three, which means that families whose annual incomes were less than or equal to $31,000 would be eligible for these supports as long as they met other eligibility criteria, such as having dependent children or not having other means of support. Setting higher income eligibility thresholds for some supports allows states to serve both families with very low incomes as well as families who may be working and earning somewhat higher incomes, which can assist families transitioning from welfare to work as well as other working families who have not received welfare.

While New York, North Carolina, and Wisconsin set 200 percent of the FPL as the maximum income eligibility level for several supports, in Oklahoma and Washington, income eligibility criteria varied widely by support. These two states set the maximum income eligibility level at 200 percent of the FPL or higher for subsidized child care but set it lower for other supports. Washington officials reported that income eligibility criteria for supports in their state were deliberately graduated to ensure that as families' incomes rose, they would not lose eligibility for several supports simultaneously. According to officials, this approach attempts to minimize the potential work disincentive associated with losing eligibility for several supports at once, as families with increasing earnings instead lose eligibility for supports gradually.

[5]As previously noted, states are able to adjust income eligibility criteria, within federal guidelines, for some supports for low-income families, but for other supports, such as food stamps and the federal EITC, the federal government sets income eligibility rules.

Table 5: Maximum Income Eligibility Level for Receipt of Supports as a Percentage of the FPL, by Site Visit State and by Support

State	Subsidized child care	TANF diversion	Transportation assistance	Utility assistance	Job retention and advancement services
New York	200	200	200	213[a]	200
North Carolina	236[a]	200	200	130	200
Oklahoma	227[a]	130	No maximum	110	Differs by program
Washington	200	Same as TANF cash[b]	150	125	Differs by program
Wisconsin	200	Not available	200	150	200

Source: GAO analysis of data provided by site visit states.

Note: The maximum income eligibility levels shown for transportation assistance and job retention and advancement services were reported for specific programs serving low-income families. These do not necessarily represent eligibility criteria for all transportation and job retention and advancement programs offered in these states.

[a]The state's maximum income eligibility level is based on a percentage of state median income. These levels have been converted to a percentage of FPL for consistency.

[b]In Washington, the maximum monthly TANF cash assistance grant for a family of three is $546. Because Washington has a 50 percent earned income disregard, a family of three would be eligibile for at least $1 of TANF cash assistance if its monthly earned income was less than $1092, which is equivalent to 86 percent of the FPL.

Across the five states we visited, the form of supports for low-income families and the frequency of provision varied by state and support. Supports for low-income families can take several different forms, including cash benefits, vouchers, in-kind benefits, and services. For example, families might receive cash benefits through TANF cash assistance, vouchers to pay for public transportation, wood to heat their homes in the winter, or job-search assistance services. In addition, the frequency of support provision, or how often a family receives a support, varies depending on how the support is structured. Some supports, such as TANF cash assistance, are provided on a monthly basis, while other supports, such as utility assistance and tax credits, are provided on a one-time basis or once annually.

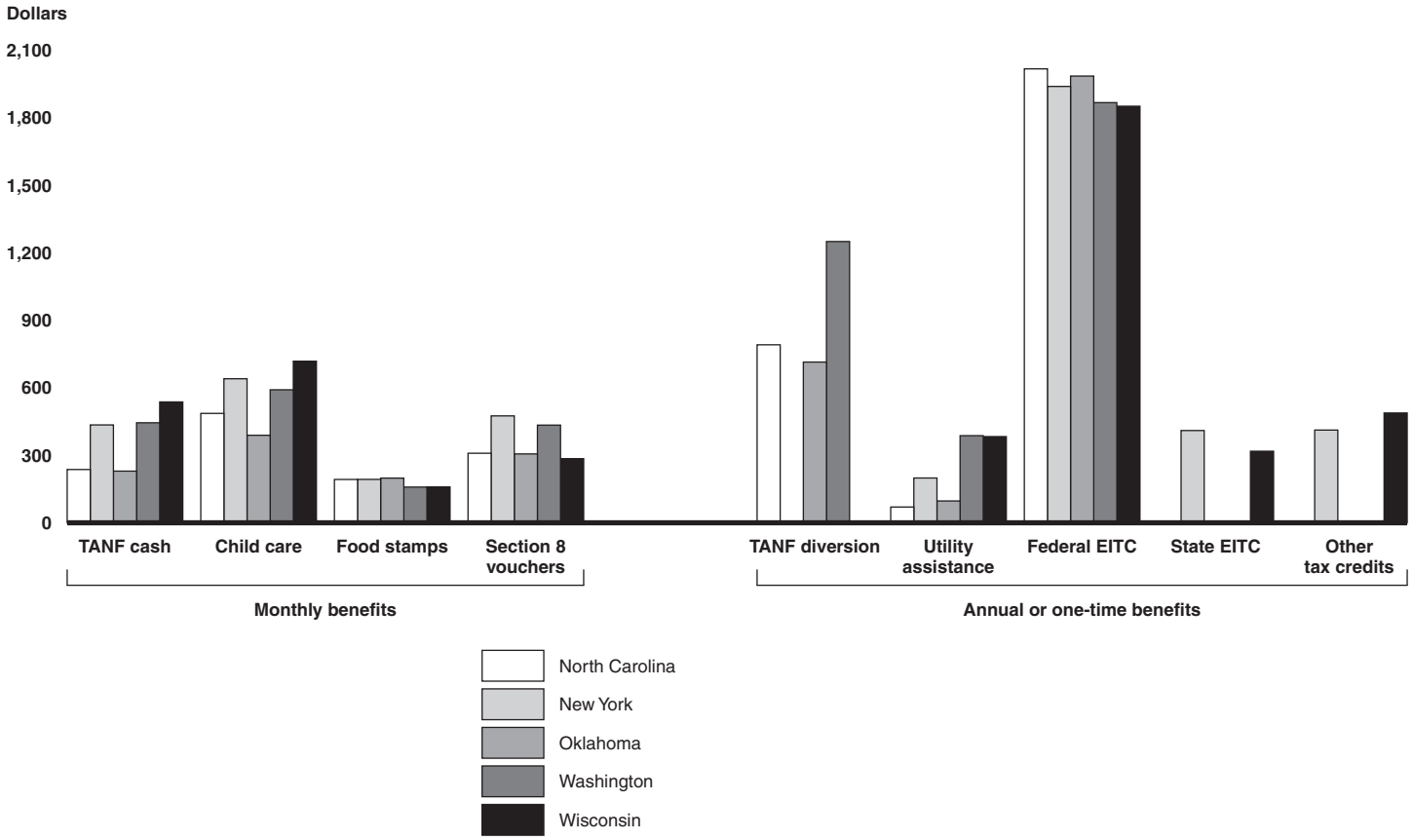
When structuring supports, states also make decisions about the benefit amounts provided to eligible families.[6] In the five states we visited, the average benefit amount provided to support recipients varied by state and

[6]As previously noted, states are able to adjust the benefit amounts, within federal guidelines, for some supports for low-income families, but for other supports, such as food stamps and the federal EITC, the federal government sets benefit amounts.

support, as shown in figure 3. For example, though in all five of the states we visited the average monthly benefit for subsidized child care was larger than the average monthly benefits for other supports, the benefit value differed across states, with the most significant difference between two states equaling approximately $300. Although average benefits provide some idea of the value of each support to a recipient family, because many supports are structured to provide benefits to a broad range of families with different income levels and family sizes, individual family benefits often differ from the average family benefit.[7]

[7]Though states were able to provide average benefit data per support, they were unable to provide the average total benefits per family. States typically do not have unified systems of data collection that would allow them to track all of the various supports individual families receive, especially when these supports are administered by different state agencies. See U.S. General Accounting Office, *Welfare Reform: Improving State Automated Systems Requires Coordinated Federal Effort*, HEHS-00-48 (Washington, D.C.: April 27, 2000).

Figure 3: Average Monthly and Annual Family Benefits per Support, by Site Visit State



Sources: GAO analysis of federal and state data.

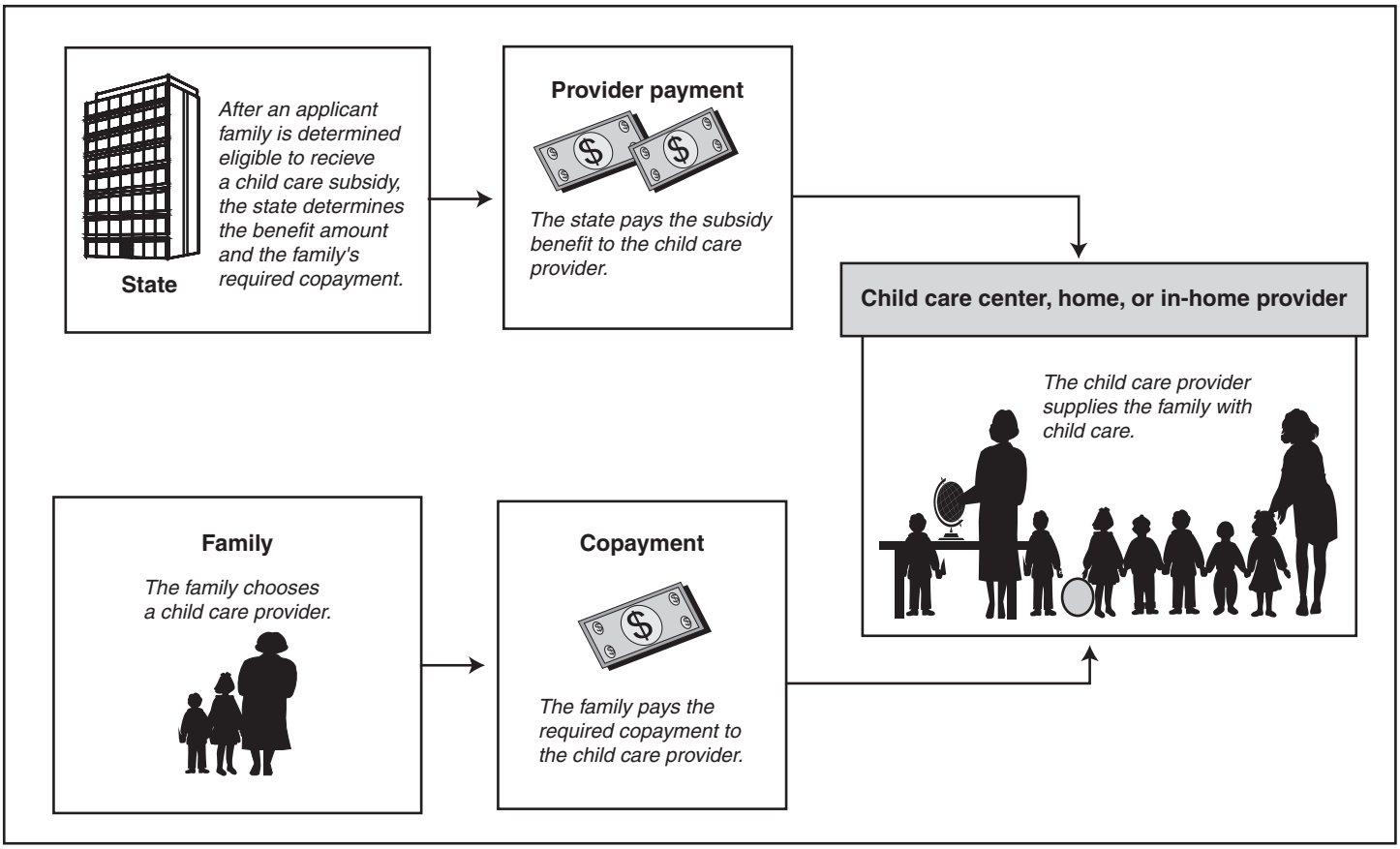
To determine each individual family's benefits for supports, such as subsidized child care and TANF cash assistance, states often use a sliding scale, which adjusts the benefit amount received based on a range of factors, including family size and income. By using a sliding scale to determine benefit amounts, states are able to serve a broader range of low-income families with varied benefits. For other supports, such as utility assistance, while some states use a sliding scale method to determine each family's benefit, other states provide each family with a flat grant. For example, North Carolina determines the flat grant for utility assistance recipients by dividing the number of eligible applicant families into the total funding available each year.

When structuring benefit amounts, states also make decisions about the structures of payments to service providers and cost-sharing with recipient families.[8] Though families receive benefits directly from the state for some supports, such as TANF cash assistance, states pay benefits through vouchers or directly to service providers for several other supports, such as subsidized child care and utility assistance. These provider payments consist of the family's calculated benefit amount, and payments are also typically based on the rate charged by the provider for the service. For example, federal regulations direct states to pay market rates to child care providers receiving child care subsidies, but each state is responsible for completing its own market rate survey and determining what rates will be paid to each provider. In North Carolina and Oklahoma, child care centers are assigned "star" ratings based on quality and other factors, and the state sets provider payment rates based on type of provider, market rates, and star levels, such that higher-quality providers receive larger payments relative to other providers.

Concerning cost sharing, state policymakers sometimes require families to pay part of the support cost, or a copayment, for services, as shown in figure 4. In the five states we visited, states typically pay a portion of each family's cost for subsidized child care and SCHIP services, but some or all recipient families must also pay copayments for these services. By having either some or all recipient families pay copayments, the state is likely able to serve a broader range of families with available funds. For example, Wisconsin's BadgerCare program, which provides health insurance for families whose incomes make them ineligible for Medicaid, requires recipients with incomes over 150 percent of the FPL to pay monthly premiums as well as copayments for certain BadgerCare services.

[8]For more information on the structures of payments to service providers and cost sharing with recipient families, see U.S. General Accounting Office, *Child Care: States Exercise Flexibility in Setting Reimbursement Rates and Providing Access for Low-Income Children*, GAO-02-894 (Washington, D.C.: September 18, 2002).

Figure 4: Relationship between Provider Payments and Copayments for Supports, as Illustrated for Child Care Subsidies



Source: GAO.

Selected States Deliver Supports in a Coordinated Manner

Each of the five states we visited made efforts to deliver supports in a coordinated manner. In each of these states, several supports for low-income families were colocated at local offices, thereby providing families with a single access point for a variety of supports. Across the five states, supports that were typically colocated in local offices included TANF cash assistance and TANF diversion, subsidized child care, transportation support services, food stamps, Medicaid, and SCHIP. For example, in North Carolina, each local social service office includes staff members who assist with applications and determine eligibility for food stamps, TANF cash assistance, TANF diversion, subsidized child care, Medicaid, SCHIP, utility assistance, transportation support services, and emergency assistance. This colocation of supports at local offices is similar to our

previously reported findings on the colocation of support services, such as food stamps, TANF cash assistance, and Medicaid, at WIA one-stop centers, which provide employment and training assistance.[9] Though this trend toward increased colocation of supports seems to be taking place in many states in a variety of local offices, officials in several of the states we visited reported that housing assistance often is not colocated with other supports for low-income families, in some cases because the supports are administered by separate state or local agencies.

When supports are colocated in a single location, it is likely that caseworkers also help coordinate the provision of supports for low-income families. In each of the five states we visited, state officials reported that the delivery of supports was sometimes coordinated among multiple caseworkers or directly coordinated by a single caseworker who provides families with case management services, assistance in identifying support needs, and eligibility determination. States cited several examples of coordinated case management, including the following:

- In Washington's local offices, a single caseworker determines an applicant family's eligibility for TANF cash assistance, food stamps, General Assistance,[10] emergency assistance, and health insurance programs, such as Medicaid and SCHIP.

- North Carolina and Washington colocated substance abuse caseworkers in the local offices that provide TANF cash assistance in order to improve caseworkers' abilities to coordinate the delivery of these services for families who need services from both programs. In contrast to these efforts to improve coordination between substance abuse caseworkers and staff delivering other supports for low-income families, Washington officials noted that less coordination existed between mental health staff and staff delivering other low-income supports.

[9]Specifically, in U.S. General Accounting Office, *Workforce Investment Act: States and Localities Increasingly Coordinate Services for TANF Clients, but Better Information Needed on Effective Approaches*, GAO-02-696 (Washington, D.C.: July 3, 2002), we reported that in 2001, 16 states provided TANF cash assistance in a majority of their one-stops, 20 states conducted Medicaid eligibility determination in at least some of their one-stops, and 26 states conducted food stamp eligibility determination in at least some of their one-stops.

[10]Washington's General Assistance program provides cash assistance benefits to families and individuals who are unable to work because of incapacity and who do not qualify for other federal- and state-funded cash assistance programs.

- Wisconsin provides a case management program that assists low-income families not receiving TANF cash assistance with the coordination of supports. Wisconsin implemented this case management program in order to improve access and delivery of supports to low-income families who have left TANF cash assistance or are not receiving TANF cash assistance, as many studies have reported that these families are less likely to receive the supports for which they are eligible than are families receiving TANF cash assistance.

  To provide coordinated case management and streamlined supports, states typically combine funding streams from several different programs, which can prove challenging. For example, in 2002, Oklahoma combined funding streams from several different programs when the state adopted a "one family, one caseworker" philosophy for low-income families receiving TANF cash assistance, food stamps, and subsidized child care. Oklahoma officials reported that although they initially faced the challenge of determining how to allocate caseworker costs to each separate support program, officials addressed this challenge by surveying caseworkers engaged in the provision of these supports at several points in time to determine the amount of time they spent delivering each support.

  In three of the five states we visited, officials reported that integrated applications, which allow a family to apply for several supports at once, and integrated computer systems, which store information on recipients of several different supports, have been implemented to help coordinate the delivery of supports. In particular, families in Oklahoma apply for TANF cash assistance, subsidized child care, Medicaid, and food stamps through a single, comprehensive application. Further, though some state officials noted that the development of computer systems that simultaneously comply with the rules of several federal programs continued to be a challenge, Washington officials reported that they designed both an integrated application and a single computer system to coordinate the delivery of several supports for low-income families and to gather data on support recipients. In addition, Wisconsin has implemented a computer system that allows simultaneous application and eligibility determination for many supports for low-income families, excluding housing assistance

and utility assistance.[11] Concerning utility assistance, Wisconsin officials noted that the use of both a separate computer system and application somewhat prohibits its coordination with other supports, but the ease of applying for utility assistance on a straightforward application that gathers only the information related to a family's eligibility for utility assistance may also improve families' ability to access this support.

In the states we visited, the delivery of some supports is also coordinated through categorical eligibility rules, which make recipients of certain supports automatically eligible to receive other supports. For example, in North Carolina, families who receive food stamps are automatically qualified to receive utility assistance and federal telephone assistance.[12] Further, in Washington, families who receive any of the support programs administered by the Washington Department of Social and Health Services are automatically eligible to receive state-funded telephone assistance. This direct link between receipt of two or more separate support programs can facilitate low-income families' access to these supports.

Although efforts to deliver supports for low-income families in a coordinated manner were under way statewide in the five states we visited, because of local variation in offices and staff, the level of support coordination might differ within the state. For example, North Carolina officials reported that variation exists in how counties organize and coordinate the provision of food stamps with other support services. In all counties, food stamps are colocated in the same local offices with other supports. However, in some counties, separate staff provide each type of support, while in other counties individual staff provide both food stamps and other supports. Also, though efforts to coordinate the delivery of some supports were apparent in all five of the states we visited, state officials also reported instances where support coordination was not occurring or had been reduced and cited challenges to support coordination, such as

[11]For a more detailed discussion of the use of computer systems as a tool to streamline eligibility determination, see U.S. General Accounting Office, *Means-Tested Programs: Determining Financial Eligibility Is Cumbersome and Can Be Simplified*, GAO-02-58 (Washington, D.C.: November 2, 2001). For further discussion of the use of computer systems in human services, including initiatives in other states and obstacles to systems modernization, see HEHS-00-48.

[12]North Carolina's use of categorical eligibility for LIHEAP applicants already receiving food stamps is consistent with what we reported in GAO-02-58. In that report, we found that Nebraska also exercised this option, which is allowed under federal law.

the complexities of combining multiple funding streams and satisfying the various requirements of separate federal programs.

Many States Have Expanded Supports in Recent Years, but Express Uncertainty about the Future

Over the last several years, states have made substantial changes in their supports for low-income families, with most of these changes expanding the provision and receipt of supports, but state officials expressed uncertainty about their continued ability to provide the current level of support. Though many federal policy changes affecting support programs have occurred in the last decade, welfare reform played a central role in changes to a broad range of supports for low-income families. States made significant changes to the structure of their welfare programs in order to focus their new TANF cash assistance programs on the goals of employment and economic independence. To further this effort, states began spending increased amounts of funds on work supports for a broad range of low-income families. Since 2000, states have implemented many programmatic changes that affect the availability of supports for low-income families. While, in general, the availability of supports has increased during this time period, according to officials, as states have responded to recent fiscal constraints, they have made additional changes that limit the provision of some supports to low-income families. Further, as states plan for the future of supports in the current fiscal environment, officials reported that they are considering changes that would likely limit the availability and provision of supports for low-income families.

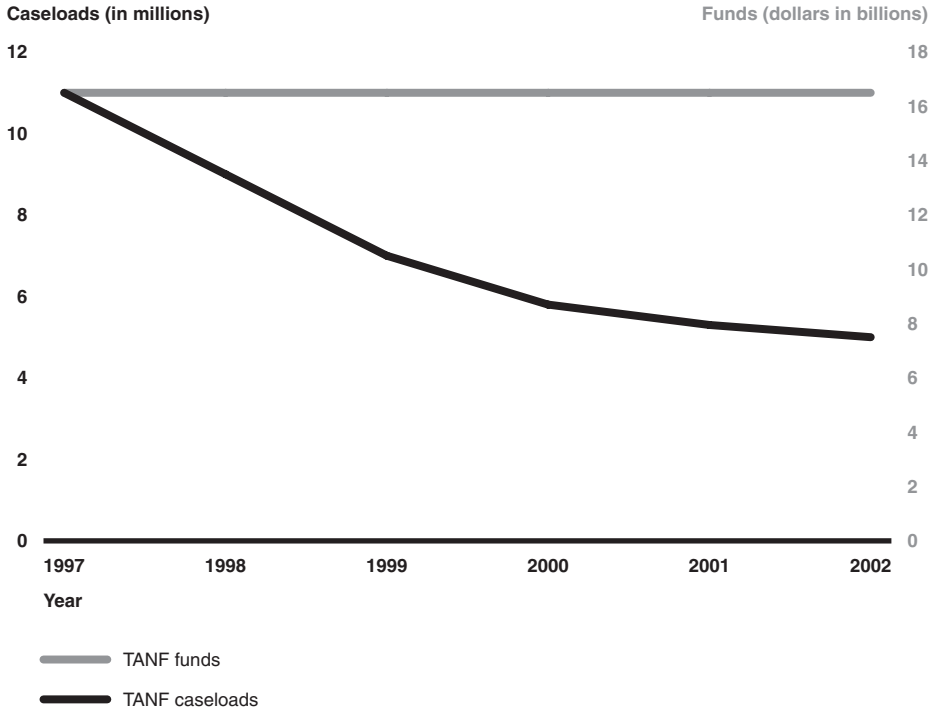
Welfare Reform Played an Integral Role in the Expansion of Supports for Low-Income Families

Since the enactment of PRWORA, welfare caseloads have fallen dramatically, and TANF spending on support services for low-income families has increased. Under TANF, states have the flexibility to provide both income maintenance and work support services that help low-income families find and maintain employment. In addition, as allowed under the TANF block grant structure, states are also able to set aside or reserve TANF funds for use in later years.[13] Figure 5 shows that as states implemented their TANF programs during the strong economy of the late 1990s, the number of TANF cash assistance recipients decreased significantly, while the annual amount of federal funds provided to the states for TANF remained constant, as provided for under the fixed

[13]For more information on TANF reserves, see U.S. General Accounting Office, *Welfare Reform: Information on TANF Balances*, GAO-03-1094 (Washington, D.C.: September 8, 2003) and U.S. General Accounting Office, *Welfare Reform: Information on Changing Labor Market and State Fiscal Conditions*, GAO-03-977 (Washington, D.C.: July 15, 2003).

amount of the block grant. This resulted in a significant amount of funds available to states for supports and other services or saving for future use.

Figure 5: Trends in the TANF Caseload and Federal TANF Block Grant since 1997



Source: GAO analysis of HHS data.

Note: Caseload is measured as number of assistance recipients. TANF regulations define assistance as benefits designed to meet a family's ongoing basic needs. In most instances, families receiving assistance are those receiving monthly cash payments.

As TANF cash assistance caseloads fell, states shifted their spending priorities from cash assistance to support services.[14] As illustrated in figure 6, states decreased the share of TANF expenditures[15] for cash assistance between fiscal years 1998 and 2002 and increased the share spent on

[14]See GAO-02-615T *Welfare Reform: States Provide TANF-Funded Work Support Services to Many Low-Income Families Who Do Not Receive Cash Assistance*, April 10, 2002.

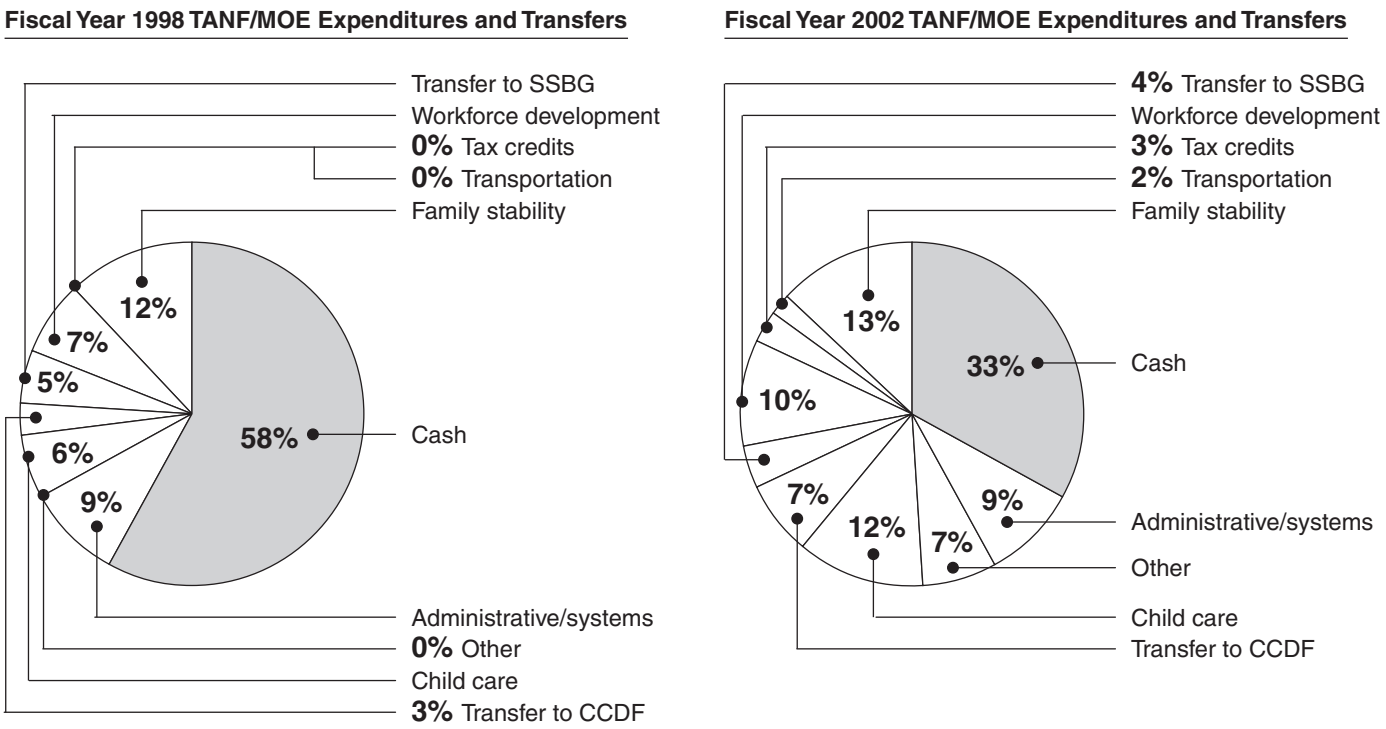
[15]These data include federal TANF funds and state maintenance of effort (MOE) dollars. To qualify for their full TANF allotments each year, states must spend a certain amount of state money, referred to as MOE funds. MOE requirements were calculated based on states' pre-PRWORA welfare spending.

services. Specifically, spending on cash assistance decreased from 58 percent of TANF expenditures in fiscal year 1998 to 33 percent in fiscal year 2002. Over the same time period, the proportion of TANF expenditures on child care increased from 9 percent to 19 percent.[16] The proportion of TANF expenditures for workforce development also increased, from 7 percent in 1998 to 10 percent in 2002. In addition to this increased emphasis on spending on supports, states reported leaving some TANF funds unspent, although the amount varied by state.[17]

[16]TANF and state MOE expenditures on child care include both funds directly spent on child care (labeled Child care in the figure) and funds transferred to the Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) (labeled Transfer to CCDF in the figure). Some TANF funds transferred to the CCDF may not yet have been expended.

[17]For more information on unspent TANF funds, see GAO-03-1094 and GAO-03-977.

Figure 6: National TANF/MOE Expenditures in Fiscal Years 1998 and 2002



Source: GAO analysis of HHS data.

Consistent with figure 6, several state officials reported that their support program expansions in the last several years were often funded with TANF dollars that the states had accumulated as a result of falling TANF cash assistance caseloads. However, some state officials responding to our survey indicated a reversal in this spending trend, which may be due in part to increasing cash assistance caseloads.[18] Approximately half of the state officials responding to our survey reported that since 2000 the number of TANF cash assistance recipients had increased (23 states), while about half of the officials reported that the number of recipients had decreased (24 states). Officials from two states reported no change in the number of recipients. Officials from 9 states with increased cash assistance caseloads reported that between 2000 and the time of survey

[18]The recent increases in caseloads have been small in some states, compared with the declines of the 1990s.

completion in spring 2003, funding of other supports was reduced in order to redirect funds to TANF cash assistance. Among these 9 states, TANF funding was most commonly reduced for job training, basic education for adults, and transportation, while funds were less often redirected from child care, job search, and case management, as table 6 displays.

Table 6: Number of States Reporting That Funds Were Reduced for Support Services to Redirect Funds to TANF Cash Assistance between State Fiscal Year 2000 and Spring 2003

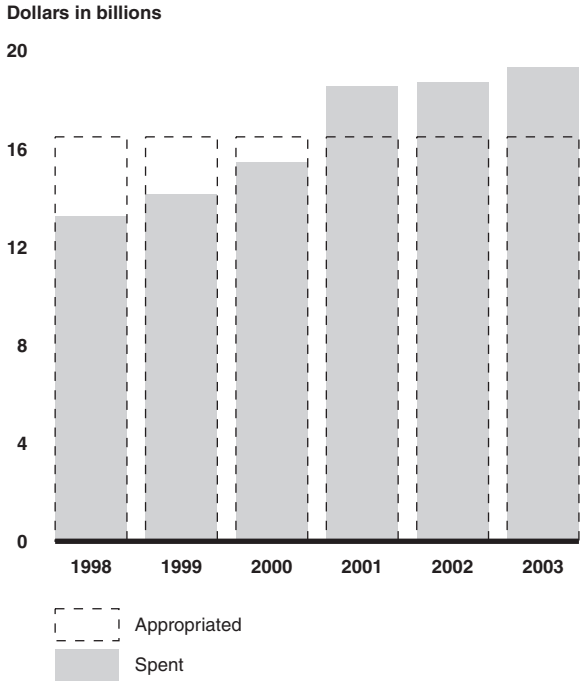
Support service for which funding was reduced	Number of states reducing funds for support
Job training	7
Basic education for adults	5
Transportation	5
Child care	3
Job search	3
Case management	2
Total number of states indicating at least one of the above	**9**

Source: GAO survey, spring 2003.

Note: Thirty-nine states reported that they had not redirected funds to TANF cash assistance.

During our site visits, several officials explained that they no longer have sufficient TANF funds set aside to continue to fund support programs at current levels, which is consistent with TANF spending trends at the national level. As shown in figure 7, since 2001, states have spent more TANF funds than they received in their annual awards. To support this level of spending, states are drawing more heavily upon their TANF balances.

Figure 7: Trends in Annual TANF Spending Relative to TANF Funding



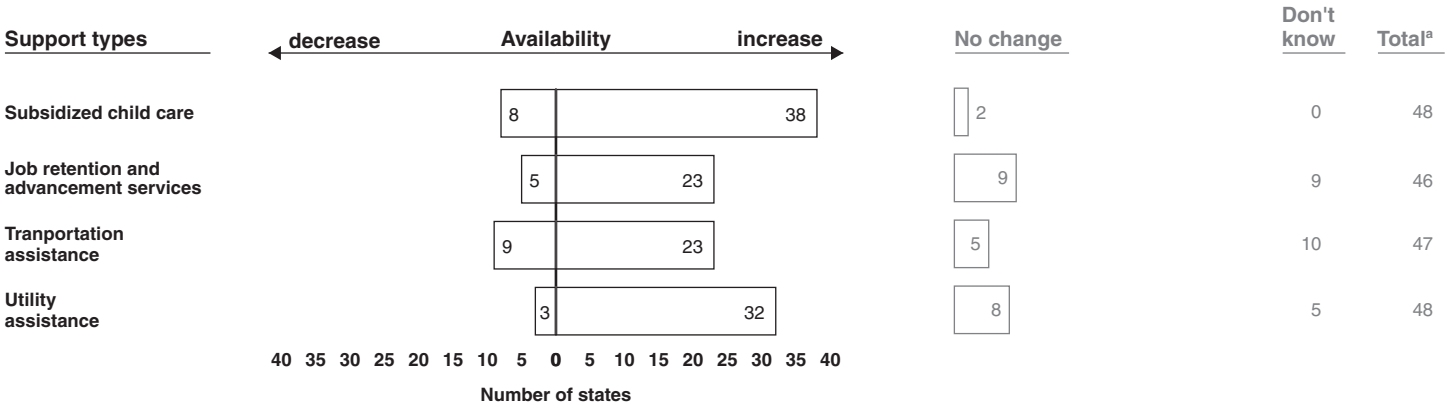
Sources: GAO analysis of HHS and Treasury data.

Note: Includes expenditures from states' TANF programs and from TANF funds transferred to the CCDF and SSBG as allowed by law. See GAO-03-1094.

Many States Have Expanded Supports since 2000

Many states reported in our 50-state survey that the availability of supports and the number of families receiving supports have increased since 2000. Figure 8 shows that in most states the number of families receiving assistance with child care, transportation, utilities, and job retention and advancement increased. While the number of recipients can increase as a result of changes in the needs of the population, it can also increase because of changes in state policies that affect the availability of supports.

Figure 8: Number of States Reporting Changes in the Number of Recipients of Each Type of Support between State Fiscal Year 2000 and Spring 2003



Source: GAO survey, spring 2003.

Notes: The survey did not collect data on the number of recipients of Medicaid and SCHIP.

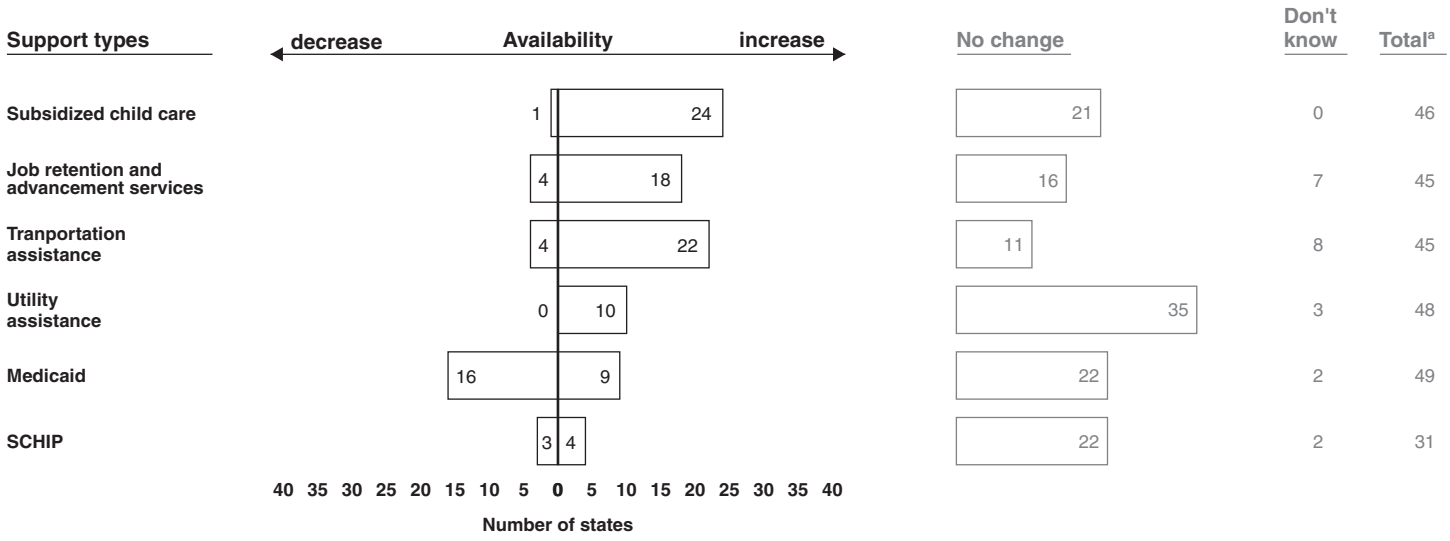
For a complete list of the states reporting these changes, see appendix III.

[a]Not all states responded to each question.

States can expand or limit the availability of supports by increasing or decreasing the number of benefits and services available or the types of services provided. Most states reported that the number or types of child care subsidies, transportation support services, and job retention and advancement services stayed the same or increased between state fiscal year 2000 and spring 2003, an outcome that we have characterized as causing the availability of these supports to stay the same or increase, as shown in figure 9. Few states decreased the number or type of services provided, with the notable exception of Medicaid services, which were decreased in 16 states.

Few changes were reported in the provision of state tax credits. According to officials responding to our 50-state survey, none of their state earned income tax credits, child care tax credits, or housing credits were eliminated, reduced, or suspended between state tax years 2000 and 2002.

Figure 9: Number of States Reporting Changes in the Availability of Supports because of Changes in the Number or Type of Services Provided between State Fiscal Year 2000 and Spring 2003



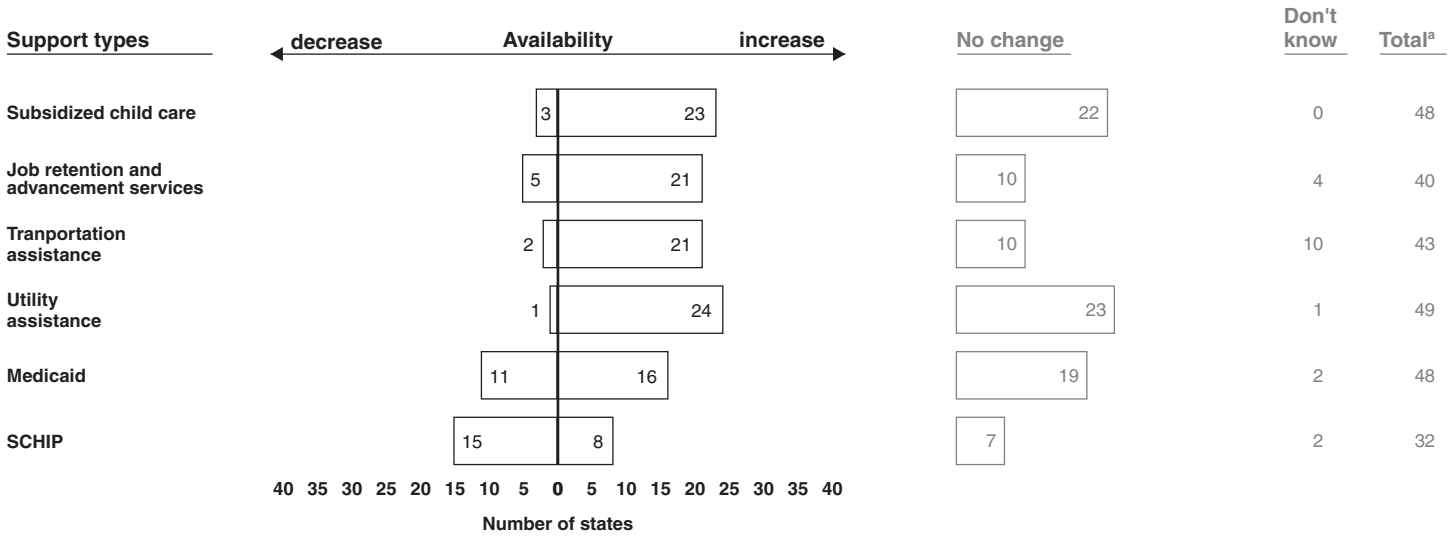
Source: GAO survey, spring 2003.

Note: For a complete list of the states reporting these changes, see appendix III.

[a]Not all states responded to each question.

States can affect the availability of supports indirectly by changing low-income families' awareness of supports through outreach efforts, such as billboards, fliers, and radio announcements. By increasing or decreasing outreach efforts, states may affect low-income families' awareness of supports and the number of low-income families applying. States' outreach efforts for most supports increased or stayed the same between state fiscal year 2000 and spring 2003, an outcome that we have characterized as causing availability to increase or stay the same, as shown in figure 10. Outreach efforts for Medicaid and SCHIP, however, decreased in 11 and 15 states, respectively. Officials in one of the states we visited explained that they had cut back on outreach efforts for their Medicaid and SCHIP programs because of budget constraints and a decrease in the number of doctors who would accept patients covered by Medicaid or SCHIP.

Figure 10: Number of States Reporting Changes in the Availability of Supports because of Changes in Outreach Efforts between State Fiscal Year 2000 and Spring 2003



Source: GAO survey, spring 2003.

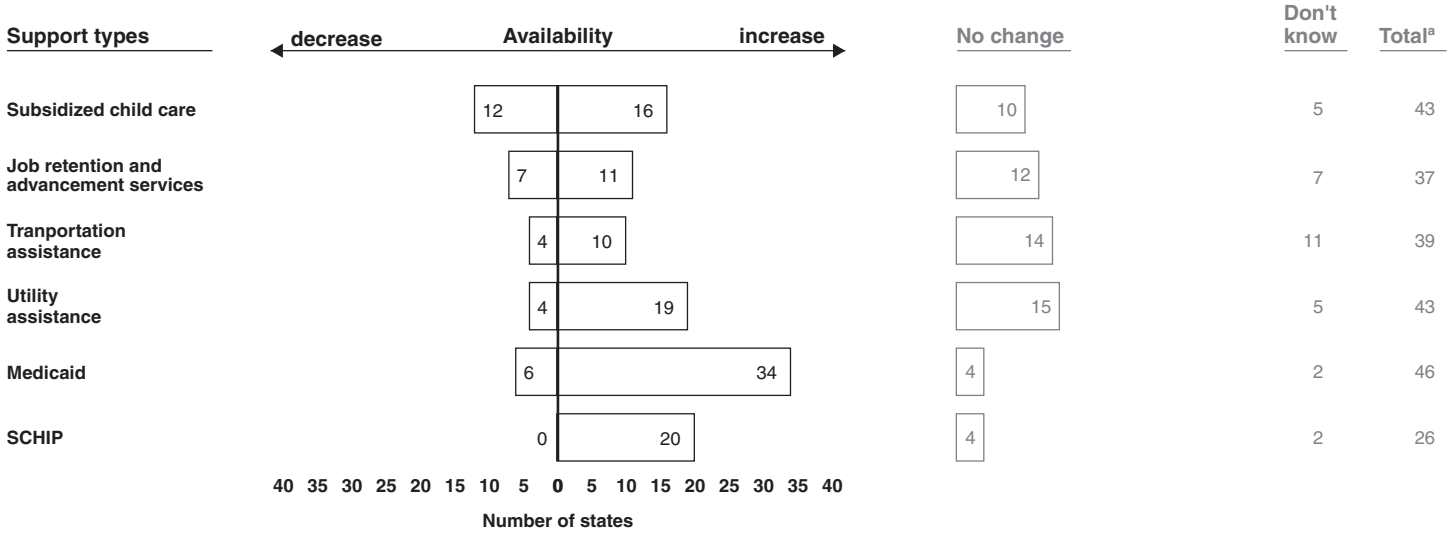
Note: For a complete list of the states reporting changes, see appendix III.

[a]Not all states responded to each question.

Since 2000, states generally have modified income eligibility criteria in ways that expanded the availability of support services. However, some states reported changes to income eligibility criteria in recent years that limited the availability of some supports. (See fig. 11.) Changes to eligibility criteria often affect the number of families receiving supports, as such changes affect the size of the eligible population. In our site visit states, officials often noted that recent changes in federal support policies, such as those for Medicaid, SCHIP, and food stamps, have allowed states to expand their income eligibility criteria to cover a broader range of low-income families with these supports. Further, as shown in figure 11, most states responding to our 50-state survey reported that as a result of changes in income eligibility criteria between state fiscal year 2000 and spring 2003, the eligible populations for utility assistance, Medicaid, and SCHIP increased. For other supports, such as subsidized child care, transportation support services, and job retention and advancement services, survey responses were mixed, and though several states reported that the eligible population increased because of changes in eligibility criteria between state fiscal year 2000 and spring 2003, a substantial number of states reported that changes in eligibility criteria caused the

eligible population to stay the same or decrease, as shown in figure 11. These mixed responses concerning changes in subsidized child care income eligibility criteria are similar to those we previously reported in May 2003.[19] In that study, we surveyed subsidized child care officials directly about changes to income eligibility criteria between state fiscal year 2001 and the spring of 2003, and a majority of respondents reporting changes noted that these resulted in narrowed coverage.

Figure 11: Number of States Reporting Changes in the Availability of Supports because of Changes in Support Eligibility Criteria between State Fiscal Year 2000 and Spring 2003



Source: GAO survey, spring 2003.

Note: For a complete list of the states reporting these changes, see appendix III.

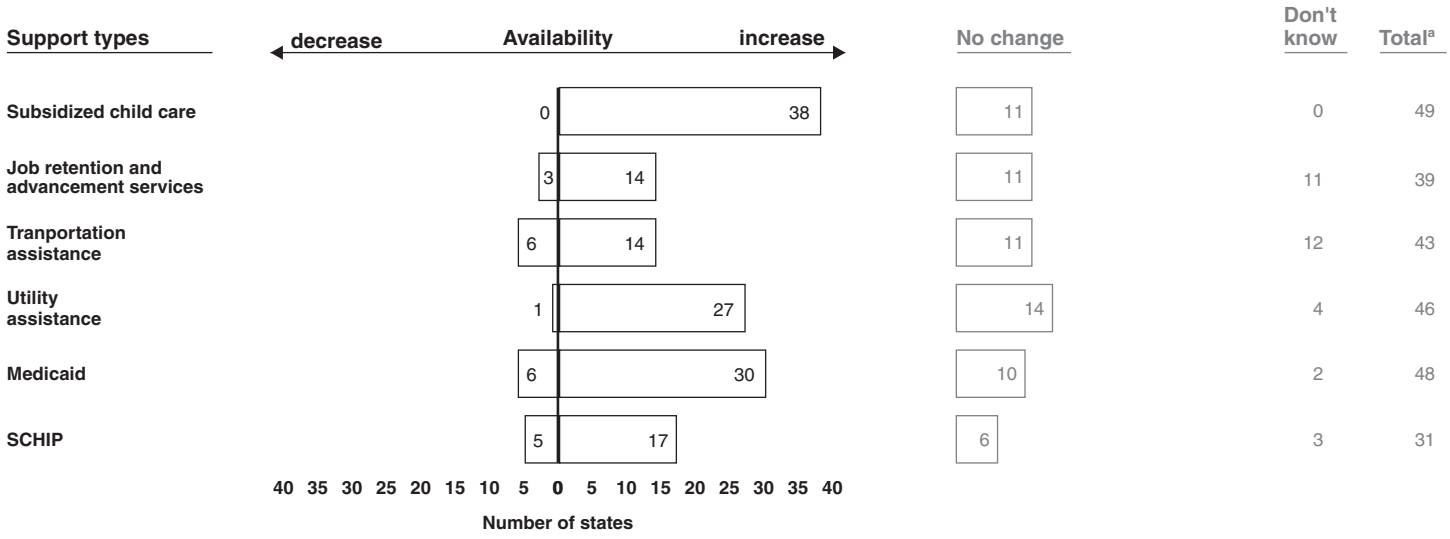
[a]Not all states responded to each question.

Since 2000, many states also modified provider payments in ways that expanded the availability of supports for low-income families, but a small number of states modified these payments in ways that limited the provision of supports or decreased support availability, as shown in

[19]See U.S. General Accounting Office, *Child Care: Recent State Policy Changes Affecting the Availability of Assistance for Low-Income Families*, GAO-03-588 (Washington, D.C.: May 5, 2003), p.26.

figure 12.[20] A majority of the states responding to our 50-state survey reported that provider payments for SCHIP, Medicaid, job retention and advancement services, utility assistance, and subsidized child care increased between state fiscal year 2000 and spring 2003, though some states reported that provider payments for many of these supports decreased during the same time period.

Figure 12: Number of States Reporting Changes in the Availability of Supports because of Provider Payment Changes between State Fiscal Year 2000 and Spring 2003



Source: GAO survey, spring 2003.

Note: For a complete list of the states reporting these changes, see appendix III.

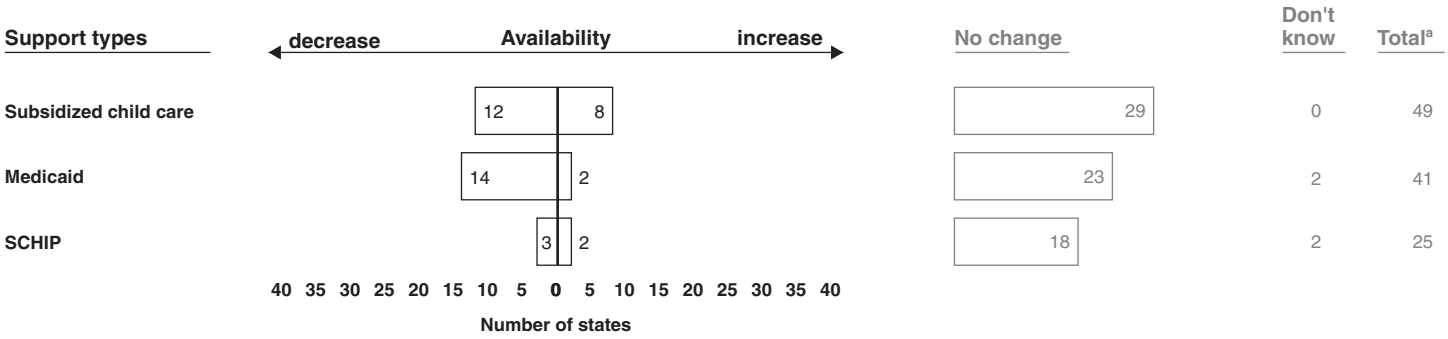
[a]Not all states responded to each question.

Regarding changes to copayments, most states responding to our survey reported that families' copayments for SCHIP, Medicaid, and subsidized child care stayed the same between state fiscal year 2000 and spring 2003, while some states reported that families' copayments increased during that time. We have classified increases in copayments as decreasing the availability of supports because as families' copayments increase, fewer families may be able to afford to participate in the support program. (See fig. 13.) Both North Carolina and Washington officials reported in our site

[20]We have classified increases in provider payments as increasing the availability of supports because the higher payments would tend to encourage more providers to participate.

visits that since state fiscal year 2001, they have increased families' copayments for subsidized child care. These findings are similar to those we previously reported that showed several states increased families' copayments for subsidized child care between state fiscal year 2001 and the spring of 2003, resulting in decreased availability of subsidized child care.[21]

Figure 13: Number of States Reporting Changes in the Availability of Supports because of Copayment Changes between State Fiscal Year 2000 and Spring 2003



Source: GAO survey, spring 2003.

Notes: Copayments are most commonly required for these three supports.

For a complete list of the states reporting these changes, see appendix III.

[a]Not all states responded to each question.

State officials also reported a few changes to the delivery of supports since 2000 in both written responses to our 50-state survey and our five site visits, and of those who reported changes to delivery, most of the changes expanded the provision of supports to low-income families. For example, Washington officials reported that the number of family violence counselors colocated in local offices with other supports for low-income families increased between state fiscal year 2000 and the spring of 2003. Similarly, South Carolina officials responding to our survey noted that they have expanded utility assistance delivery in recent years by adding more offices and staff and by colocating staff in WIA one-stop centers. Concerning transportation support services for low-income families, officials from both North Carolina and Georgia reported that they have made efforts to expand and coordinate services in recent years. In contrast, North Carolina officials also reported during our site visit that

[21]See GAO-03-588, page 26.

the number of substance abuse caseworkers colocated in local offices with other supports for low-income families was reduced in 2002 because of budget cuts.

States Are Considering Changes That Would Limit Supports in the Future

During our site visits, officials expressed concern that the progress they have made in recent years to promote employment and economic independence for low-income families may erode, given the fiscal crises that states currently face. Officials in several of the states we visited explained that their support program expansions in the last several years, which were funded with TANF dollars that the states had accumulated because of falling TANF cash assistance caseloads, may be at risk. These states reported that without sufficient TANF funds to continue these efforts, some support programs face elimination. Oklahoma officials explained that their budget cuts are due not only to declining TANF reserves, but also to decreased state revenues. Although Oklahoma still has TANF reserves, officials there stated that these would probably be depleted soon and they, too, might need to cut back on services that had been expanded.

Many states added written comments to our 50-state survey that expressed concern about the future of supports. Half of the states surveyed reported that the current economic, budget, or funding situations in their states might limit the provision of supports in the near future. In addition, a small number of states reported that decisions had already been made to implement changes in supports between the summer of 2003 and the end of their state's fiscal year 2004. These changes include reducing the number or type of services offered, changing the eligibility criteria to limit the number of families eligible for supports, decreasing payment amounts made to service providers, increasing the copayment amounts that families pay, and decreasing outreach efforts. Planned changes were particularly prevalent for Medicaid and subsidized child care programs.

Concluding Observations

Overall, supports for low-income families have undergone many changes over the past several years, and they will likely continue to evolve as federal and state governments further develop policies and respond to cyclical fiscal conditions and changes in the demand for services. With a focus on promoting employment and economic independence, states have adjusted support programs to provide not only services to families receiving TANF cash assistance but also services to other low-income families not receiving TANF cash assistance. States have used TANF funds

to experiment with new support programs and have recognized that supports like subsidized child care are an increasingly important support for low-income working families. Most recently, states have faced fiscal crises and tough choices about reducing their supports for low-income families. The emphasis on moving people into work, though, remains a priority. As states continue to adjust supports for low-income families in efforts to move forward with the reforms of the last decade and improve efficiency, access, and coordination, they will also continue to face the pressures of competing priorities and fiscal constraints.

Agency Comments

We provided a draft of this report to the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) for the department's review and comment. HHS agreed with the findings and conclusions of the report. HHS also noted that to address the fiscal uncertainty that some states face, reauthorization of the TANF and child care programs by the Congress will enable states to know with certainty the level of federal TANF and child care resources that will be available to support low-income families over the next 5 years. HHS's written comments appear in appendix IV. HHS and an expert on supports for low-income families also provided technical comments, which we have incorporated where appropriate.

We are sending copies of this report to the Secretary of HHS, relevant congressional committees, and others who are interested. Copies will be made available to others upon request, and this report will also be available on GAO's Web site at http://www.gao.gov.

If you or your staff have any questions about this report, please contact me on (202) 512-7215. Additional GAO contacts and acknowledgments are listed in appendix V.

Cynthia M. Fagnoni
Managing Director, Education, Workforce,
and Income Security

Appendix I: Objectives, Scope, and Methodology

We designed our study to provide information on (1) the extent to which states provide supports for low-income families, (2) how states have structured programs to support low-income families, and (3) the changes states have made to supports for low-income families in recent years. To obtain information about these objectives, we conducted a mail survey of the social services agency directors in each state and the District of Columbia, conducted in-person interviews with state officials in five states, and reviewed information available from prior GAO work and relevant federal agencies.

We conducted our work between December 2002 and November 2003, in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards.

Survey of State Social Services Directors

To obtain information on the extent to which states provide supports for low-income families and how this has changed in the last few years, we conducted a survey of support programs in each state and the District of Columbia. We pretested our survey instrument with state social service directors in four states: Colorado, Delaware, Maryland, and Virginia. Surveys were mailed to state social service directors in April 2003, and follow-up phone calls were made to states whose surveys were not received by May 5, 2003. The survey was addressed to the state social service agency directors and instructed them to have the staff members most knowledgeable about their states' support programs complete the survey. We received responses from the District of Columbia and all states except Michigan, providing a 98 percent response rate. We did not independently verify the information obtained through the survey. Data from the surveys were double-keyed to ensure data entry accuracy, and the information was analyzed using statistical software. The survey included questions about the provision and receipt of the states' child care subsidies, transportation support services, utility assistance, job retention and advancement services, health assistance (including public health insurance, domestic violence programs, substance abuse treatment programs, and mental health treatment programs), and income assistance (including state tax credits, TANF cash assistance, and TANF diversion programs). The survey also included questions on recent changes in the availability and structure of these support programs. Respondents who frequently answered "don't know" were prompted to answer questions regarding their reasons for this response. The officials reported most frequently that the reasons they did not have this information were that services varied broadly by locality and that data were not available or not complete at the state level.

State Site Visits

To obtain information about each assignment objective and, in particular, to gain a deeper understanding of how selected states have structured programs to support low-income families, we interviewed state officials in New York, North Carolina, Oklahoma, Washington, and Wisconsin. In selecting these states for our in-depth fieldwork, we included those that appeared, based on their federal and state TANF expenditures, to provide support services, and we also included states that, when viewed as a group, provide variation across characteristics such as state median income, poverty rate, population, and geographic location.

The interviews were administered using a semistructured interview guide that included questions about the structure and receipt of states' child care subsidies, transportation support services, utility assistance, job retention and advancement services, health assistance (including public health insurance, domestic violence programs, substance abuse treatment programs, and mental health treatment programs), and income assistance (including state tax credits, TANF cash assistance, and TANF diversion programs). The survey also included questions about efforts to coordinate supports and recent changes in the availability and structure of support programs. We also encouraged state officials to share information about any additional programs that they believed were important for low-income families in their states. During our site visits we spoke with program administrators or program analysts for each type of support program as well as budget and data analysts. For example, we spoke not only with social services officials, but in most states we also spoke with transportation officials, tax officials, Medicaid officials, and so on, if these supports were provided by separate state agencies.

To ensure that our understanding of the availability and characteristics of supports for low-income families was accurate and objective, following our site visits we conducted phone interviews with advocacy organizations that either included low-income families in their membership or that work directly with low-income families in promoting issues related to supports.[1]

Some limitations exist in any methodology that gathers information about programs undergoing change, such as those included in this review. Results presented in our report represent only the conditions present in

[1]The organizations that we interviewed were Community Voices Heard (New York), Community Action Project of Tulsa (Oklahoma), Fremont Public Association (Washington), and Wisconsin Council on Children and Families (Wisconsin). We contacted an organization in North Carolina but were unable to obtain an interview.

the states we visited at the time of our site visits, between December 2002 and April 2003. Although, as we have presented, state officials reported on their expectations of program changes in the near future, we cannot comment on any actual changes that may have occurred after our fieldwork was completed. Furthermore, we cannot generalize our findings beyond the five states we visited, but we have used these data for illustrative purposes.

Review of Federal Reports

To obtain information about policies, participation rates, and other characteristics of the support programs that are administered largely at the federal level, such as food stamps, rental housing assistance, and the federal EITC, we reviewed reports and information readily available from prior GAO work and relevant federal agencies.

Reliability of Data Obtained from HHS and Treasury

To determine the completeness and accuracy of data obtained from HHS and Treasury, we reviewed related documentation and conducted tests of the data for obvious omissions and errors. In addition, we interviewed knowledgeable agency officials regarding the HHS data. We determined that the data were sufficiently reliable for use in this report.

Appendix II: Proportion of Eligible Applicants Who Receive Supports, by State and Type of Support

Tables 7 through 11 display individual state responses to survey questions regarding the extent to which eligible low-income families who apply for supports actually receive supports. These data are summarized graphically in figure 2 in the report.

Table 7: Proportion of Eligible Applicants Who Receive Subsidized Child Care, by State and Type of Child Care

State	Infant care for children aged 0-2 years	Daytime child care for children aged 2-5 years	Before/after school child care	Evening and weekend child care	Special needs child care	Child care for sick children
Alabama	Don't know	Don't know	Don't know	Don't know	Don't know	.
Alaska	All or almost all	All or almost all	All or almost all	All or almost all	All or almost all	.
Arizona	Almost none	Almost none	Almost none	Almost none	Almost none	.
Arkansas	All or almost all	All or almost all	All or almost all	All or almost all	All or almost all	All or almost all
California	More than half	More than half	More than half	More than half	More than half	.
Colorado	More than half	More than half	More than half	More than half	More than half	More than half
Connecticut	Don't know	Don't know	Don't know	Don't know	Don't know	.
Delaware	All or almost all	All or almost all	All or almost all	All or almost all	All or almost all	.
District of Columbia	All or almost all	All or almost all	All or almost all	All or almost all	All or almost all	All or almost all
Florida	Don't know	Don't know	Don't know	Don't know	Don't know	.
Georgia	All or almost all	All or almost all	All or almost all	All or almost all	All or almost all	All or almost all
Hawaii	All or almost all	All or almost all	All or almost all	All or almost all	All or almost all	All or almost all
Idaho	All or almost all	All or almost all	All or almost all	All or almost all	All or almost all	All or almost all
Illinois	All or almost all	All or almost all	All or almost all	All or almost all	All or almost all	.
Indiana	All or almost all	All or almost all	All or almost all	All or almost all	All or almost all	.
Iowa	More than half	More than half	More than half	More than half	More than half	More than half
Kansas	All or almost all	All or almost all	All or almost all	All or almost all	All or almost all	All or almost all

State	Infant care for children aged 0-2 years	Daytime child care for children aged 2-5 years	Before/after school child care	Evening and weekend child care	Special needs child care	Child care for sick children
Kentucky	Less than half	Less than half	Less than half	Less than half	Less than half	.
Louisiana	All or almost all	All or almost all	All or almost all	All or almost all	.	All or almost all
Maine	.	.	.	.	.	.
Maryland	Don't know	Don't know	Don't know	Don't know	Don't know	Don't know
Massachusetts	About half	More than half	More than half	Don't know	Don't know	.
Minnesota	Don't know	Don't know	Don't know	Don't know	Don't know	Don't know
Mississippi	Don't know	Don't know	Don't know	Don't know	Don't know	Almost none
Missouri	All or almost all	.	.	.	.	.
Montana	Almost none	Almost none	Almost none	Almost none	All or almost all	.
Nebraska	All or almost all	All or almost all	All or almost all	All or almost all	All or almost all	All or almost all
Nevada	Don't know	Don't know	Don't know	Don't know	Don't know	Don't know
New Hampshire	Don't know	Don't know	Don't know	Don't know	Don't know	.
New Jersey	Don't know	Don't know	Don't know	Don't know	Don't know	Don't know
New Mexico	Don't know	Don't know	Don't know	Don't know	Don't know	Don't know
New York	Don't know	Don't know	Don't know	Don't know	Don't know	Don't know
North Carolina	Don't know	Don't know	Don't know	Don't know	Don't know	Don't know
North Dakota	All or almost all	All or almost all	All or almost all	All or almost all	.	.
Ohio	Don't know	.	.	.	.	.
Oklahoma	All or almost all	All or almost all	All or almost all	All or almost all	All or almost all	All or almost all
Oregon	More than half	More than half	More than half	More than half	More than half	More than half
Pennsylvania	Don't know	Don't know	Don't know	Don't know	Don't know	Don't know
Rhode Island	More than half	More than half	More than half	More than half	Don't know	.
South Carolina	Don't know	Don't know	Don't know	Don't know	Don't	.

State	Infant care for children aged 0-2 years	Daytime child care for children aged 2-5 years	Before/after school child care	Evening and weekend child care	Special needs child care	Child care for sick children
					know	
South Dakota	All or almost all	All or almost all	All or almost all	All or almost all	All or almost all	All or almost all
Tennessee	.	.	.	.	.	.
Texas	.	.	.	.	.	.
Utah	.	.	.	.	.	.
Vermont	All or almost all	All or almost all	All or almost all	All or almost all	All or almost all	.
Virginia	Don't know	Don't know	Don't know	Don't know	Don't know	Don't know
Washington	All or almost all	All or almost all	All or almost all	All or almost all	All or almost all	.
West Virginia	All or almost all	All or almost all	All or almost all	More than half	Almost none	Almost none
Wisconsin	More than half	More than half	About half	Don't know	More than half	Don't know
Wyoming	All or almost all	All or almost all	All or almost all	All or almost all	All or almost all	All or almost all

Source: GAO survey, spring 2003.

Notes: These data are summarized in figure 2.

States were asked, "Currently, in your state, approximately what percentage of eligible low-income families who apply for some type of subsidized child care service actually receives it?" Response categories were defined as follows: all or almost all (86-100%); more than half (61-85%); about half (41-60%); less than half (16-40%); almost none (1-15%); don't know.

Michigan did not respond to our survey.

Cells left blank indicate that the state did not answer or was not asked the question. For example, states indicating previously that a service was not subsidized in at least one locality in the state were not asked about the extent to which eligible applicants received services.

Table 8: Proportion of Eligible Applicants Who Receive Transportation Assistance, by State and Type of Assistance

State	Public transit subsidies	Van/shuttle service	Car repairs	Car insurance	Fuel vouchers	Establishment of public transit route	Used cars	Carpool matching
Alabama	Don't know	Don't know	.	.	.	Don't know	.	.
Alaska	All or almost all	All or almost all	All or almost all	All or almost all	All or almost all	.	.	.
Arizona	Almost none	Almost none	Almost none	Almost none	Almost none	.	.	Almost none
Arkansas	Don't know	Don't know	Don't know	Don't know	Don't know	Don't know	Don't know	.
California	Don't know	Don't know	Don't know	Don't know	Don't know	Don't know	Don't know	Don't know
Colorado	Don't know	Don't know	Don't know	Don't know	Don't know	Don't know	Don't know	.
Connecticut	All or almost all	All or almost all	All or almost all	More than half	All or almost all	All or almost all	More than half	.
Delaware	Don't know	All or almost all	All or almost all	All or almost all	.	Don't know	More than half	Don't know
District of Columbia	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.
Florida	About half	Don't know	Don't know	Don't know	About half	Don't know	Don't know	.
Georgia	About half	About half	Less than half	Less than half	.	.	.	.
Hawaii	All or almost all	.	.	All or almost all	.	.	.	.
Idaho	Don't know	.	Don't know	Don't know	Don't know	.	.	.
Illinois	All or almost all	Don't know	Less than half	Don't know	Don't know	Don't know	Almost none	.
Indiana	More than half	Less than half	About half	.	About half	.	Less than half	.
Iowa	Don't know	Don't know	Less than half	Less than half	Less than half	Don't know	Less than half	.
Kansas	Don't know	.	Don't know	Don't know	.	.	Don't know	.
Kentucky	.	.	All or almost all	All or almost all	.	.	.	.
Louisiana	Don't know	Don't know	Don't know	Don't know	.	.	Almost none	.
Maine	.	All or almost all	.	.	.	All or almost all	.	.
Maryland	All or almost all	All or almost all	Don't know	Don't know	Don't know	Don't know	Don't know	Don't know
Massachusetts	All or almost all	Less than half	Almost none	.	Almost none	Almost none	Almost none	Almost none
Minnesota	More than half	.	.	.	.	More than half	.	.
Mississippi	All or almost all	All or almost all	Almost none	Don't know	.	.	.	.

State	Public transit subsidies	Van/shuttle service	Car repairs	Car insurance	Fuel vouchers	Establishment of public transit route	Used cars	Carpool matching
Missouri	.	Almost none	About half	.	.	.	.	.
Montana	All or almost all	.	All or almost all	All or almost all	All or almost all	.	All or almost all	.
Nebraska	Don't know	Don't know	Don't know	Don't know	Don't know	.	Don't know	.
Nevada	.	.	Almost none	Almost none	Almost none	Almost none	.	.
New Hampshire	All or almost all	Don't know	All or almost all	All or almost all	.	Don't know	About half	.
New Jersey	Don't know	Don't know	Don't know	Don't know	Don't know	Don't know	Don't know	Don't know
New Mexico	All or almost all	All or almost all	More than half	More than half	All or almost all	.	Almost none	.
New York	Don't know	Don't know	Don't know	Don't know	Don't know	Don't know	Don't know	Don't know
North Carolina	All or almost all	All or almost all	All or almost all	All or almost all	All or almost all	All or almost all	About half	Less than half
North Dakota	More than half	About half	All or almost all	All or almost all	More than half	Less than half	.	Less than half
Ohio	Don't know	Don't know	Don't know	Don't know	Don't know	Don't know	Don't know	Don't know
Oklahoma	Don't know	Don't know	Don't know	Don't know	.	Don't know	Don't know	.
Oregon	About half	Almost none	Less than half	Almost none	About half	Almost none	.	Almost none
Pennsylvania	All or almost all	All or almost all	All or almost all	All or almost all	All or almost all	All or almost all	All or almost all	All or almost all
Rhode Island	Don't know	All or almost all	.	.	.	Don't know	.	.
South Carolina	Don't know	Don't know	Don't know	Don't know	Don't know	Don't know	Don't know	Don't know
South Dakota	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.
Tennessee	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.
Texas	Don't know	Don't know	Don't know	Don't know	Don't know	Don't know	Don't know	Don't know
Utah	.	More than half	More than half	Less than half	More than half	.	Almost none	.
Vermont	All or almost all	All or almost all	Don't know	.	.	More than half	Don't know	All or almost all
Virginia	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.
Washington	Don't know	Don't know	All or almost all	All or almost all	All or almost all	Don't know	Don't know	Don't know
West Virginia	.	.	About half	.	About half	.	Almost none	.
Wisconsin	Don't know	Don't know	Don't know	Don't know	Don't know	Don't know	Don't know	Don't know
Wyoming	Almost none	.	Almost none	Almost none	Almost none	.	.	.

Source: GAO survey, spring 2003.

Notes: These data are summarized in figure 2.

States were asked, “Currently, in your state, approximately what percentage of eligible low-income families who apply for some type of transportation support service actually receives it?” Response categories were defined as follows: all or almost all (86-100%); more than half (61-85%); about half (41-60%); less than half (16-40%); almost none (1-15%); don’t know.

Michigan did not respond to our survey.

Cells left blank indicate that the state did not answer or was not asked the question. For example, states indicating previously that a service was not subsidized in at least one locality in the state were not asked about the extent to which eligible applicants received services.

Table 9: Proportion of Eligible Applicants Who Receive Job Retention and Career Advancement Services, by State and Type of Service

State	Employment services	Post-employment case management	Training	Education	Mentoring and peer relationships	Employment retention bonuses
Alabama	More than half	More than half	Less than half	About half	Almost none	.
Alaska	All or almost all	All or almost all	Less than half	Less than half	Almost none	.
Arizona	More than half	Less than half	Less than half	Less than half	Almost none	Almost none
Arkansas	Don't know	Don't know	Don't know	Don't know	Don't know	Don't know
California	.	.	.	.	.	.
Colorado	Don't know	Don't know	Don't know	Don't know	Don't know	Don't know
Connecticut	All or almost all	All or almost all	Don't know	Don't know	.	.
Delaware	All or almost all	All or almost all	All or almost all	.	.	All or almost all
District of Columbia	All or almost all	All or almost all	All or almost all	All or almost all	All or almost all	All or almost all
Florida	Don't know	More than half	About half	About half	Don't know	Don't know
Georgia	.	.	.	.	.	.
Hawaii	All or almost all	Less than half	More than half	More than half	.	.
Idaho	All or almost all	Almost none	Almost none	Don't know	Almost none	.
Illinois	All or almost all	Less than half	Less than half	Less than half	Less than half	Less than half
Indiana	More than half	.	More than half	.	.	More than half
Iowa	Don't know	.	All or almost all	All or almost all	.	.
Kansas	All or almost all	Don't know	Less than half	Less than half	Don't know	.
Kentucky	.	.	.	.	.	.
Louisiana	Don't know	Don't know	Don't know	Don't know	Don't know	.
Maine	All or almost all	More than half	More than half	More than half	Less than half	.
Maryland	All or almost all	More than half	More than half	More than half	Less than half	.
Massachusetts	.	About half	More than half	More than half	Almost none	More than half
Minnesota	All or almost all	Less than half	Almost none	Less than half	Almost none	Almost none
Mississippi	All or almost all	All or almost all	More than half	.	About half	.
Missouri	All or almost all	.	All or almost all	All or almost all	Less than half	Almost none
Montana	All or almost all	All or almost all	.	.	.	.
Nebraska	All or almost all	All or almost all	All or almost all	All or almost all	.	.
Nevada	.	.	.	.	.	.
New Hampshire	.	.	.	.	.	.
New Jersey	Don't know	Don't know	Don't know	Don't know	Don't know	Don't know
New Mexico	All or almost all	All or almost all	All or almost all	All or almost all	All or almost all	.

State	Employment services	Post-employment case management	Training	Education	Mentoring and peer relationships	Employment retention bonuses
New York	Don't know	Don't know	Don't know	Don't know	Don't know	Don't know
North Carolina	All or almost all	All or almost all	All or almost all	All or almost all	All or almost all	More than half
North Dakota	All or almost all	Less than half	All or almost all	All or almost all	Less than half	Less than half
Ohio	More than half	Less than half	Less than half	More than half	Less than half	.
Oklahoma	Less than half	Almost none	Less than half	Almost none	.	.
Oregon	All or almost all	All or almost all	All or almost all	All or almost all	All or almost all	.
Pennsylvania	All or almost all	All or almost all	All or almost all	All or almost all	All or almost all	All or almost all
Rhode Island	Don't know	.	Don't know	Don't know	.	.
South Carolina	.	.	.	.	.	.
South Dakota	.	.	.	.	.	.
Tennessee	.	.	.	.	.	.
Texas	Don't know	Don't know	Don't know	Don't know	Don't know	Don't know
Utah	All or almost all	More than half	.	More than half	More than half	More than half
Vermont	Don't know	Don't know	Don't know	Don't know	.	.
Virginia	All or almost all	All or almost all	Less than half	Less than half	About half	Almost none
Washington	All or almost all	All or almost all	All or almost all	All or almost all	All or almost all	.
West Virginia	.	More than half	.	.	.	About half
Wisconsin	All or almost all	All or almost all	All or almost all	All or almost all	All or almost all	All or almost all
Wyoming	About half	Almost none	Less than half	Almost none	.	.

Source: GAO survey, spring 2003.

Notes: These data are summarized in figure 2.

States were asked, "Currently, approximately what percentage of eligible low-income families who apply for some type of job retention and career advancement service actually receives it in your state?" Response categories were defined as follows: all or almost all (86-100%); more than half (61-85%); about half (41-60%); less than half (16-40%); almost none (1-15%); don't know.

Michigan did not respond to our survey.

Cells left blank indicate that the state did not answer or was not asked the question. For example, states indicating previously that a service was not subsidized in at least one locality in the state were not asked about the extent to which eligible applicants received services.

Table 10: Proportion of Eligible Applicants Who Receive Utility Assistance, by State and Type of Assistance

State	Heating	Electricity	Telephone	Air conditioning/ home cooling	Weatherization/ energy conservation	Water	Plumbing/septic
Alabama	Less than half	.	.	Less than half	Less than half	.	.
Alaska	More than half	More than half	.	.	Don't know	.	.
Arizona	Don't know	Don't know	Don't know	Don't know	Don't know	Don't know	.
Arkansas	.	.	.	.	.	.	.
California	Don't know	Don't know	.	Don't know	Don't know	.	.
Colorado	More than half	More than half	Less than half	.	More than half	.	.
Connecticut	All or almost all	.	.	.	Almost none	.	.
Delaware	Don't know	Don't know	Don't know	Don't know	.	Don't know	Don't know
District of Columbia	Less than half	Less than half	Less than half	Less than half	Less than half	Less than half	.
Florida	Don't know	Don't know	.	Don't know	.	Don't know	.
Georgia	Less than half	Less than half	.	Less than half	Less than half	.	.
Hawaii	More than half	More than half	.	More than half	About half	.	.
Idaho	All or almost all	All or almost all	All or almost all	.	All or almost all	.	.
Illinois	More than half	More than half	Don't know	More than half	Don't know	.	.
Indiana	All or almost all	All or almost all	.	All or almost all	All or almost all	.	.
Iowa	More than half	More than half	Don't know	.	Don't know	More than half	More than half
Kansas	All or almost all	All or almost all	.	All or almost all	Don't know	.	.
Kentucky	About half	.	Don't know	Less than half	Less than half	.	.
Louisiana	All or almost all	All or almost all	.	All or almost all	More than half	.	.
Maine	More than half	More than half	About half	.	About half	Less than half	Less than half
Maryland	All or almost all	All or almost all	Don't know	All or almost all	Almost none	.	.
Massachusetts	.	.	.	.	.	.	.

State	Heating	Electricity	Telephone	Air conditioning/ home cooling	Weatherization/ energy conservation	Water	Plumbing/septic
Minnesota	More than half	Don't know	Don't know	.	Less than half	.	.
Mississippi	.	.	.	.	.	.	.
Missouri	All or almost all	Don't know	Don't know	About half	Almost none	.	.
Montana	All or almost all	More than half	Don't know	.	Almost none	.	.
Nebraska	Don't know	Don't know	.	Don't know	Don't know	.	.
Nevada	Don't know	Don't know	.	.	Don't know	.	.
New Hampshire	Don't know	Don't know	.	Don't know	Don't know	.	.
New Jersey	Don't know	Don't know	Don't know	Don't know	Don't know	.	.
New Mexico	More than half	More than half	More than half	More than half	More than half	More than half	.
New York	All or almost all	All or almost all	.	.	Don't know	All or almost all	All or almost all
North Carolina	More than half	More than half	About half	More than half	More than half	.	About half
North Dakota	All or almost all	All or almost all	All or almost all	Don't know	Don't know	.	.
Ohio	Don't know	Don't know	Don't know	Don't know	Don't know	Don't know	Don't know
Oklahoma	Don't know	Don't know	.	Don't know	Don't know	Don't know	Don't know
Oregon	Don't know	Don't know	Don't know	.	Don't know	Don't know	.
Pennsylvania	.	.	.	.	.	.	.
Rhode Island	All or almost all	Less than half	All or almost all	.	All or almost all	.	.
South Carolina	More than half	More than half	All or almost all	More than half	More than half	More than half	.
South Dakota	Don't know	.	.	.	Don't know	.	.
Tennessee	About half	About half	.	About half	About half	Don't know	.
Texas	More than half	More than half	.	.	More than half	All or almost all	.
Utah	All or almost all	All or almost all	All or almost all	All or almost all	About half	All or almost all	.
Vermont	More than half	More than half	All or almost all	.	About half	.	.
Virginia	.	.	.	.	.	.	.
Washington	Less than half	.	.	.	Almost none	.	.

State	Heating	Electricity	Telephone	Air conditioning/ home cooling	Weatherization/ energy conservation	Water	Plumbing/septic
West Virginia	All or almost all	All or almost all	All or almost all	Don't know	All or almost all	All or almost all	Don't know
Wisconsin	All or almost all	All or almost all	Don't know	Don't know	All or almost all	.	.
Wyoming	All or almost all	All or almost all	All or almost all	All or almost all	Less than half	.	.

Source: GAO survey, spring 2003.

Notes: These data are summarized in figure 2.

States were asked, "Currently, in your state, approximately what percentage of eligible low-income families who apply for some type of utility assistance service actually receives it?" Response categories were defined as follows: all or almost all (86-100%); more than half (61-85%); about half (41-60%); less than half (16-40%); almost none (1-15%); don't know.

Michigan did not respond to our survey.

Cells left blank indicate that the state did not answer or was not asked the question. For example, states indicating previously that a service was not subsidized in at least one locality in the state were not asked about the extent to which eligible applicants received services.

Table 11: Proportion of Eligible Applicants Who Receive Health Assistance, by State and Type of Assistance

	Domestic violence programs	Mental health treatment	Substance abuse treatment
Alabama	All or almost all	Don't know	Don't know
Alaska	More than half	About half	All or almost all
Arizona	Less than half	All or almost all	All or almost all
Arkansas	Don't know	Don't know	Don't know
California	Don't know	Don't know	Don't know
Colorado	Less than half	Don't know	More than half
Connecticut	Don't know	.	.
Delaware	Don't know	Don't know	Don't know
District of Columbia	Don't know	All or almost all	Less than half
Florida	All or almost all	All or almost all	All or almost all
Georgia	All or almost all	Less than half	All or almost all
Hawaii	All or almost all	Don't know	Don't know
Idaho	All or almost all	All or almost all	All or almost all
Illinois	All or almost all	Don't know	More than half
Indiana	All or almost all	All or almost all	All or almost all
Iowa	Don't know	All or almost all	Don't know
Kansas	.	Don't know	.
Kentucky	More than half	All or almost all	.
Louisiana	All or almost all	All or almost all	Don't know
Maine	Don't know	Don't know	Don't know
Maryland	All or almost all	Don't know	Don't know
Massachusetts	.	Don't know	All or almost all
Minnesota	All or almost all	Don't know	More than half
Mississippi	Don't know	Don't know	Don't know
Missouri	Don't know	More than half	More than half
Montana	About half	Less than half	Less than half
Nebraska	Don't know	Don't know	Don't know
Nevada	All or almost all	Don't know	.
New Hampshire	.	More than half	Almost none
New Jersey	Don't know	Don't know	Don't know
New Mexico	Don't know	Don't know	Don't know
New York	Don't know	Don't know	Don't know

	Domestic violence programs	Mental health treatment	Substance abuse treatment
North Carolina	All or almost all	Don't know	Don't know
North Dakota	More than half	More than half	More than half
Ohio	Don't know	Don't know	Don't know
Oklahoma	Don't know	Don't know	More than half
Oregon	All or almost all	More than half	More than half
Pennsylvania	All or almost all	All or almost all	All or almost all
Rhode Island	Don't know	More than half	Don't know
South Carolina	Don't know	Don't know	Don't know
South Dakota	Don't know	All or almost all	More than half
Tennessee	.	.	.
Texas	Don't know	Less than half	All or almost all
Utah	Don't know	Don't know	Don't know
Vermont	Don't know	All or almost all	.
Virginia	Don't know	Don't know	Don't know
Washington	All or almost all	Don't know	Don't know
West Virginia	All or almost all	.	.
Wisconsin	.	Don't know	More than half
Wyoming	.	All or almost all	Don't know

Source: GAO survey, spring 2003.

Notes: These data are summarized in figure 2.

States were asked, "Currently, in your state, approximately what percentage of eligible low-income families who apply for substance abuse treatment actually receives it?" "Currently, in your state, approximately what percentage of eligible low-income families who apply for mental health treatment actually receives it?" "Overall in your state, approximately what percentage of eligible low-income families who apply for domestic violence programs currently obtains services or assistance?" Response categories were defined as follows: all or almost all (86-100%); more than half (61-85%); about half (41-60%); less than half (16-40%); almost none (1-15%); don't know.

Michigan did not respond to our survey.

Cells left blank indicate that the state did not answer or was not asked the question. For example, states indicating previously that a service was not subsidized in at least one locality in the state were not asked about the extent to which eligible applicants received services.

Appendix III: Changes in the Number of Recipients and Availability of Supports between State FY 2000 and Spring 2003

Tables 12 through 17 provide information on changes between state fiscal year 2000 and spring 2003 that states reported in the number of support recipients and in the number or type of services provided, state outreach efforts, eligibility criteria, provider payments, and families' copayments. The data in these tables are summarized in figures 8 through 13 in the report.

Table 12: Changes between State Fiscal Year 2000 and Spring 2003 in the Number of Recipients of Each Type of Support, by State

State	Subsidized child care	Transportation support services	Utility assistance	Job retention and advancement services
Alabama	Increased	.	Increased	Increased
Alaska	.	Decreased	Increased	Stayed same
Arizona	Increased	Increased	Increased	Stayed same
Arkansas	Increased	Don't know	Increased	Don't know
California	Increased	Increased	Decreased	Increased
Colorado	Increased	Don't know	Increased	Don't know
Connecticut	Decreased	Increased	Increased	Decreased
Delaware	Increased	Don't know	Stayed same	Increased
District of Columbia	Increased	Don't know	Increased	Increased
Florida	Increased	Decreased	Don't know	Decreased
Georgia	Increased	Increased	Stayed same	.
Hawaii	Increased	Decreased	Increased	Decreased
Idaho	Stayed same	Increased	Increased	Increased
Illinois	Increased	Increased	Increased	Stayed same
Indiana	Decreased	Decreased	Increased	Don't know
Iowa	Stayed same	Increased	Don't know	Increased
Kansas	Increased	Increased	Stayed same	Increased
Kentucky	Increased	Decreased	Decreased	Don't know
Louisiana	Decreased	Don't know	Increased	Don't know
Maine	Increased	Stayed same	Don't know	Increased
Maryland	Increased	Don't know	Increased	Don't know
Massachusetts	Decreased	Decreased	.	Decreased
Minnesota	Increased	Stayed same	Increased	Increased
Mississippi	Increased	Don't know	Increased	Increased
Missouri	Increased	Increased	.	Stayed same
Montana	Increased	Decreased	Increased	Stayed same

State	Subsidized child care	Transportation support services	Utility assistance	Job retention and advancement services
Nebraska	Decreased	Increased	Decreased	Increased
Nevada	Increased	Increased	Increased	.
New Hampshire	Increased	Increased	Stayed same	.
New Jersey	Increased	Increased	Increased	Increased
New Mexico	Increased	Increased	Increased	Increased
New York	Increased	Increased	Don't know	Increased
North Carolina	Increased	Decreased	Increased	Don't know
North Dakota	Increased	Increased	Increased	Increased
Ohio	Increased	Don't know	Stayed same	Increased
Oklahoma	Increased	Don't know	Increased	Increased
Oregon	Decreased	Increased	Don't know	Decreased
Pennsylvania	Increased	Increased	Increased	Increased
Rhode Island	Increased	.	Stayed same	Don't know
South Carolina	Increased	Decreased	Increased	Increased
South Dakota	Increased	Stayed same	Increased	Don't know
Tennessee	.	.	Increased	.
Texas	Increased	Increased	Increased	Increased
Utah	Decreased	Don't know	Increased	Stayed same
Vermont	Increased	Stayed same	Increased	Stayed same
Virginia	Decreased	Increased	Stayed same	Increased
Washington	Increased	Increased	Increased	Increased
West Virginia	Increased	Increased	Stayed same	Stayed same
Wisconsin	Increased	Increased	Increased	Increased
Wyoming	Increased	Stayed same	Increased	Stayed same

Source: GAO survey, spring 2003.

Notes: These data are summarized in figure 8.

States were asked, "Comparing state fiscal year 2000 with the present, to what extent has the number of [support type] recipients increased, decreased, or stayed the same?"

Michigan did not respond to our survey.

Cells left blank indicate that the state did not answer or was not asked the question. For example, states that did not have a particular support in both state fiscal year 2000 and spring 2003 were not asked about changes in these supports.

Table 13: Changes between State Fiscal Year 2000 and Spring 2003 in the Number or Type of Services Provided, by State

State	Subsidized child care	Transportation support services	Utility assistance	Medicaid	SCHIP	Job retention and advancement services
Alabama	Stayed same	.	Increased	Increased	Increased	Stayed same
Alaska	.	Stayed same	Stayed same	Decreased	.	Increased
Arizona	Increased	Increased	Stayed same	Stayed same	Increased	Stayed same
Arkansas	Stayed same	Stayed same	Stayed same	Increased	.	Stayed same
California	Not applicable	Increased	Stayed same	Decreased	.	Don't know
Colorado	Stayed same	Don't know	Increased	Decreased	Stayed same	Stayed same
Connecticut	Stayed same	Increased	Stayed same	Decreased	Stayed same	Decreased
Delaware	Increased	Don't know	Stayed same	Stayed same	Stayed same	Increased
District of Columbia	Increased	Don't know	Stayed same	Stayed same	.	Stayed same
Florida	Stayed same	Increased	Don't know	Increased	Increased	Don't know
Georgia	Stayed same	Don't know	Don't know	Decreased	Stayed same	.
Hawaii	Stayed same	Stayed same	Stayed same	Stayed same	.	Increased
Idaho	Stayed same	Don't know	Increased	Increased	.	Increased
Illinois	Increased	Increased	Stayed same	Stayed same	Stayed same	Decreased
Indiana	Increased	Increased	Stayed same	Decreased	Stayed same	Stayed same
Iowa	Increased	Increased	Stayed same	Decreased	Stayed same	Stayed same
Kansas	Stayed same	Stayed same	Stayed same	Stayed same	Stayed same	Increased
Kentucky	Stayed same	Not applicable	Don't know	Stayed same	Stayed same	Don't know
Louisiana	Increased	Stayed same	Increased	Increased	.	Don't know
Maine	Stayed same	Stayed same	Stayed same	Stayed same	Stayed same	Increased
Maryland	Increased	Don't know	Increased	Stayed same	Stayed same	Don't know
Massachusetts	Increased	Decreased	.	Decreased	Stayed same	Decreased
Minnesota	Stayed same	Stayed same	Stayed same	Stayed same	.	Increased
Mississippi	Stayed same	Don't know	Stayed same	Don't know	Don't know	Don't know
Missouri	Stayed same	Decreased	Stayed same	Stayed same	.	Stayed same
Montana	Increased	Increased	Stayed same	Decreased	Decreased	Stayed same
Nebraska	Stayed same	Stayed same	Stayed same	Stayed same	.	Increased
Nevada	Increased	Stayed same	Stayed same	Don't know	Don't know	.
New Hampshire	Increased	Increased	Stayed same	Stayed same	Stayed same	.
New Jersey	Increased	Increased	Increased	Decreased	Stayed same	Increased
New Mexico	Stayed same	Increased	Stayed same	Increased	.	Increased
New York	Increased	Increased	Stayed same	Increased	Increased	Increased

State	Subsidized child care	Transportation support services	Utility assistance	Medicaid	SCHIP	Job retention and advancement services
North Carolina	Increased	Increased	Stayed same	Stayed same	Stayed same	Stayed same
North Dakota	Increased	Increased	Stayed same	Decreased	Stayed same	Increased
Ohio	Increased	Decreased	Stayed same	Stayed same	.	Stayed same
Oklahoma	Increased	Increased	Stayed same	Decreased	.	Increased
Oregon	Decreased	Increased	Increased	Decreased	Stayed same	Decreased
Pennsylvania	Stayed same	Increased	Increased	Stayed same	Not applicable	Increased
Rhode Island	Increased	.	Stayed same	Stayed same	.	Don't know
South Carolina	Increased	Decreased	Stayed same	Decreased	.	Increased
South Dakota	Stayed same	Stayed same	Stayed same	Stayed same	Stayed same	Not applicable
Tennessee	.	.	Stayed same	.	.	.
Texas	Increased	Don't know	Increased	Stayed same	Stayed same	Increased
Utah	Not applicable	Increased	Stayed same	Decreased	Decreased	Stayed same
Vermont	Increased	Increased	Not applicable	Decreased	.	Stayed same
Virginia	Stayed same	Increased	Stayed same	Increased	Decreased	Increased
Washington	Stayed same	Increased	Increased	Stayed same	Stayed same	Stayed same
West Virginia	Increased	Stayed same	Stayed same	Stayed same	Stayed same	Stayed same
Wisconsin	Increased	Increased	Stayed same	Stayed same	.	Increased
Wyoming	Stayed same	.	Stayed same	Increased	Stayed same	Stayed same

Source: GAO survey, spring 2003.

Notes: These data are summarized in figure 9.

States were asked, "Comparing state fiscal year 2000 with the present, to what extent did the number or type of [support type] services provided change in your state?"

Michigan did not respond to our survey.

Cells left blank indicate that the state did not answer or was not asked the question. For example, states that did not have a particular support in both state fiscal year 2000 and spring 2003 were not asked about changes in these supports.

Table 14: Changes between State Fiscal Year 2000 and Spring 2003 in Outreach Efforts, by State

State	Subsidized child care	Transportation support services	Utility assistance	Medicaid	SCHIP	Job retention and advancement services
Alabama	Increased	.	Increased	Increased	Increased	Increased
Alaska	Increased	Stayed same	Increased	Stayed same	.	Increased
Arizona	Stayed same	Not applicable	Increased	Stayed same	Decreased	Not applicable
Arkansas	Stayed same	Stayed same	Increased	Increased	.	Stayed same
California	Increased	Don't know	Decreased	Not applicable	Not applicable	Increased
Colorado	Increased	Don't know	Increased	Stayed same	Decreased	Don't know
Connecticut	Stayed same	Increased	Stayed same	Decreased	Decreased	Not applicable
Delaware	Stayed same	Don't know	Stayed same	Decreased	Decreased	Stayed same
District of Columbia	Increased	Don't know	Increased	Increased	.	Increased
Florida	Stayed same	Increased	Don't know	Increased	Decreased	Increased
Georgia	Increased	Don't know	Increased	Increased	Decreased	.
Hawaii	Increased	Stayed same	Increased	Increased	.	Increased
Idaho	Stayed same	Don't know	Stayed same	Decreased	.	Increased
Illinois	Stayed same	Increased	Stayed same	Stayed same	Stayed same	Increased
Indiana	Stayed same	Increased	Increased	Decreased	Decreased	Stayed same
Iowa	Increased	Increased	Stayed same	Stayed same	Increased	Stayed same
Kansas	Increased	Increased	Increased	Increased	Decreased	Increased
Kentucky	Increased	Not applicable	Stayed same	Stayed same	Decreased	Don't know
Louisiana	Increased	Don't know	Increased	Stayed same	.	Decreased
Maine	Increased	Increased	Increased	Stayed same	Stayed same	Stayed same
Maryland	Increased	Don't know	Increased	Don't know	Decreased	Don't know
Massachusetts	Stayed same	Stayed same	.	Decreased	Decreased	Decreased
Minnesota	Stayed same	Stayed same	Increased	Stayed same	.	.
Mississippi	Stayed same	Don't know	Increased	Don't know	Don't know	Don't know
Missouri	Stayed same	Not applicable	Stayed same	Decreased	.	Stayed same
Montana	Stayed same	Increased	Stayed same	Decreased	Decreased	Increased
Nebraska	Decreased	Stayed same	Stayed same	Stayed same	.	Increased
Nevada	Stayed same	Stayed same	Increased	Stayed same	Don't know	.
New Hampshire	Stayed same	Decreased	Stayed same	Stayed same	Stayed same	.
New Jersey	Increased	Increased	Increased	Increased	Increased	Increased
New Mexico	Stayed same	Increased	Stayed same	Increased	.	Increased
New York	Increased	Increased	Stayed same	Increased	Increased	Increased

State	Subsidized child care	Transportation support services	Utility assistance	Medicaid	SCHIP	Job retention and advancement services
North Carolina	Increased	Increased	Increased	Stayed same	Decreased	Stayed same
North Dakota	Stayed same	Stayed same	Stayed same	Stayed same	Increased	Stayed same
Ohio	Stayed same	Decreased	Stayed same	Increased	.	Decreased
Oklahoma	Increased	Increased	Stayed same	Decreased	.	Increased
Oregon	Stayed same	Increased	Stayed same	Stayed same	Stayed same	Decreased
Pennsylvania	Decreased	Increased	Increased	Stayed same	Stayed same	Increased
Rhode Island	Increased	.	Stayed same	Decreased	.	Not applicable
South Carolina	Increased	Increased	Increased	Decreased	.	Increased
South Dakota	Increased	Not applicable	Increased	Stayed same	Stayed same	Not applicable
Tennessee	.	.	Increased	.	.	.
Texas	Increased	Don't know	Stayed same	Increased	Decreased	Increased
Utah	Not applicable	Increased	Stayed same	Stayed same	Stayed same	Stayed same
Vermont	Increased	Increased	Increased	Increased	.	Decreased
Virginia	Stayed same	Increased	Stayed same	Increased	Increased	Increased
Washington	Stayed same	Increased	Stayed same	Decreased	Decreased	Increased
West Virginia	Increased	Stayed same	Stayed same	Increased	Increased	Stayed same
Wisconsin	Decreased	Increased	Increased	Stayed same	.	Increased
Wyoming	Stayed same	Stayed same	Stayed same	Increased	Increased	Not applicable

Source: GAO survey, spring 2003.

Notes: These data are summarized in figure 10.

States were asked, "Comparing state fiscal year 2000 with the present, to what extent did the outreach efforts for [support type] services change in your state?"

Michigan did not respond to our survey.

Cells left blank indicate that the state did not answer or was not asked the question. For example, states that did not have a particular support in both state fiscal year 2000 and spring 2003 were not asked about changes in these supports.

Table 15: Changes between State Fiscal Year 2000 and Spring 2003 in the Size of the Eligible Population as a Result of Changes in Eligibility Criteria of Each Type of Support, by State

State	Subsidized child care	Transportation support services	Utility assistance	Medicaid	SCHIP	Job retention and advancement services
Alabama	Don't know	.	Stayed same	Stayed same	Not applicable	Not applicable
Alaska	.	Not applicable	Stayed same	Decreased	.	Decreased
Arizona	Not applicable	Increased	Increased	Decreased	Increased	Not applicable
Arkansas	Increased	Don't know	Not applicable	Increased	.	Not applicable
California	Not applicable	Not applicable	Stayed same	Increased	.	Decreased
Colorado	Decreased	Increased	Increased	Decreased	Increased	Increased
Connecticut	Decreased	Stayed same	Increased	Increased	Not applicable	Decreased
Delaware	Increased	Don't know	Increased	Stayed same	Stayed same	Stayed same
District of Columbia	Not applicable	Don't know	Increased	Increased	.	Not applicable
Florida	Increased	Not applicable	Decreased	Increased	Increased	Don't know
Georgia	Decreased	Not applicable	Increased	Not applicable	Stayed same	.
Hawaii	Increased	Decreased	Stayed same	Increased	.	Increased
Idaho	Stayed same	Increased	Increased	Increased	.	Increased
Illinois	Stayed same	Increased	Stayed same	Increased	Increased	Decreased
Indiana	Decreased	Stayed same	Stayed same	Increased	Increased	Not applicable
Iowa	Stayed same	Stayed same	Not applicable	Not applicable	.	Not applicable
Kansas	Decreased	Increased	Not applicable	Increased	.	Increased
Kentucky	Increased	Decreased	Not applicable	Decreased	Increased	Don't know
Louisiana	Decreased	Don't know	Increased	Increased	.	Don't know
Maine	Stayed same	Stayed same	Not applicable	Increased	Increased	Increased
Maryland	Increased	Don't know	Increased	Don't know	Increased	Don't know
Massachusetts	Stayed same	Stayed same	.	Decreased	Increased	Stayed same
Minnesota	Stayed same	Stayed same	Increased	Increased	.	Stayed same
Mississippi	Stayed same	Don't know	Increased	Don't know	Don't know	Not applicable
Missouri	Not applicable	Stayed same	Stayed same	Decreased	.	Stayed same
Montana	Increased	Decreased	Stayed same	Increased	Increased	Decreased
Nebraska	Decreased	Not applicable	Decreased	Stayed same	.	Not applicable
Nevada	Increased	Stayed same	Increased	Stayed same	Don't know	.
New Hampshire	Don't know	Don't know	Stayed same	Increased	Stayed same	.
New Jersey	Stayed same	Stayed same	Increased	Increased	Increased	Stayed same
New Mexico	Decreased	Increased	Stayed same	Increased	.	Increased
New York	Don't know	Don't know	Don't know	Increased	Stayed same	Don't know

State	Subsidized child care	Transportation support services	Utility assistance	Medicaid	SCHIP	Job retention and advancement services
North Carolina	Increased	Stayed same	Increased	Increased	Increased	Decreased
North Dakota	Decreased	Increased	Increased	Increased	Increased	Increased
Ohio	Not applicable	Decreased	Stayed same	Increased	.	Don't know
Oklahoma	Increased	Don't know	Increased	Increased	.	Stayed same
Oregon	Decreased	Increased	Don't know	Not applicable	Increased	Stayed same
Pennsylvania	Increased	Increased	Decreased	Increased	Not applicable	Increased
Rhode Island	Increased	.	Stayed same	Increased	.	Decreased
South Carolina	Don't know	Not applicable	Increased	Increased	.	Increased
South Dakota	Increased	Not applicable	Increased	Increased	Increased	Not applicable
Tennessee	.	.	Stayed same	.	.	.
Texas	Decreased	Stayed same	Don't know	Increased	Increased	Increased
Utah	Stayed same	Don't know	Don't know	Increased	Increased	Stayed same
Vermont	Increased	Don't know	Not applicable	Increased	.	Stayed same
Virginia	Don't know	Stayed same	Increased	Increased	Not applicable	Don't know
Washington	Stayed same	Increased	Don't know	Increased	Increased	Increased
West Virginia	Decreased	Stayed same	Stayed same	Increased	Increased	Stayed same
Wisconsin	Increased	Not applicable	Decreased	Increased	.	Stayed same
Wyoming	Increased	Stayed same	Stayed same	Increased	Increased	Stayed same

Source: GAO survey, spring 2003.

Notes: These data are summarized in figure 11.

States were asked, "Comparing state fiscal year 2000 with the present, to what extent did the size of the eligible population change as a result of changes in state eligibility criteria for [support type]?"

Michigan did not respond to our survey.

Cells left blank indicate that the state did not answer or was not asked the question. For example, states that did not have a particular support in both state fiscal year 2000 and spring 2003 were not asked about changes in these supports.

Table 16: Changes between State Fiscal Year 2000 and Spring 2003 in Provider Payments, by State

State	Subsidized child care	Transportation support services	Utility assistance	Medicaid	SCHIP	Job retention and advancement services
Alabama	Increased	.	Increased	Increased	Increased	Don't know
Alaska	Increased	Increased	Stayed same	Increased	.	Stayed same
Arizona	Increased	Stayed same	Increased	Increased	Stayed same	Increased
Arkansas	Increased	Stayed same	Not applicable	Increased	.	Don't know
California	Increased	Don't know	Stayed same	Stayed same	.	Don't know
Colorado	Increased	Don't know	Increased	Decreased	Increased	Don't know
Connecticut	Increased	Increased	Increased	Increased	Increased	Stayed same
Delaware	Stayed same	Don't know	Stayed same	.	.	Increased
District of Columbia	Stayed same	Don't know	Increased	Increased	.	Increased
Florida	Increased	Not applicable	Don't know	Stayed same	Increased	Don't know
Georgia	Increased	Don't know	Increased	Decreased	Decreased	.
Hawaii	Increased	Stayed same	Increased	Increased	.	Stayed same
Idaho	Stayed same	Stayed same	Increased	Increased	.	Decreased
Illinois	Stayed same	Increased	Increased	Decreased	Decreased	Increased
Indiana	Increased	Increased	Stayed same	Increased	Stayed same	Increased
Iowa	Increased	Don't know	Stayed same	Stayed same	Increased	Not applicable
Kansas	Increased	Stayed same	Increased	Stayed same	Increased	Stayed same
Kentucky	Increased	Not applicable	Increased	Stayed same	Increased	Don't know
Louisiana	Stayed same	Increased	Increased	Increased	.	Don't know
Maine	Increased	Decreased	Don't know	Stayed same	Increased	Increased
Maryland	Increased	Don't know	Stayed same	Increased	Increased	Don't know
Massachusetts	Increased	Increased	.	Decreased	Decreased	Stayed same
Minnesota	Increased	Decreased	Stayed same	Increased	.	.
Mississippi	Stayed same	Don't know	Increased	Don't know	Don't know	Not applicable
Missouri	Increased	Not applicable	Stayed same	Increased	.	Stayed same
Montana	Stayed same	Stayed same	Increased	Decreased	Stayed same	Stayed same
Nebraska	Increased	Decreased	Stayed same	Increased	.	Increased
Nevada	Increased	Increased	Increased	Don't know	Don't know	.
New Hampshire	Increased	Stayed same	Stayed same	Decreased	Decreased	.
New Jersey	Stayed same	Stayed same	Not applicable	Increased	Increased	Increased
New Mexico	Increased	Decreased	Decreased	Increased	.	Increased
New York	Increased	Don't know	Don't know	Increased	Increased	Increased

State	Subsidized child care	Transportation support services	Utility assistance	Medicaid	SCHIP	Job retention and advancement services
North Carolina	Increased	Increased	Increased	Increased	Decreased	Stayed same
North Dakota	Stayed same	Increased	Increased	Increased	Increased	Increased
Ohio	Increased	Don't know	Stayed same	Increased	.	Not applicable
Oklahoma	Increased	Increased	Increased	Increased	.	Don't know
Oregon	Stayed same	Increased	Stayed same	Increased	Increased	Decreased
Pennsylvania	Increased	Increased	Increased	Stayed same	Increased	Increased
Rhode Island	Increased	.	Increased	Increased	.	Increased
South Carolina	Increased	Increased	Increased	Stayed same	.	Increased
South Dakota	Increased	Don't know	Increased	Stayed same	Stayed same	Not applicable
Tennessee	.	.	Increased	.	.	.
Texas	Increased	Don't know	Don't know	Increased	Don't know	Stayed same
Utah	Stayed same	Stayed same	Increased	Increased	Stayed same	Stayed same
Vermont	Increased	Stayed same	Stayed same	Increased	.	Not applicable
Virginia	Increased	Decreased	Increased	Increased	Increased	Don't know
Washington	Increased	Not applicable	Increased	Increased	Increased	Not applicable
West Virginia	Increased	Decreased	Stayed same	Stayed same	Stayed same	Decreased
Wisconsin	Increased	Increased	.	Increased	.	Don't know
Wyoming	Increased	Stayed same	Increased	Increased	Increased	Stayed same

Source: GAO survey, spring 2003.

Notes: These data are summarized in figure 12.

States were asked, "Comparing state fiscal year 2000 with the present, to what extent did provider payment rates change for [support type] services in your state?"

Michigan did not respond to our survey.

Cells left blank indicate that the state did not answer or was not asked the question. For example, states that did not have a particular support in both state fiscal year 2000 and spring 2003 were not asked about changes in these supports.

Table 17: Changes between State Fiscal Year 2000 and Spring 2003 in Copayments for Subsidized Child Care, Medicaid, and SCHIP, by State

State	Subsidized child care	Medicaid	SCHIP
Alabama	Decreased	Stayed same	Stayed same
Alaska	Decreased	Stayed same	.
Arizona	Stayed same	Stayed same	Stayed same
Arkansas	Stayed same	Decreased	.
California	Stayed same	Stayed same	.
Colorado	Stayed same	Increased	Decreased
Connecticut	Stayed same	Increased	Stayed same
Delaware	Stayed same	Increased	Stayed same
District of Columbia	Decreased	Not applicable	.
Florida	Increased	Not applicable	Stayed same
Georgia	Stayed same	Stayed same	Not applicable
Hawaii	Stayed same	Stayed same	.
Idaho	Increased	Not applicable	.
Illinois	Stayed same	Increased	Stayed same
Indiana	Stayed same	Not applicable	Stayed same
Iowa	Stayed same	Stayed same	Stayed same
Kansas	Stayed same	Increased	Not applicable
Kentucky	Stayed same	Increased	Increased
Louisiana	Increased	Stayed same	.
Maine	Stayed same	Stayed same	Stayed same
Maryland	Decreased	Increased	Stayed same
Massachusetts	Decreased	Increased	Stayed same
Minnesota	Stayed same	Stayed same	.
Mississippi	Stayed same	Don't know	Don't know
Missouri	Stayed same	Stayed same	.
Montana	Increased	Increased	Stayed same
Nebraska	Increased	Increased	.
Nevada	Stayed same	Don't know	Don't know
New Hampshire	Increased	Stayed same	Increased
New Jersey	Stayed same	Not applicable	Not applicable
New Mexico	Increased	Stayed same	.
New York	Stayed same	Stayed same	Not applicable
North Carolina	Increased	Increased	Stayed same

State	Subsidized child care	Medicaid	SCHIP
North Dakota	Stayed same	Increased	Stayed same
Ohio	Stayed same	Stayed same	.
Oklahoma	Stayed same	Not applicable	.
Oregon	Increased	.	Stayed same
Pennsylvania	Decreased	Stayed same	Not applicable
Rhode Island	Stayed same	Increased	.
South Carolina	Stayed same	Stayed same	.
South Dakota	Decreased	Stayed same	Not applicable
Tennessee	.	.	.
Texas	Increased	Not applicable	Stayed same
Utah	Stayed same	Increased	Not applicable
Vermont	Stayed same	Decreased	.
Virginia	Stayed same	Stayed same	Increased
Washington	Increased	Stayed same	Decreased
West Virginia	Increased	Stayed same	Stayed same
Wisconsin	Stayed same	Stayed same	.
Wyoming	Decreased	Stayed same	Stayed same

Source: GAO survey, spring 2003.

Notes: These data are summarized in figure 13, although in the figure, state responses are characterized as increasing or decreasing the availability of supports. Therefore, states shown in the table as increasing copayments are shown in figure 13 as decreasing the availability of supports.

States were asked, “Comparing state fiscal year 2000 with the present, to what extent did co-payments for [support type] services change in your state?”

Michigan did not respond to our survey.

Cells left blank indicate that the state did not answer or was not asked the question. For example, states that did not have a particular support in both state fiscal year 2000 and spring 2003 were not asked about changes in these supports.

Appendix IV: Comments from the Department of Health and Human Services

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

Office of Inspector General

Washington, D.C. 20201

DEC 23 2003

Ms. Cynthia M. Fagnoni
Managing Director, Education, Workforce,
and Income Security
United States General
Accounting Office
Washington, D.C. 20548

Dear Ms. Fagnoni:

Enclosed are the Department's comments on your draft report entitled, "Supports For Low-Income Families: States Serve a Broad Range of Families Through a Complex and Changing System." The comments represent the tentative position of the Department and are subject to reevaluation when the final version of this report is received.

The Department provided several technical comments directly to your staff.

The Department appreciates the opportunity to comment on this draft report before its publication.

Sincerely,

Dara Corrigan
Acting Principal Deputy Inspector General

Enclosure

The Office of Inspector General (OIG) is transmitting the Department's response to this draft report in our capacity as the Department's designated focal point and coordinator for General Accounting Office reports. OIG has not conducted an independent assessment of these comments and therefore expresses no opinion on them.

Comments of the Department of Health and Human Services on the General Accounting Office's Draft Report, "Supports For Low-Income Families: States Serve a Broad Range of Families Through a Complex and Changing System" (GAO-04-256)

The Department of Health and Human Services appreciates the opportunity to comment on the General Accounting Office's draft report.

The report demonstrates that States provide a wide range of employment services and benefits, such as child care and transportation, that enable families to work and move toward self-sufficiency. Eligibility criteria and benefits are structured to serve a broad range of low-income families, including families on and off welfare. These support systems vary substantially among States, creating a complex national picture that will continue to evolve. The "Highlights" summary and the graphical representations use helpful formats for conveying this important information. While States have expanded the availability of support services in recent years, the current State fiscal environment may result in future reductions in some of these support services.

We agree with the findings and conclusions of the report. To address the fiscal uncertainty that some States face, reauthorization of the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) and the Child Care programs by Congress will enable States to know with certainty the level of Federal TANF and child care resources that will be available to support low-income families over the next five years.

Appendix V: GAO Contacts and Staff Acknowledgments

GAO Contacts

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Staff Acknowledgments

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Related GAO Products

Welfare Reform: Information on TANF Balances. GAO-03-1094. Washington, D.C.: September 8, 2003.

Welfare Reform: Information on Changing Labor Market and State Fiscal Conditions. GAO-03-977. Washington, D.C.: July 15, 2003.

Transportation-Disadvantaged Populations: Some Coordination Efforts among Programs Providing Transportation Services, but Obstacles Persist. GAO-03-697. Washington, D.C.: June 30, 2003.

Child Care: Recent State Policy Changes Affecting the Availability of Assistance for Low-Income Families. GAO-03-588. Washington, D.C.: May 5, 2003.

Child Care: States Exercise Flexibility in Setting Reimbursement Rates and Providing Access for Low-Income Children. GAO-02-894. Washington, D.C.: September 18, 2002.

Workforce Investment Act: States and Localities Increasingly Coordinate Services for TANF Clients, but Better Information Needed on Effective Approaches. GAO-02-696. Washington, D.C.: July 3, 2002.

Welfare Reform: States Provide TANF-Funded Work Support Services to Many Low-Income Families Who Do Not Receive Cash Assistance. GAO-02-615T. Washington, D.C.: April 10, 2002.

Welfare Reform: States Provide TANF-Funded Services to Many Low-Income Families Who Do Not Receive Cash Assistance. GAO-02-564. Washington, D.C.: April 5, 2002.

Human Services Integration: Results of a GAO Cosponsored Conference on Modernizing Information Systems. GAO-02-121. Washington, D.C.: January 31, 2002.

Means-Tested Programs: Determining Financial Eligibility Is Cumbersome and Can Be Simplified. GAO-02-58. Washington, D.C.: November 2, 2001.

Welfare Reform: Challenges in Maintaining a Federal-State Fiscal Partnership. GAO-01-828. Washington, D.C.: August 10, 2001

Welfare Reform: Improving State Automated Systems Requires Coordinated Federal Effort. HEHS-00-48. Washington, D.C.: April 27, 2000.

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