

**Institute for  
Research on  
Poverty**

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**A. Projects Funded with Core Resources Provided by the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, and by the Graduate School, University of Wisconsin–Madison**

*Welfare Reform*

1. “Monitoring State Efforts to Reduce Out-of-Wedlock Childbearing: The Impact of Welfare Reform”

Principal Investigator: Gary Sandefur

7/1/97–12/31/98

The 1996 federal welfare reform bill requires states to establish goals and timelines for reducing out-of-wedlock childbearing not only among TANF recipients, but among the general population as well. This project will assess the efforts and progress of states in this area by monitoring federal and state expenditures and programs on family planning and, within Wisconsin, monitoring county expenditures, programs, and trends in out-of-wedlock childbearing. The data to be used include information on state and Wisconsin programs and expenditures, national nativity detail (all birth certificates for 1988 and later, with state and city identifiers attached, available through the Center for Demography and Ecology at the University of Wisconsin), Wisconsin nativity detail (all Wisconsin birth certificates over the same period, with county identifiers attached), and the state goals and plans for reducing out-of-wedlock childbearing as they are submitted to ASPE.

2. “The Impact of Welfare Reform on Families”

Principal Investigators: Mark Courtney and Irving Piliavin

1/1/97–12/31/98

This pilot study in Dane County, where Madison is located, is the forerunner of the project titled “What Happens to Families under Wisconsin Works,” described below. The investigators are following the experiences of a sample of 200 participants in Wisconsin Works (W-2), the state’s new welfare program. Half are those who transferred from Aid to Families with Dependent Children to W-2 when it began, and half are those who entered W-2 after its establishment. Initial interviews are obtaining basic data on family demographics, work and public assistance histories, child care, and income. One year later, when it is anticipated that some recipients will have left the rolls, respondents will be re-interviewed at greater length to obtain information about education and training, employment and earnings histories, physical and mental health, parenting styles, and residential mobility. The results should provide information on the economic and personal circumstances surrounding those who do and do not exit from the program.

3. “What Happens to Families Who Leave AFDC?”

Principal Investigators: Barbara Wolfe and Maria Cancian

9/30/97–9/29/98

Wisconsin’s experience in welfare reform since the late 1980s has set a pattern that many states are now following. An understanding of the circumstances of AFDC recipients who responded to

Wisconsin welfare initiatives by leaving the rolls may give insight into the experiences of those who will cease receiving welfare under the new reform programs. This project examines families who were Wisconsin AFDC recipients in July 1995 and left during the ensuing year, comparing their situation with those who remained on the rolls. With other program data (food stamps and Medicaid, Unemployment Insurance), the study looks at how the “leavers” fared in terms of income, work experience, and other public assistance receipt after exiting AFDC, in contrast to the circumstances of those who continued to receive benefits. It also investigates the circumstances of those who did and did not return to AFDC within 18 months after leaving.

4. “How Teen Mothers Are Faring under Welfare Reform”

Principal Investigators: Sandra Danziger and Ariel Kalil

1/1/97–12/31/98

Through paired interviews with teenage mothers who are receiving welfare in a county in Michigan and with the mothers with whom they are required to live in order to receive benefits, this longitudinal study is collecting information on the effects of mandated work and school activities on maternal psychological well-being, parenting behavior, family functioning, and the health and development of the young children.

5. “The Welfarization of Family Law”

Principal Investigator: Tonya Brito

6/1/98–8/31/98

The investigator is preparing a law article whose thesis is that, owing to the shift in welfare policy since the late 1980s toward behavioral modification, welfare law has begun to influence family law: i.e., the administrative rules regulating welfare recipients in such areas as paternity establishment, child support collections, living arrangements of teen parents, among others, have impinged on the general body of family law that applies to all American families. As an example, under welfare reform child support enforcement law has become more administrative and less reliant on the judicial process. The overall objective of the article is to encourage the use of existing family law and its underlying policies to reshape the welfare reform debate to include serious discussion of what all families, not just poor families, with children need.

6. “Process Evaluation: Workshop, Papers and Conference”

Principal Investigator: Thomas Corbett

9/30/97–9/29/98

This project’s goal is to improve the quality and utility of implementation, or process, evaluations of welfare reform by developing protocols and standards for such evaluations and disseminating them widely through the evaluation community. The National Research Forum on Families, Children, and the New Federalism, located within the National Center for Children in Poverty, is collaborating with IRP in this project. The Joyce Foundation and the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation are also contributing resources. Activities include convening a group of about 35 experts in a workshop that was held in October 1997, in New York City, commissioning a set of 10 to 12 papers dealing with the issues to be identified at the workshop, organizing a national conference to present and discuss the papers, and finally, developing and disseminating, both in print and electronically, standards and protocols for process evaluations.

7. Conference on Rethinking the Evaluation Strategies under TANF  
Principal Investigator: Thomas Corbett  
1/1/98–12/31/98  
A conference is proposed to examine the new role of the federal government in public assistance policy following the 1996 federal reform legislation that replaced AFDC with block grants, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families. Issues to be addressed include the interaction of research planning and TANF reporting requirements, the extent of interagency cooperation in research on public assistance programs, the extent of federal-state cooperation, and public management under the new regime.
8. “Conference: Foundations of Anti-Poverty Policies”  
Principal Investigators: Steven Durlauf and Samuel Bowles  
7/1/98–6/30/99  
The investigators will organize a conference to reexamine the bases on which antipoverty policies are proposed and supported. The purpose is to learn why conventional antipoverty policies have fallen into disfavor since their advancement in the 1960s, and also to learn what policies can achieve widespread support. Papers will be commissioned on several topics: the ethical foundations of antipoverty policies, public attitudes toward antipoverty policies and the poor, and the efficacy of antipoverty policies.

### *Family Well-Being*

9. “Fragile Families and Well-Being Project Workshop”  
Principal Investigators: Irwin Garfinkel and Jeanne Brooks-Gunn, Columbia University;  
Sara McLanahan, Princeton University  
6/30/97–8/31/99  
The Fragile Families Project is following a new birth cohort of children born to unwed parents in selected cities. The sample includes children of African-American, Hispanic, and white parents, reflecting the racial and ethnic composition of the city. A control group of married parents is also being followed. Information on social and economic conditions of the parents, parental relationships, involvement of the fathers, community resources, and child well-being is collected from both mothers and fathers at the time of the child’s birth, and both parents and the child will be followed for four years. The principal investigators and other scholars involved in the project will visit the Institute for Research on Poverty in 1999 to present analytic results.
10. Conference on Nonmarital Fertility  
Principal Investigator: Larry Wu  
1/1/98–12/31/98  
Births to unmarried mothers in the United States have greatly increased in recent decades. By the mid-1990s, nearly one third of all U.S. births occurred to unmarried women. This phenomenon has attracted the attention of both policy makers and social scientists: policy makers have concentrated on teen births, and researchers have focused on nonmarital first births. Yet higher-order nonmarital births now constitute over half of all nonmarital births and over a quarter of all births. An interdisciplinary conference on nonmarital fertility will build on projects being conducted by several IRP researchers, including economists, demographers, and sociologists,

and scholars at other institutions who are researching this topic. The conference, planned for April 1999, will examine issues of basic research, emphasizing what is it that we do not yet know and how we might obtain answers to these questions.

11. “Association between a Nonmarital First Birth and the Subsequent Nonmarital Fertility of U.S. Women”

Principal Investigator: Larry Wu

7/1/98–6/30/99

The research question addressed here is whether a nonmarital first birth leads to subsequent nonmarital fertility. Data from the Current Population Survey, National Longitudinal Survey of Youth, and National Survey of Family Growth for 1988 and 1995 are used to compare the pace of marital and nonmarital fertility among women born after 1939. The issues examined are whether a first nonmarital birth speeds the pace of subsequent nonmarital childbearing as compared to the pace of marital childbearing, whether completed family size is larger for women who bear their first child out of wedlock, and whether answers to these questions vary by race and ethnicity.

12. “Inequality, Context, and Adolescent Male Behavior”

Principal Investigator: Marino Bruce

6/1/98–5/31/99

This project builds upon theoretical work to construct a conceptual model demonstrating that the behaviors of adolescent males are a function of their social environment. The model will be operationalized using data from the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health to examine the effects of class, race, family, and peers on four types of behavior, two negative and two positive, that teenaged men use to evince masculinity: physical violence, alcohol and drug use, working for pay, and participation in sports. The conceptual and empirical models developed in this pilot project serve as the foundation for a larger project examining the relationship between social context and individual behavior.

### *Immigration*

13. “Social Networks, Poverty, and Health among Mexican Immigrant Households”

Principal Investigator: Shawn Kanaiaupuni

6/1/98–5/31/99

Using a data set that provides information on (1) migrant and nonmigrant households in Mexico and (2) Mexican immigrant households in the United States, this research will examine the influence of family networks on child health and reproductive health behavior—prenatal and postnatal care practices—in Mexico and the United States. One hypothesis to be explored is that immigrants rely more heavily on family networks to overcome obstacles in a new country, and that receipt of network assistance improves birth outcomes in the United States relative to those in Mexico. The analysis will address not only the correlation between health and family networks, but also some of the specific mechanisms involved, such as the provision of health advice, financial gifts or loans, and child care.

## 14. “Immigrant Health and Welfare Reform”

Principal Investigators: Alberto Palloni and Shawn Kanaiaupuni

1/1/98–12/31/98

This project will gather information on child and maternal health among small groups of Hmong and Mexican immigrants in Wisconsin and comparable groups of nonimmigrant people living in areas within or adjacent to the immigrants. Information will also be collected from some state agencies, to learn about policy changes in response to welfare reforms. This research effort is a pilot for a proposed larger project assessing the impact of welfare reform on health conditions and related health behavior of Hmong and Mexican immigrant populations in Wisconsin, Illinois, and California, and the influence of institutional changes among agencies charged with implementation of new policies. The pilot will permit the investigators to assess the viability and performance of the proposed data-collection instruments.

***Education***

## 15. “Integration of School-Level Information into the Chicago Longitudinal Study”

Principal Investigator: Arthur Reynolds

8/1/98–6/30/99

The Chicago Longitudinal Study (CLS) contains 1,150 students who originally enrolled in a preschool and kindergarten program for low-income children in inner-city Chicago from 1983 to 1985. Most of them are now in high school. This project, part of a larger evaluation described below, will investigate the relationship between the particular characteristics of each high school and the achievement and graduation success of CLS students in the schools. The research questions addressed are (1) whether the quality of high schools attended affects the persistence of benefits from early intervention programs offered to children from low-income families; and (2) whether a school’s average achievement and racial and social mix affect the achievement of individual students in the CLS.

## 16. “Family Composition, Family Change, and Educational Outcomes”

Principal Investigator: Gary Sandefur

7/1/98–6/30/99

An extension of work on the relationship between family structure and adolescent educational attainment, this research examines the effects of relationships among parents, teachers, and adolescents on the initiation of sexual activity. Using data from the National Educational Longitudinal Survey and the National Longitudinal Survey of Adolescent Health, the project addresses the following questions: Can relationships with teachers and peers compensate for poor or nonexistent relationships with parents? How do both sets of relationships influence the onset of early sexual activity? How strongly associated are different types of relationships—do teens, for example, who have poor relationships with their parents also tend to have poor relationships with teachers and peers?

*The Labor Market and the Poor*

## 17. “Job Holding and Earnings Dynamics for Low-Wage Workers”

Principal Investigator: Robinson Hollister

1/1/98–12/31/98

The New Hope Project in Milwaukee is a demonstration program providing earnings supplements, subsidized health insurance and child care, and in some cases community service jobs to low-skilled workers. Its participants routinely file pay stubs containing information on earnings and hours worked. The investigator will utilize these pay stub data to analyze the dynamics of earnings and jobs held by the workers, providing information on whether the workers move up or down the wage ladder and the extent to which they utilize child care and health insurance. The study will also compare these data with information collected from household surveys of the participants to learn whether personal reports accord with data recorded on the pay stubs.

*Mentoring and Training*

## 18. Minority Mentoring Activities

Principal Investigator: Barbara Wolfe

1/1/98–6/30/99

This program supports (1) two-week visits by minority scholars to the Institute, where they present their research and exchange information with IRP colleagues, and (2) a collaborative relationship with the Center for Urban Progress at Howard University, involving visits by IRP scholars to the Center and participation of Center faculty and graduate students in the IRP Summer Research Workshop on Problems of the Low-Income Population.

**B. Projects Funded by Other Federal Agencies***The Disabled and Elderly*

1. “Changes in the Economic Status of Aged and Disabled Beneficiaries and Their Correlates”  
Social Security Administration  
Principal Investigators: Robert Haveman, Karen Holden, and Barbara Wolfe  
3/1/95–8/31/98

This research examines the levels of well-being, and changes in those levels over time, of aged and disabled Social Security beneficiaries. It utilizes data from the SSA New Beneficiary Studies of 1982 and 1991, as well as information from the Panel Study of Income Dynamics. Study of the changing economic well-being of retired beneficiaries draws on the two waves of the NBS to study alterations over the 1982–91 period in the absolute and relative economic status of men and women who were new retired-worker beneficiaries in 1982. These changes are compared with those of their nonretired counterparts over that decade. Analysis of the changing economic well-being of disabled beneficiaries provides estimates of the level and changes in economic well-being of new SSDI beneficiaries in 1982, both in absolute terms and in comparison to their nondisabled counterparts over the 1982–91 decade.

2. “The Contributions of Employer-Provided Pension, Employment and Asset Income to the Economic Well-Being and Security of Disabled and Retired Social Security Recipients: Analyses Using the New Beneficiary Data System”  
Social Security Administration  
Principal Investigators: Karen Holden, Robert Haveman, and Barbara Wolfe  
2/1/98–1/31/99

As in the project described above, the investigators are studying the economic well-being of disabled-worker (SSDI) and retired-worker (OASI) beneficiaries in the New Beneficiary Studies of 1982 and 1991. They compare the well-being of the new SSDI beneficiaries with a matched nondisabled population, and the OASI beneficiaries with the general population aged 62 and older. The study uses both conventional income measures of economic status and alternative measures that reflect the value of potential income streams over the lifetime of the respondent and spouse. The research focuses on the contribution of changes in employer-provided pensions, post-retirement employment, and income from assets to well-being over time. These estimates are supplemented by examining the influence of health conditions and medical care expenditures on well-being using linked Medicare charge data, the influence of changes in federal income taxation of social security benefits over the period studied, and the influence of survivor benefits on the well-being of widows.

**Education**

## 3. “Long-Term Effects of the Chicago Child-Parent Centers”

U.S. Department of Education

Principal Investigator: Arthur Reynolds

9/1/96–8/31/99

The Chicago Longitudinal Study includes 1,150 minority children who participated in the Chicago Child-Parent Centers, a large-scale early childhood intervention program, for up to six years from ages 3 to 8. This three-year research project extends the study by evaluating the impact of the intervention seven to ten years after the end of program participation. It addresses three major questions: Is participation in the intervention from preschool to grade 3 associated with school achievement and attendance, grade retention and special education placement, high school completion, and juvenile delinquency? Are the effects of participation consistent across alternative econometric and psychometric techniques for estimating program effects? Which individual, family, and school-level factors mediate the effects of participation in early childhood intervention?

## 4. “Family Change during Adolescence and School Performance”

National Science Foundation

Principal Investigator: Gary Sandefur

7/1/97–6/30/99

This research concerns the effects of family structure (specifically, the presence or absence of parents) and changes in family structure during the high school years on high school graduation and college attendance. Using data from the National Educational Longitudinal Survey, students are followed by the time they were in eighth grade, in 1988, to 1994, when they had the opportunity to complete high school or obtain a GED and begin college. With data from the Panel Study of Income Dynamics, individuals are followed from age 13 to age 21. The research focuses on changes in family composition during this critical period in the life cycle and their association with the educational attainment of those studied. The project also explores the changes in family structure that are associated with five key variables: family income, residential mobility and school changing, social capital, self-concept and locus of control, and behavior in school. The ways in which these variables help account for the association between changes in family structure and educational attainment will be examined.

**Food Assistance and the Poor**

## 5. “IRP-USDA 1998–99 Small Grants Program”

U.S. Department of Agriculture

6/1/98–8/31/99

Four projects were funded through a competition held in spring 1998:

## a. Jennifer Anderson, Colorado State University

“Independent Validation of the Core Food Security Measure with Asian and Pacific Islanders”

To obtain accurate, nationally applicable measures of food insecurity and hunger, the U.S. Department of Agriculture has in recent years developed an 18-question Core Food

Security Module that permits documentation of the extent and severity of food insecurity among households over a twelve-month period. This project will extend validation of the module among diverse populations by testing it on a sample of low-income households in Hawaii, which has a large population of Asian and Pacific Islander ancestry. The results are expected to expand the research base on predictors of food security to help policy makers better evaluate and target food assistance programs.

- b. Greg Duncan and Lori Kowaleski-Jones, Northwestern University  
“Effects of Participation in Food Assistance Programs: Evidence from NLSY Children”
- Since its establishment in 1972, the Special Supplemental Feeding Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) has sought to increase the nutrition level and general well-being of children. WIC is now one of the fastest-growing federal assistance programs. Past evaluations of the program have documented its value in reducing infant mortality, rates of low birth weight, and early childhood anemia. Many of these evaluations date from years before 1990, however, and have relied on data from a single state or compared results across several states. This research will investigate the effects of WIC on a national sample of children born between 1990 and 1995 to women in the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth. A variety of effects, including birth weight, infant motor and social skills, and infant temperament, will be considered.
- c. Katharine Donato, Louisiana State University, and Shawn Kanaiaupuni, University of Wisconsin–Madison  
“Food Insecurity and Immigrant Well-Being: Mexican Immigrants to the United States”
- To understand the implications of eliminating the food safety net for many immigrant households, this research project will examine various measures of food security among immigrants from Mexico. The measures include nutritional intake, the proportion of income spent on food, wives’ control over food purchases, and breast-feeding practices. The information is taken from data collected by the investigators as part of a larger project on the health and well-being of Mexican immigrant mothers and their children. The data base contains three waves of health and migration data collected from 1500 households in San Luis Potosi, Mexico, in 1996 and 1998, and a first wave of similar data collected in Houston later in 1996 and in San Diego in 1997.
- d. Beth Osborne Daponte, University of Pittsburgh  
“A Macro-Level Analysis of the Private Food Assistance Network”
- Beginning in the late 1970s and continuing through the 1980s, a private food assistance network has grown to large proportions in the United States. This network comprises food banks, which are nonprofit community warehouses that receive donations of edible but often unsalable food, food pantries, which distribute food from banks and other sources to needy households, and Second Harvest, a national food distribution network based in Chicago. This research will conduct a quantitative and qualitative analysis of the private food distribution system, examining such issues as the retail value and

nutritional value of donated food, the content and quality of food donations, the amount of tax deductions and tax credits taken for donated food, and the volunteer hours used in providing food assistance to the poor.

### *Methodology*

6. “Estimating Behavior Determining Income When Response Is Subject to Error”  
National Science Foundation  
Principal Investigators: Martin David and Christopher Bollinger  
9/1/95–8/31/99

The Survey of Income and Program Participation was designed to measure participation in various government programs by asking survey participants, at regular intervals, questions about receipt of program benefits. The Census Bureau has collected validation data that make it possible to estimate the incidence and structure of errors in respondents’ answers. This project deals with the nature of such errors in response, and of failure to respond to some questions, particularly those regarding Food Stamps and AFDC. The 1984 SIPP is used. One of the findings to date is that as income increases, so does the probability that respondents will inaccurately report that they did not receive Food Stamp benefits. The ultimate purpose of the research is to model multiple program use.

7. “Measuring Consumer Knowledge and Risk Perception of Food-Related Biotechnologies”  
U.S. Department of Agriculture  
Principal Investigators: Robin Douthitt and Lydia Zepeda  
9/1/96–8/31/99

The project is a study of the food preferences of consumers and their perceptions concerning the safety and nutrition of food produced with use of biotechnology. Using data collected in a nationwide telephone survey of primary food purchasers, the investigators are analyzing the effects of consumer attitudes and beliefs concerning the risks of recombinant bovine somatotropin (rbGH) on consumer demand for fluid milk.

**C. Projects Funded by Private Foundations*****Poverty Measurement***

## 1. “Implementing New Measures of American Poverty”

The Annie E. Casey Foundation

Principal Investigator: Thomas Corbett

6/1/96–12/31/98

The purpose of this project is to help implement and popularize a new measure of American poverty, based on a 1995 report of the Committee on National Statistics, National Academy of Sciences. It will (1) address the remaining analytic and technical issues left unresolved by the NAS study, (2) facilitate use of one or more alternate measures of poverty by creating, or encouraging creation of, public use files containing both new poverty thresholds and new measures of available resources, (3) support analytic and policy work exploring the consequences and concerns associated with changing the official measure, and (4) convene workshops and conferences to acquaint a widening audience of academic and government researchers with the new measure(s).

***Welfare Reform***

## 2. “Wisconsin Works: A Case Study in Evaluating Comprehensive Welfare Reform”

The Joyce Foundation and the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation

Principal Investigators: Thomas Corbett and Barbara Wolfe

7/1/96–12/31/98

This project focuses on methods for evaluating the new state-based welfare reform programs. A national conference, “Evaluating Comprehensive State Welfare Reforms,” was held in Madison in November 1996. The conference papers were published under the same title in IRP Special Report no. 69 and have been further revised for publication in *Policy Studies Review*. The project has been extended to focus on process or implementation evaluations and on advancing methods for using linked administrative data for welfare program evaluations.

## 3. “Midwest States Mid-Level Administrator Welfare Reform Meetings”

The Family Impact Seminar

Principal Investigator: Thomas Corbett

8/1/96–4/30/99

The Midwest Welfare Peer Assistance Network (WELPAN) is a group of senior welfare officials from Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio, and Wisconsin. The officials have been meeting regularly since the fall of 1996 to share ideas and compare notes on what it takes to make welfare reform work. The meetings are coordinated by the Family Impact Seminar, Washington, D.C., and IRP, and are funded by the Joyce Foundation.

## 4. “Developing a County-Level Welfare Peer-Assistance Strategy”

The Joyce Foundation

Principal Investigators: Judi Bartfeld, Karen Bogenschneider, and Thomas Corbett

4/1/98–10/31/99

The success of the Midwest Welfare Peer Assistance Network of state welfare officials has motivated this project, which intends to facilitate communication among local welfare officials within and among states. Working with the University of Wisconsin’s Cooperative Extension, it is using distance education technologies. Video-satellite conferences are being organized, starting with Wisconsin official as a test, and procedures for coordinating and facilitating dissemination among these peers are being developed. Project members are assembling an advisory committee and identifying key topics of concern to local officials as a focus of conference discussion.

## 5. “Evaluating the Labor Market Impacts of W-2”

The Joyce Foundation

Principal Investigators: Thomas Kaplan, Maria Cancian, and Daniel Meyer

8/6/97–8/31/99

Using state administrative data, the investigators will examine the earnings and income of Wisconsin Works (W-2) participants, former participants, and low-income nonparticipants. They will analyze income sources, the extent of dependency on welfare income, employment stability, job trajectories and the personal characteristics that appear to be related to these trajectories, and the industries employing participants and low-income nonparticipants.

## 6. “What Happens to Families under Wisconsin Works (W2)?”

The Joyce Foundation

Principal Investigators: Mark Courtney and Irving Piliavin

4/1/98–4/30/01

This project will survey families that come into contact with agencies responsible for implementing W-2 in Milwaukee. For W-2 administrative purposes, the city has been divided into six districts, in which program operations have been contracted to five different nongovernmental agencies. In each district, 200 families will be randomly selected from those who contact the W-2 agency, including families that apply to participate in W-2 (whether they are adjudged eligible or ineligible by the agency), those that apply but decide not to participate, and those that are immediately diverted by the agency to private-sector employment. The families will be asked to complete two interviews, a short one at the time they first agree to participate in the survey and an extended, face-to-face interview 12 months later that will explore their work experience and family well-being.

## 7. “State Capacity Study”

The Research Foundation of the State University of New York

Principal Investigators: Thomas Corbett and Thomas Kaplan

6/15/97–

With support from private foundations, the Federalism Research Group at the Rockefeller Institute, State University of New York, is conducting field research in 18 states to examine the management systems used by states to conduct their welfare, Medicaid, and work force development programs. In the first round of this research, the principal investigators have collected extensive data on Wisconsin’s public assistance system by interviewing government

officials and program clients, collecting budgetary, staffing and workload information, summarizing such documents as agency reports and administrative rules and procedures, and directly observing interactions among government officials, program clients, and private service providers.

### *Inequality*

8. “Earnings Inequality: The Role of Fringe Benefits”

The Russell Sage Foundation

Principal Investigators: Barbara Wolfe, David Cutler, Brigitte Madrian, and Timothy McBride

9/1/95–12/31/98

The research examines the question of whether growth in the standard fringe-benefit package in the past two decades has played a role in the deterioration of employment of low-skilled workers by increasing the cost to employers of hiring a low-wage worker relative to that of hiring a high-wage worker. Nondiscrimination laws have since 1978 required private firms to offer fringe benefits, including health insurance, to all full-time workers. These rules mean that the share of fringe benefits relative to cash compensation is much higher for low-income workers than it is for middle- or high-income workers, and may offer an incentive for employers to avoid hiring low-wage employees or to employ them on a part-time basis.

9. “An Agent-Based Model to Study Inequality”

The MacArthur Foundation

Principal Investigators: Steven N. Durlauf and Kenneth J. Arrow

1/1/96–10/31/98

The rise in U.S. income inequality in the last fifteen years has prompted research interest in examining the factors that may account for that growth. The purpose of this project is to develop a comprehensive general model in which mutual interactions of different causal factors can be taken into account. The model is based on the behavior of individual agents (individuals, families) as it is guided by mutual influences: for example, the effect of role models and peer-group influences on school achievement, illegitimacy, and employment expectations, or the effect on individual worker productivity of the skills of his or her coworkers. A network of theoretical and empirical researchers has been developed and a series of meetings has been held for the presentation and discussion of papers on various topics related to model development.

10. “The Effects of the Deterioration of the Low-Wage Labor Market on the Lives and Living Conditions of Young, Low-Skilled Workers”

The Rockefeller Foundation

Principal Investigator: Robert Haveman

9/1/97–8/31/99

The project will address two questions: How have the lives and living conditions of young, unskilled workers and their families changed over the past two decades, relative to young workers with more skills and education? What effect has the serious erosion of the low-skilled labor market over the past two decades had on the lives and living conditions of those young workers who must seek employment in it, and their families? Two cohorts of young, low-skilled workers will be studied: one first observed in 1968, the other first observed in 1986. The cohorts

will be followed for the next six years of their early working life. The project will attempt to isolate the effect of labor market deterioration on economic and noneconomic aspects of these workers, distinguished by race and gender, comparing their experiences with early and late comparison groups of young, higher-skilled workers. The core sample will be drawn from the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth, and some of the more complete family and living arrangement information in the Panel Study of Income Dynamics will be used to augment these data.

### ***Family Well-Being***

11. “Family, Neighborhood, and Own Choice Determinants of Adolescent Non-Marital Childbearing”

The Smith Richardson Foundation

Principal Investigators: Barbara Wolfe and Robert Haveman

12/31/96–12/30/98

The investigators are examining factors behind the choice of young women to give birth outside of marriage, concentrating on their response to the economic incentives related to this decision. They focus on differences in economic well-being associated with the two options available: the option of giving birth as an unmarried teen and the option of forgoing childbearing while unmarried and adolescent. Economic well-being is measured by levels of expected earnings and welfare income associated with these choices. The influence of such policy-related factors as expenditures by the state of residence on family planning and education is taken into account. Other factors accounted for are characteristics of the girl’s family, growing up in a poor family, in a single-parent family, and in a poor neighborhood. The data are from the Panel Study of Income Dynamics, to which the investigators have added neighborhood characteristics taken from the 1970, 1980, and 1990 censuses.

**D. Projects Funded by the State of Wisconsin***Child Support*

1. “Wisconsin Works Child Support Waiver Demonstration Evaluation”  
Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development  
Principal Investigators: Daniel Meyer and Maria Cancian  
11/97–10/01

Wisconsin Works (W-2), the state’s welfare reform program that began in September 1997, contains more generous child support provisions than those in the AFDC program. Under AFDC, families received the first \$50 per month paid on their behalf; the remainder went to public agencies as partial reimbursement for their welfare expenditures. Under W-2, families will generally retain all of the amount paid on their behalf. The child support component of W-2 is operating as a waiver demonstration program, which began in October 1997. The terms and conditions under which the federal government granted the waiver required an evaluation of the program, and stated that the evaluation must include assignment to treatment and control groups: a control group of 4,000 would receive either 40 percent of the amount paid or \$50, whichever is greater, and a treatment group of 4,000 plus all others participating in W-2 would receive the full amount of child support. The Institute for Research on Poverty is the evaluator of the demonstration. The four-year IRP plan includes three types of evaluation: an implementation/process study, an impact analysis, and a nonexperimental study (the last must still receive federal approval).

2. “Research on Child Support Enforcement”  
Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development  
Principal Investigators: Daniel Meyer and Maria Cancian  
7/1/98–6/30/00

An extension of research on child support reform in Wisconsin that has been ongoing since 1980, work in the current biennium focuses on (1) long-term compliance patterns in relation to such enforcement mechanisms as intercepting tax returns and revoking professional and driving licenses; (2) explanation for the pattern of higher payments when parents share joint legal custody than when mothers or fathers have sole legal custody; (3) a comparison of the use of the child support guidelines in Wisconsin with use in other states, a study of the current rate of guideline use in paternity cases in Wisconsin, and a study of the current rate of guideline use in divorce cases in Wisconsin; (4) the role of child support in the income packages of participants in Wisconsin Works and the contribution of child support to the well-being of those who exited from AFDC, before implementation of W-2; and (5) examination of differences in paternity establishment, support orders, and compliance rates across counties.

***Linking Administrative Data***

3. “Development and Use of Merged Administrative Data”  
Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development  
Principal Investigators: Thomas Kaplan and Maria Cancian  
1/1/98–12/31/01

The welfare reforms currently under way in Wisconsin have resulted in increasing demands for high-quality, timely information that can be used for program monitoring, evaluation, and policy design. This project addresses issues related to the organization and use of administrative data for these purposes. The intent is to develop a plan and coordinate the merging of administrative data from several sources into a single, comprehensive research file.

***Family Well-Being***

4. “SSI Parent Initiative”  
Wisconsin Department of Health and Family Services  
Principal Investigator: Mark Courtney  
4/27/98–12/31/98

The Wisconsin Council on Developmental Disabilities is conducting a study known as the SSI Parent Initiative. This project will assist the study by providing (1) setup of the software program for the SSI parent interviews, (2) data entry for at least 200 interviews, (3) statistical analysis of the interview data, and (4) a report on the results.

5. “Analyzing Data on Children in Substitute Care”  
Wisconsin Department of Health and Family Services  
Principal Investigator: Mark Courtney  
4/1/98–8/31/98

An extension of earlier work on children in substitute (foster) care in Wisconsin, this project will generate data on children in substitute care through the end of 1997 and will produce a report updating an earlier analysis covering the period 1988–95.

6. “Honoring Our Children with a Healthy Start”  
Great Lakes Inter-Tribal Council  
Principal Investigator: Mark Courtney  
5/26/98–8/31/98

As the evaluator for the Honoring Our Children project of the Great Lakes Inter-Tribal Council, the investigator is overseeing evaluation design, data collection methodologies, and performance evaluation of a project intended to reduce infant mortality and improve infant and parent well-being among nine American Indian tribes in Wisconsin.

**E. Special Project**

## 1. “WISKIDS Count”

Wisconsin Council on Children and Families

Principal Investigators: Thomas Corbett and Patricia Brown

11/1/91–12/31/98

The Wisconsin Council on Children and Families conducts an ongoing project, WisKids Count, that monitors the status of children in Wisconsin. As part of the project, investigators at the Institute for Research on Poverty publish periodic data reports, titled *WisKids Count Data Book*. Five such reports have been produced. The most recent, appearing in 1998, is subtitled *A Portrait of Child Well-Being in Wisconsin*. It provides county-by-county data on such indicators as child abuse and neglect, juvenile arrests, child care access, health care, and the economic status of families.