

# **The Family Transition Program**

## **Implementation and Three-Year Impacts of Florida's Initial Time-Limited Welfare Program**

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### **Preface**

This is the fourth report in MDRC's multi-year evaluation of Florida's Family Transition Program (FTP), one of the most important initiatives developed under waivers of federal welfare rules granted before the passage of the 1996 welfare law. Implemented in 1994, FTP was one of the first welfare reform initiatives to impose a time limit on the receipt of cash assistance; it also provides a rich array of services and supports designed to help participants achieve self-sufficiency. FTP was planned as a pilot program and operates in one county — Escambia (Pensacola). However, it has also informed the design of Florida's current statewide program, called WAGES.

Like the previous reports in the study, this one presents a generally positive picture of FTP's results. Three years after entering the study, individuals who were subject to FTP received less public assistance and had higher overall income, on average, than similar people in a group that remained subject to the prior welfare policies. The results varied for subgroups of the welfare population: Those who entered FTP with both a high school diploma (or equivalent) and recent work history experienced particularly large gains in earnings and income. In contrast, those who had no diploma and no recent work history actually had lower income than their counterparts in the group subject to prior policies.

Under FTP, most recipients are limited to 24 months of welfare receipt in any 60-month period; certain groups facing greater barriers to employment are limited to 36 months in any 72-month period. Relatively few participants reached FTP's time limits during the three-year follow-up period for this report, but almost all of those had their welfare grants ended. Data are just beginning to emerge from follow-up studies examining the families whose grants were discontinued.

The final report in the FTP study, scheduled for next year, will fill in critical pieces of this unfolding story. It will include data for at least four years of follow-up, long enough to see whether the overall results — or the results for specific subgroups — begin to change when the more disadvantaged recipients begin to reach the 36-month time limit. The report will also draw on a survey of several thousand study participants that will provide detailed data on respondents' living arrangements, household income, and job characteristics, and the well-being of their children. The final report will also present the results of a number of in-depth interviews conducted 18 months after recipients reached the time limit and had their grants terminated.

We are deeply grateful to the Florida Department of Children and Families, which has unstintingly supported and assisted the evaluation, and to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and the Ford Foundation for their support. This level of commitment has made the entire project possible, allowing Florida, other states, and the nation as a whole to benefit from early information about these major new directions in social policy.

Judith M. Gueron  
President

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### **Introduction**

The Family Transition Program (FTP) is a welfare reform pilot project that began operating in 1994 in Escambia, a mid-sized county in northwestern Florida that includes the City of Pensacola. FTP was one of the first welfare reform initiatives in the nation to include a time limit on the receipt of cash assistance. The program also includes a broad array of services, mandates, and financial work incentives designed to help welfare recipients prepare for, find, and hold jobs. FTP was implemented more than two years before the passage of the federal Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 (PRWORA), and it anticipated several elements of the new federal law. FTP also served as a model for Florida's statewide welfare reform, Work and Gain Economic Self-Sufficiency (WAGES), which was implemented in late 1996. Thus, FTP provides important lessons on the implementation and potential effects of more recent welfare

reform initiatives in Florida and elsewhere.

This is the fourth report in a multi-year evaluation of FTP being conducted by the Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation (MDRC) under a contract with the Florida Department of Children and Families, the agency that administers FTP. The evaluation is also supported by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and the Ford Foundation. MDRC is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization with more than two decades' experience designing and evaluating social policy initiatives. The report describes FTP's implementation and examines how the program is affecting welfare receipt, employment, and family income, among other measures.

While the results presented here go beyond those presented in the prior reports, it is still too early to draw final conclusions about FTP's effectiveness. The report's main analysis follows individuals for three years, long enough to see the results that were generated when small numbers of recipients reached FTP's 24-month time limit (nearly 60 percent of FTP participants are subject to a 24-month time limit, but the vast majority of them left welfare before reaching the limit). But over 40 percent of FTP participants — those facing greater barriers to employment — are subject to a 36-month time limit, and the report's follow-up period is not long enough to track many of these people to the point when they reached the limit. Moreover, the data used in the report mostly come from administrative records that may not provide a full picture of families' economic situations.

A final report in 2000 will include at least four years of follow-up data and will also draw from a large-scale survey that will provide more detailed information on families' income, expenses, living standards, and the well-being of their children.

## **I. The Findings in Brief**

For purposes of the evaluation, welfare applicants and recipients in Escambia County were assigned, at random, to one of two groups: the *FTP group*, whose members are eligible for FTP's special services and financial incentives and subject to its mandates and time limit; and the *Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) group*, whose members are subject to the welfare rules that were in place before FTP began. (Although AFDC group members are neither eligible for FTP's services nor subject to its time limit, many of them are required to participate in employment-related activities, in accordance with prior welfare rules.) Because people were assigned to one or the other group at random, the two groups are comparable. Thus, any differences in employment, welfare receipt, or other outcomes that emerge between the groups over time can be confidently attributed to FTP. These differences are known as FTP's *impacts*.

The report focuses primarily on about 2,800 people (1,400 in each group) who were assigned to the two groups between May 1994 (when FTP began) and February 1995. It uses administrative data to track each person for three years after he or she entered the study. The report's key findings include the following:

- On average, FTP has both increased participants' total income and reduced their reliance on public assistance. In Year 3 of the study period, FTP group members had an average of \$449 (7 percent) more combined income from cash assistance, Food Stamps, and earnings than did members of the AFDC group. On average, FTP group members received \$301 (35 percent) less in cash assistance and \$112 (9 percent) less in Food Stamps, but these reductions in public assistance were more than offset by a substantial \$862 (22 percent) increase in average earnings. The increase in average income for the FTP group as a whole is notable because some members of the group reached the time limit during Year 3 and lost income as a result; this suggests that other members of the FTP group gained enough income to offset the losses for those who reached the time limit. It will be important to see whether the overall income gains continue in Year 4, when a larger number of FTP group members who were assigned a 36-month time limit will have reached the limit and had their benefits canceled.
- FTP has produced different results for different subsets of the welfare population. For example, among those who had both a high school diploma or General Educational Development (GED) certificate and recent work experience when they entered the program, FTP group members had \$939 (13 percent) more combined income from public assistance and earnings in Year 3 than their AFDC group counterparts; the income gain was driven by a substantial \$1,249 (21 percent) increase in average earnings. In contrast, FTP generated no increase in earnings for those who entered the program with neither a high school diploma/GED nor recent work experience — a group facing serious barriers to employment. In fact, FTP group members in this subgroup had less income than their AFDC group counterparts throughout much of the follow-up period.
- Only a small proportion of FTP participants have reached the time limit, but almost all of those who reached that point have had their benefits entirely canceled. As of June 1998, only 223 (11 percent) of the 1,960 FTP group members who could have reached their time limit had done so. Most of the

others had left welfare and still had months remaining on their clocks. A smaller number received either 24 or 36 months of benefits, but some of the months did not count, usually because the participant had been granted a medical exemption. Of the 223 participants who reached the limit, 210 (94 percent) had their welfare grant entirely canceled at that point. Four were granted brief extensions, and the children's portion of the grant was retained in nine cases because it was determined that full cancellation would put the children at risk of foster care placement. A little under half of the participants who reached the time limit were working and earning at least as much as a standard welfare grant at that point.

Like the previous reports in this study, this one presents a generally positive assessment of the Family Transition Program. Although the results vary for different subgroups, on average, FTP has both increased families' income and reduced their reliance on public assistance during the first three years of the follow-up period. Moreover, for a number of reasons described below, these results are probably a conservative estimate of FTP's impacts. However, it is still too early to draw final conclusions because many of the least employable FTP participants had not yet reached the time limit when the report's follow-up period ended. The final report will fill in additional pieces of this important story.

## **II. The Policy Context**

The 1996 federal welfare law fundamentally changed the structure and funding of cash assistance for needy families, but many of the specific policies that the law encourages states to adopt were already being implemented under waivers of federal AFDC rules that had been granted to 43 states prior to the bill's passage. For example, while the law restricts states from using federal funds to provide assistance to most families for more than 60 months, more than 30 states had previously received waivers to implement some form of welfare time limit in at least part of the state.

Florida's Family Transition Program is one of the most important initiatives implemented under waivers because it was one of the first to include a time limit on welfare benefits. In fact, Escambia County was the first place in the United States where single-parent welfare recipients reached a time limit and had their benefits canceled. (The first recipients reached the limit in early 1996.) As of late 1997, 26 states had imposed a 60-month benefit termination time limit (that is, a time limit that results in the cancellation of a families' full welfare grant), and 19 others had imposed termination time limits of less than 60 months.<sup>1</sup>

Because time limits are so new, very little is known about how they will be implemented or how they will affect welfare recipients, their families, or government spending. Proponents contend that time limits will motivate recipients and the welfare system to focus on self-sufficiency and that curtailing long-term welfare receipt will help alleviate a range of social problems. Critics argue that many welfare recipients have low skills and other problems that will make it difficult for them to support their families over the long term without welfare. Thus, they argue, imposing time limits will ultimately harm many vulnerable families with children. The FTP evaluation — which uses a rigorous research design and a rich array of data sources — is providing vital early information on the implementation and impacts of this key change in welfare policy.

## **III. The Socioeconomic Context**

Several aspects of the socioeconomic context in which FTP has been implemented are important in assessing its results.

First, FTP has been implemented in a relatively healthy economic climate. Escambia County's unemployment rate (4.5 percent in mid-1998) has remained at or below the state and national averages throughout the period of the study.

Second, FTP has been implemented during a period when welfare reform has been a central focus of policy debates at the national and state levels. The 1996 federal welfare law was signed just over two years after FTP started operating, and Florida implemented WAGES statewide a few months later. As discussed below, the intense media coverage of welfare-related issues during this period may have affected the behavior of AFDC group members, even though they are not subject to FTP's policies.

Third, in a related issue, after rising sharply in the early 1990s, Florida's statewide welfare caseload has been dropping rapidly since 1994: The statewide caseload declined by 61 percent between February 1994 and May 1998, the largest drop recorded in any large state during this period. The number of families receiving cash assistance in Escambia County declined by a similar amount during this period, falling from 6,603 to 2,544 (a drop of 62 percent).

## **IV. The Family Transition Program**

All of the welfare applicants and recipients who were randomly assigned to the FTP group were required to enroll in the program. Although FTP's time limit is its best-known feature, the program is in fact a multifaceted initiative that includes a wide range of features designed to assist and require participants to

move toward self-sufficiency. The program includes four major components:

- A time limit. Most recipients are limited to 24 months of cash assistance receipt in any 60-month period after entering FTP, although certain groups of particularly disadvantaged recipients have a limit of 36 months of receipt in any 72-month period.<sup>2</sup> Temporary extensions of the time limit may be granted under certain circumstances, and the program model calls for post-time-limit, publicly funded work opportunities for FTP participants who make a diligent effort but have not found a job by the time they reach the time limit. A citizen Review Panel helps to determine whether participants are considered to have complied with program rules and makes recommendations regarding extensions and benefit terminations.
- Financial work incentives. FTP changes a number of welfare rules to encourage and reward work. Most important, the first \$200 plus one-half of any remaining earnings are disregarded (that is, not counted) in calculating a family's monthly welfare grant. In addition, FTP allows families to accumulate more assets than were previously allowed without losing eligibility for benefits. Finally, subsidized transitional child care is provided for two years after recipients leave welfare for work (as opposed to the one year of assistance provided under traditional AFDC).
- Enhanced services. FTP participants can receive a variety of services designed to help them prepare for and find employment. FTP participants receive intensive case management, provided by workers with small caseloads. Clients also receive enhanced employment and training services (most FTP participants are required to participate in such services for at least 30 hours per week), social and health services, access to expanded funding for child care and support services, and other kinds of assistance. Many of FTP's services are located together in the FTP program offices (known as "service centers") to make them more accessible. In addition, participants who find jobs and earn their way off welfare can obtain support for further education or training.
- Parental responsibility mandates. Under FTP, parents with schoolage children are required to ensure that their children are attending school regularly and to speak with their children's teachers each grading period. Welfare applicants with pre-schoolage children must verify that their children have begun the necessary immunizations. Parents who fail to comply with these mandates — or the employment and training participation requirements described above — may be sanctioned (that is, their grants may be reduced or canceled).

FTP's enhanced services and incentives involved a substantial upfront investment. The program's designers hoped that this initial investment would be recouped when recipients moved off welfare and into jobs.

## V. The FTP Evaluation

The FTP evaluation was initially required as a condition of the federal waivers that allowed Florida to operate the program. The state has elected to continue the study even though waivers are no longer needed to implement FTP. The study includes three main components:

- An implementation analysis that examines how FTP operates;
- An impact analysis that assesses what difference the program makes; and
- A benefit-cost analysis that compares the program's financial benefits and costs for government budgets and program participants.

This report presents results from the implementation and impact analyses. Although cases were assigned to the FTP and AFDC groups from May 1994 through October 1996, as noted earlier, the report focuses primarily on the roughly 2,800 single-parent cases who were randomly assigned to the two groups between May 1994 and February 1995; these individuals are referred to as the *report sample*. The impact analysis also looks at results for various *subgroups* within the report sample.

The report's analysis relies mainly on computerized records of monthly AFDC/TANF payments,<sup>3</sup> monthly Food Stamp benefits, and quarterly earnings in jobs covered by the Florida Unemployment Insurance (UI) system for each member of the two groups. Each person is tracked for three years after her or his random assignment date (FTP group members are tracked for 42 months for a special analysis of how quickly participants are using up months of welfare benefits).

In interpreting the study's results, it is critical to consider two distinctive aspects of the FTP research design. First, people who met the criteria for an exemption from FTP at the point when they were slated to enter the study were screened out and excluded (i.e., they did not go through the random assignment process and remained subject to traditional AFDC rules). The excluded group included people who reported that they were incapacitated.<sup>4</sup> This means the study sample may not include some of the most difficult-to-employ

welfare recipients in the county.

Second, as noted earlier, many members of the AFDC group have been required to participate in employment-related activities, in accordance with prior welfare rules. Thus, the impact analysis is measuring what difference FTP makes *over and above* the outcomes generated by Florida's pre-existing welfare-to-work program (known as Project Independence). This is in contrast to many previous studies, in which the control group was not required to participate in employment-related services, and it suggests that FTP may have a higher "hurdle" to clear in order to produce impacts.

Finally, while random assignment is generally considered to be the most reliable way to assess what difference a new program makes, it is important to note that the FTP research design is limited in some respects. Notably, because people entered the study when they were applying for welfare (or having their eligibility reviewed), the evaluation cannot assess whether FTP has affected the number of people who decide to submit an application. In addition, it has been impossible to entirely insulate members of the AFDC group from the national and state welfare reform debates. Thus, in a survey conducted two years after people entered the study, 29 percent of AFDC group members reported (incorrectly) that they were subject to a time limit on welfare receipt (the figure was about 90 percent for the FTP group). This means the study may underestimate the impacts that are driven by people's awareness of the time limit. More generally, it is reasonable to assume that some members of the AFDC group who knew they were not subject to FTP's provisions were nonetheless influenced by the broader public discourse about welfare reform over the past few years.

## **VI. FTP's Implementation**

The FTP group members who are examined in the report's impact analysis entered the program just after it began operating. Previous reports in the study have highlighted several important aspects of FTP's implementation during this period and have described the major ways in which FTP differed from traditional welfare, as experienced by members of the AFDC group. Key findings from these earlier reports include:

Despite some start-up problems, FTP has been generously funded and has provided a range of services to participants. The centerpiece of the program has been intensive case management provided by workers with small caseloads (about 35 cases per worker, on average). In a survey conducted two years after random assignment, 73 percent of FTP group members reported that staff had taken the time to get to know them and their particular situations; the corresponding figure for the AFDC group was 42 percent. FTP has also had ample funding for child care subsidies and has offered a broad array of social and health services not normally provided to welfare recipients.

FTP group members were much more likely to participate in employment-related activities. In the two-year survey, 72 percent of FTP group members and 45 percent of AFDC group members reported that they had participated in at least one employment-related activity. This difference in part reflects the fact that AFDC group members with children under age three were exempt from participation mandates, while FTP group members with young children were required to participate. At least during the early operational period, FTP's employment services did not adopt a "work-first" focus: 70 percent of FTP group members who participated in at least one employment-related service entered an education or training activity (there was also a strong emphasis on job search activities, and many people participated in both education or training and in job search).

FTP group members were subject to a more intensive set of mandates to participate in activities designed to promote self-sufficiency, and these mandates were vigorously enforced. About one-third of FTP group members were sanctioned for failing to comply with program mandates within two years after random assignment compared to about 11 percent of AFDC group members.<sup>5</sup>

FTP has generally succeeded in transmitting a new message focusing on self-sufficiency. As noted earlier, nearly 90 percent of FTP group members reported on the survey that they were subject to the time limit, and FTP group members were also much more likely than AFDC group members to report that staff urged them to take a variety of steps toward self-sufficiency. At the same time, FTP's message during this period did not necessarily focus on leaving welfare quickly in order to "bank" or "save" the months remaining under the time limit: Nearly 80 percent of FTP group survey respondents reported that staff urged them to get education and training, while only 31 percent reported that staff urged them to save up their months of benefits for when they needed assistance most. Finally, it is important to note that early FTP enrollees first heard about the time limit during a period before anyone in the country had actually reached a time limit; staff believe that many participants were skeptical that the time limit would really be implemented as planned.

## **VII. The FTP Time Limit**

- Only a small proportion of FTP enrollees have reached the time limit. The vast majority left welfare before accumulating the 24 or 36 months of benefits allowed under their time limit.

Figure 1 shows the status in June 1998 of the 1,960 FTP group members who enrolled early enough that they could have reached the time limit by that point.<sup>6</sup> Of the 1,960, only 223 (11 percent) had reached the time limit.

Two factors explain why the number reaching the time limit has been small. First, a large majority of FTP participants left welfare before accumulating 24 or 36 months of benefits. A separate analysis (not shown in the figure) found that only 16 percent of those with a 24-month time limit accumulated 24 months of benefits within 42 months after random assignment. Participants with a 36-month time limit — who face greater barriers to employment — are accumulating months more quickly. Still, even among this group, only 23 percent accumulated 36 months of benefits within 42 months after enrollment. (As discussed below, members of the AFDC group — who are not subject to FTP's provisions — accumulated months of benefit receipt at about the same rate.)

Second, a substantial proportion of those who received 24 or 36 months of benefits did not actually reach the limit, because some of their months of receipt did not count. Figure 1 shows that, of the 323 people who had accumulated 24 or 36 months of benefits by June 1998 (151 with a 24-month time limit and 172 with a 36-month time limit), nearly one-third (100) had not reached the time limit. Most of the 100 who did not reach the limit had been granted an exemption, usually for medical reasons, that temporarily or permanently stopped their time-limit clock. As noted earlier, staff attempted to identify and screen out individuals with exemptions before they were randomly assigned, but some people were granted exemptions after entering FTP, either because the medical condition did not exist at the point of random assignment or because staff did not know about it. Medical exemptions were particularly likely for participants subject to a 36-month time limit.

- Although the number reaching the time limit has been small, almost all of those who reached that point had their benefits entirely canceled.

FTP's policies include three safeguards for people who reach the time limit:

- Participants who comply with FTP's mandates but encounter "extraordinary difficulties in obtaining employment" may receive up to two benefit extensions of up to four months each.
- If a "compliant" participant reaches the time limit without a job, FTP promises to provide her with a public or private work opportunity that allows her to earn at least as much as the welfare payment standard (the maximum monthly grant for her family size), plus a \$90 allowance for work expenses.
- Even if a participant is deemed "noncompliant," the children's portion of her grant can be retained and diverted to a third-party "protective payee" (actually, a nonprofit agency) if it is determined that cancellation of the full grant would place the children at serious risk of foster care placement.

**Figure 1** shows that these special provisions have rarely been used. As of June 1998, 210 of the 223 sample members who had reached the time limit (94 percent) had their entire grant canceled at that point. Four people received brief extensions (one was in the midst of the extension in June 1998), and the children's portion of the grant was retained in the nine remaining cases. Although program records indicate that 123 of the people who reached the time limit were not earning grant + \$90 (i.e., \$90 more than the payment standard) at that point, no one had been given a post-time-limit subsidized job.

The main reason for the small number of extensions is that few FTP participants have requested an extension. The small number of requests may be attributable to the fact that most FTP workers do not discuss extensions with participants; staff speculated that many participants may not be aware that extensions are possible.

The relatively small number of cases in which the children's portion of the grant was retained is likely attributable to the tight criteria for this safeguard. The child welfare staff who conduct these reviews have reported that they do not attempt to predict whether children in the family may end up in foster care but, rather, whether *cancellation of the grant, per se*, will produce that outcome. If a participant has family nearby, for example, the review is likely to conclude that these relatives could care for the children if the parent did not have the means to do so.

The key reason why no one had been given a post-time-limit subsidized job is that a large majority of the

people who reached the time limit without earning grant + \$90 had been deemed noncompliant and thus ineligible for such a position (a few had been deemed compliant but reportedly had other income sources when they reached the time limit or did not want a subsidized job).

FTP has no written definition of compliance, but a multi-step process is used to assess each case approaching the time limit. Although compliance is assessed throughout a participant's time in FTP, a key step occurs about six months before a case reaches the time limit, when staff decide whether the participant should be referred to the citizen Review Panel for a hearing. The panel was created to review the Department of Children and Families' delivery of FTP services and the progress of participants. Participants may be sent to the Review Panel at several points during their time in FTP.

FTP staff report that cases are referred to the Review Panel either because they have failed to comply with FTP mandates or because they are failing to make progress toward self-sufficiency. An analysis conducted by MDRC found that participants who are not employed six months before reaching the time limit are almost always referred to the panel at that point (some who are employed are also referred). Staff say that they refer cases to the panel both because the hearing may serve as a "wake-up call" and motivate the participant to try harder and because the panel reviews whether FTP provided the participant with sufficient services.

Whatever the reason for the referral, virtually all of the cases referred to the Review Panel six months before the time limit are deemed noncompliant and subsequently are sent a letter from the District Administrator saying that their benefits will be canceled at the time limit (MDRC reviewed 49 cases referred to the panel in the second half of 1997, and all later were slated to receive such a letter). Participants who are deemed noncompliant are not eligible for post-time-limit subsidized jobs. Interviews with active Review Panel members found that the members viewed their primary responsibilities as (1) ensuring that FTP participants receive adequate services and (2) offering clients and staff recommendations on how they should spend their remaining time in the program.

- There are clear differences in the characteristics of FTP group members who have reached the time limit and those who have not.

Using data collected at the point people entered the study, MDRC compared the characteristics of people who reached the time limit by June 1998 with those of people who could have reached the time limit but had not yet done so.

Not surprisingly, people who reached the time limit were more likely to have received welfare for a long time prior to entering FTP. For example, 33 percent of those who reached the limit had received benefits for five years or more compared to 19 percent of those who had not reached the limit. Similarly, 46 percent of those who reached the time limit had ever (prior to random assignment) worked full time for six months or more for one employer compared to 67 percent of those who did not reach the time limit.

In terms of their demographic characteristics, people who reached the time limit were somewhat younger (34 percent of them were 20 to 24 years old at random assignment compared to 23 percent of those who did not reach the limit), were more likely to have very young children, and were more likely to be African American. Those who reached the limit were also much more likely to be living in public or subsidized housing.

Finally, there were differences in attitudes, as expressed in a private survey administered at the point of random assignment. For example, those who did not reach the time limit were more likely to report feeling stigmatized for being on welfare. Among those who reached the time limit, 31 percent said they were ashamed to admit to people that they were on welfare; 43 percent of those who did not reach the limit gave this response. These responses may also be related to the fact that those who did not reach the limit were much more likely to report that most of their family and friends were not on welfare.

## **VIII. FTP's Impacts on Employment and Public Assistance Receipt**

The impact results presented in this report cover the first three years after random assignment for each member of the report sample. The results focus on three statuses — whether sample members were working in UI-covered jobs, whether they were receiving cash assistance (AFDC/TANF), and whether they were receiving Food Stamps — as well as the amount of income sample members derived from each of these three sources. The data are reported in three-month periods (quarters) because the earnings data are provided in that format.

Because they are based on Florida's administrative records and apply only to the sample member herself, the income measures do not capture all income that is available to families in the two groups. For example, sample members may have "off the books" earnings, may be living with other people whose income is not

included in the records, or may be living or working outside Florida. The data also do not provide information on sample members' work-related expenses. A large-scale survey, currently being administered 48 months after people entered the study, will provide a more complete and detailed picture of family income and expenses.

- In Year 3 of the follow-up period, FTP substantially reduced both the number of people receiving AFDC/TANF and the amount of public assistance sample members received.

As shown in **Table 1**, FTP substantially reduced AFDC/TANF payments in Year 3 of the follow-up period. On average, FTP group members received \$565 in AFDC/TANF during the year, which is \$301 (35 percent) less than the average amount received by AFDC group members. The asterisks in Table 1 indicate that this difference is statistically significant.<sup>7</sup> (The figures for each group are overall averages that include people who did not receive AFDC/TANF during the year.) At the end of Year 3, about 19 percent of FTP group members were receiving AFDC/TANF compared to 28 percent of AFDC group members — a one-third reduction in the rate of welfare receipt. This reduction is particularly striking because the rate of AFDC/TANF receipt among AFDC group members was low compared with results found at a similar point in other studies.

The large decrease in AFDC/TANF receipt and payments in Year 3 contrasts with the results for Years 1 and 2, when FTP did not reduce the number of people receiving AFDC/TANF (see the top panel of **Figure 2**). In part, this earlier result occurred because FTP's earned income disregard allowed FTP group members to earn more without losing eligibility for benefits. The program modestly reduced average AFDC/TANF payment amounts (but not the number receiving benefits) in Year 2, probably because FTP group members were more likely to be working, and thus receiving only partial welfare grants, and because they were more likely to be sanctioned for failing to comply with program rules. The emergence of large declines in AFDC/TANF receipt and payments in Year 3 appears to have been driven in large part by the fact that FTP group members began to reach the time limit around the end of Year 2. About 7 percent of the FTP group reached the time limit before the last quarter of Year 3.

The early results show that rates of welfare "recidivism" were fairly high for both groups: Among those who left welfare in Year 1 of the follow-up period, about 40 percent in each group returned to the rolls, at least temporarily, at some point during Year 2 or Year 3.

Finally, FTP has reduced Food Stamp payments throughout the follow-up period, although it has not affected the number receiving Food Stamps. Both cash assistance and earnings are counted as income in determining Food Stamp benefit amounts.

- FTP has increased employment and earnings throughout the follow-up period. The earnings gains grew larger over time.

**Table 1** shows that FTP group members earned an average of \$4,741 in Year 3 compared to \$3,880 for the AFDC group. (Again, both figures are overall averages for the entire groups, including people who did not work or worked only part time or part year.) The difference of \$862 represents a 22 percent increase in average earnings. **Table 1** and the bottom panel of **Figure 2** show that the program's earnings impacts grew larger over time.

The increase in average earnings in Year 3 was driven by two factors. First, as shown in **Table 1**, FTP group members were more likely to be working (and thus less likely to have no earnings). Just under 50 percent of FTP group members worked in a UI-covered job in the last quarter of Year 3 compared to 44 percent of AFDC group members. Second, employed FTP group members earned more, on average, than did employed AFDC group members. For example, in the last quarter of Year 3, employed FTP group members earned \$2,491, on average, compared to \$2,283 for employed AFDC group members (not shown in a table). This indicates that employed FTP group members earned higher hourly wages, worked more hours per week, and/or worked more weeks in the quarter.

Although FTP has generated increases in employment and earnings relative to the AFDC group, it is important to note that about half of FTP group members were not employed at the end of Year 3. In addition, nearly 40 percent of the FTP group members who ever worked during the three-year follow-up period were no longer working at the end of Year 3 (numbers not shown in the table).

- FTP participants gained more in earnings than they lost in public assistance. As a result, FTP both



increased participants' average income and reduced their reliance on public assistance.

When income from cash assistance, Food Stamps, and earnings are considered together, as in **Figure 3**, it becomes clear that FTP has both increased FTP group members' average income from these sources and decreased their reliance on public assistance. In Year 3, FTP group members had an average of \$6,495 in combined income, which was \$449 (7.4 percent) more than the comparable figure for the AFDC group. On average, FTP group members' derived 73 percent of their income from earnings in that year compared to 64 percent for the AFDC group.<sup>8</sup>

The income results also suggest that FTP group members may have received larger benefits from the federal Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC), a refundable credit worth up to \$3,656 per year for a family with two children (in 1997). Because the size of a household's EITC is tied to its earnings, and because FTP group members had higher average earnings, they probably received larger tax refunds. The 48-month survey will provide information on how many families actually claim the EITC, so that it can be factored into later results. The survey will also examine other sources of household income, as well as work-related expenses (for example, for child care and transportation).

- FTP produced different results for different subsets of the welfare population.

**Figure 4** shows results for four subgroups of the report sample defined by sample members' educational attainment and recent work history at the point they entered the program; these characteristics are presumed to affect an individual's job readiness. As shown in the upper-left panel, FTP generated substantial increases in earnings and total income for those who had both a high school diploma or GED and recent work experience at enrollment (about one-third of all participants). On average, FTP group members in this subgroup had \$939 more in combined income from public assistance and earnings in Year 3 than their AFDC group counterparts. There were also significant income and earnings gains for those with a high school diploma or GED and no recent work history (shown in the lower-left panel).

In contrast, FTP did not significantly increase earnings or income for those without a high school diploma (or GED). Those with no diploma *and* no recent work experience — nearly one-fourth of all participants — lost more in public assistance than they gained in earnings. In fact, for reasons that are not entirely clear, FTP group members in this subgroup had significantly less income than their AFDC group counterparts, even in Years 1 and 2 of the follow-up period, before people started reaching the time limit.

Although the results for the no diploma/no work experience subgroup are suggestive, two key issues remain unresolved. First, a large part of the income loss can be attributed to the fact that FTP group members in this subgroup were more likely than AFDC group members to have no income from any of the three sources covered by the administrative records. This raises the possibility that FTP group members in the subgroup may be more likely to be living outside Florida, or to be relying on income from others. The 48-month survey will provide a more complete picture of household income. Second, longer follow-up is needed to see what happens to the income situation in Year 4: About two-thirds of the FTP group members in this subgroup have a 36-month time limit, and many of them reached the time limit around the end of Year 3.

**Figure 5** shows results for two subgroups defined by characteristics associated with the type of time limit sample members were most likely to be assigned. It illustrates income results for those with characteristics that would most likely lead to a 24-month time limit, and those with characteristics that would most likely lead to a 36-month time limit. Because it was necessary to create the subgroups using a different source of data than the one used by staff to assign time limits to FTP group members (because such data are not available for the AFDC group), the subgroups do not coincide exactly with people's actual time limits.<sup>9</sup> This means the results are only an approximation of FTP's impacts for people assigned to each time limit.<sup>10</sup>

The Year 3 results for the 24-month group (shown in the top panel of **Figure 5**) are particularly important because they refer to a period after some members of that group had reached the time limit. As **Figure 5** shows, FTP increased average earnings for the 24-month group as a whole enough to offset a substantial reduction in AFDC/TANF and Food Stamp benefits, but not enough to increase average combined income from earnings and welfare. In essence, FTP reduced reliance on public assistance for this group, but it did not affect combined income much. It will be important to see whether the results for the full report sample begin to follow this pattern in Year 4, when a greater number of FTP group members will have reached the time limit.

It is important to note that each of the time-limit subgroups includes people in all four of the job-readiness subgroups discussed earlier. This is because the criteria used by MDRC to define the job-readiness subgroups (educational attainment and recent work experience) are not the same as the criteria that were used by FTP to assign the time limits.<sup>11</sup> For example, among those in the 24-month time-limit subgroup, 41 percent had both a high school diploma and recent work experience at enrollment, 31 percent had a diploma but no work experience, 12 percent had no diploma but did have work experience, and 17 percent had neither a diploma nor recent work experience. Thus, one would not necessarily expect the results for the 24-month subgroup to coincide with the results for any of the job-readiness groups.

## **IX. Early Findings from Post-Time-Limit Follow-Up Studies**

The results presented in the previous section show that, on average, the FTP group had higher income than the AFDC group in Year 3. However, a great deal of attention has focused on one subset of the FTP group: The families who reached the time limit and had their benefits canceled. As noted earlier, these families represent a small fraction of the FTP group because most participants left welfare before reaching the time limit.

MDRC examined in two ways the post-time-limit status of families who reached the limit. First, administrative records were used to assess sample members' income from AFDC/TANF, Food Stamps, and UI-covered earnings in the quarter preceding benefit termination, the quarter of termination, and the quarter following termination.

Second, MDRC is conducting follow-up interviews with a small but representative group of FTP participants who reached the time limit. Sample members for this study are interviewed around the time their benefits expire (the "end-of-time-limit interview") and then six, 12, and 18 months later. At this point, results are available from end-of-time-limit interviews and six-month follow-up interviews. Both of these studies examine changes in participants' income *over time*, rather than comparing their income with comparable members of the AFDC group; thus, it is not possible to attribute any changes in income or well-being to the fact that their welfare grants were canceled.

Although it is far too early to draw any final conclusions, several findings are emerging from these two substudies.

- On average, individuals who reached the time limit had less income several months after benefit termination than they did during their last months on welfare.

For example, the administrative data show that sample members who reached the time limit had, on average, \$2,098 in combined income from AFDC/TANF, Food Stamps, and earnings in the quarter prior to termination and \$1,672 in the quarter following termination. Sample members had higher average earnings in the quarter following termination, but this increase was more than offset by the loss of public assistance income. It is particularly notable that a number of people stopped receiving Food Stamps after the time limit even though they were not employed. These people may have incorrectly believed that the time limit applied to their Food Stamp benefits, and may have failed to take the steps necessary to keep their Food Stamp case open. They also may have left the state or moved in with family.

The overall income figures mask the fact that some families gained income after the time limit while a greater number lost income. Many of those who lost income were employed when they reached the time limit; FTP's earned income disregard had allowed them to continue receiving benefits. At the time limit, they lost their supplemental welfare check. It is worth noting that, despite the income decline, many families appeared to have more income after the time limit than a nonworking family would receive from AFDC/TANF and Food Stamps — although their expenses for child care, transportation, and other items may also have been higher.

Despite the overall income loss, the available data show little evidence that families were more likely to experience severe material hardship after the time limit than they had experienced before. This does not mean families were not experiencing hardship — Florida's relatively low cash assistance grants leave people far below the poverty line — but it does not appear that serious problems such as homelessness or hunger were more prevalent after the time limit. However, longer follow-up is needed to understand whether respondents' short-term coping strategies can be maintained over time.

It may seem contradictory that participants experienced a drop in income after the time limit, while the FTP group as whole had higher income than the AFDC group in Year 3. This pattern occurred in part because the sample members who reached the time limit accounted for a very small proportion of the full FTP group and because FTP's earned income disregard had allowed some of them to supplement their income before reaching the time limit. It also suggests that the income losses for these individuals were more than offset

by income gains for those who did not reach the time limit.

- There was not much change in people's employment status in the immediate post-time-limit period, but employment status, per se, is not necessarily an accurate measure of well-being.

Of the 57 people in the post-time-limit study who completed both an end-of-time-limit and a six-month follow-up interview, 24 were employed in the final month on welfare, and 28 were employed six months later. Among the 30 respondents with a 36-month time limit, 10 were working in their last benefit month, and the same number were employed six months after termination. However, a respondent's employment status per se is not necessarily a clear indicator of her financial well-being. Some respondents who were not working were living with a partner or parent who was at least partly supporting them. In contrast, some who were employed were earning low wages and struggling to make ends meet. A key factor affecting respondents' well-being was their housing expenses; those who lived in public or subsidized housing paid little or no rent when their income was very low.

## **X. How Widely Applicable Are These Results?**

In drawing conclusions from these results, it is important to consider the extent to which FTP is likely to reflect the experiences of similar programs elsewhere.

Owing to a variety of factors that were discussed earlier, these results probably represent a conservative estimate of FTP's potential impacts. First, the analysis focuses on people who entered FTP during its start-up period, when some of the program's services were not yet in place and when its time-limit message was likely weakest (because participants may have been uncertain about whether the time limit would really be enforced). Second, some members of the AFDC group believed they were subject to a time limit, diminishing the "treatment difference" between the groups. Third, the study cannot assess whether FTP has reduced the number of people who decided to apply for welfare; this may be an important part of the program's overall impact. Fourth, perhaps driven by the strong labor market and a new overall "message" about welfare, AFDC group members have exited from welfare at an unusually rapid pace, leaving little room for FTP to generate reductions in welfare receipt rates.

At the same time, the results may represent an optimistic assessment of time-limit programs in general, because FTP has been implemented under favorable circumstances. FTP is a pilot program that has offered an unusually intensive and expensive set of services and supports and has operated in an area with a strong labor market, far from any large cities. Moreover, because clients who were initially exempt from FTP did not enter the research sample, the study may not include some of the least employable members of the county's welfare caseload. A time-limit program operating in a large city with a more disadvantaged caseload and fewer services might produce different results.

FTP's status as a pilot project, operating outside large cities, may have affected it in other ways as well. It is worth noting that the early experiences with the WAGES time limit in Dade County (Miami) have been quite different from the FTP experiences described in this report. As in FTP, very few WAGES participants reached the time limit quickly in Dade County. However, almost all of those who reached the limit were granted extensions.

## **XI. Broader Implications**

Although the story of FTP's impacts and cost effectiveness is not yet complete, the results to date suggest several general lessons and conclusions. Many of these are contrary to the initial predictions about how time limits would play out in practice.

FTP's results suggest that welfare time limits, at least as implemented in FTP, do not spur many welfare recipients to leave assistance faster in order to "bank" their available months; nonetheless, few recipients have reached the time limit. The fact that FTP did not reduce the rate of welfare receipt until people started reaching the time limit suggests that few people left welfare more quickly in order to save their scarce months of assistance.

This point needs to be qualified because one would normally expect an earned income disregard such as the one implemented in FTP to *increase* welfare receipt, at least in the short term, because some people who would have gone to work anyway are allowed to continue receiving benefits. FTP did not cause such an overall increase, which suggests that some other feature of the program — perhaps the time limit — may have spurred some people to leave welfare faster, offsetting the disregard's tendency to keep others on the rolls longer. In addition, as discussed earlier, while the time limit was vigorously communicated to recipients, staff did not necessarily urge them to respond by leaving welfare quickly. A time limit that was "marketed" in a different way might have produced different results.

That said, it seems clear that FTP did not induce many people to bank their months. Initially, this would

have seemed like an ominous result, because numerous projections showed that a large fraction of welfare recipients would reach time limits unless the limits themselves changed welfare dynamics. In fact, however, only a small proportion of FTP participants have reached their time limit. This is partly attributable to the design of FTP's time limit — those with more barriers to employment have a longer time limit — but it also reflects the fact that both FTP and AFDC group members are leaving welfare quite rapidly. Thus, while FTP has failed to *reduce* the number of people who reached the time limit, the number itself has been small. Longer follow-up is needed to determine how many people reach the limit after leaving welfare and returning.

The FTP experience highlights some of the challenges involved in administering time-limit safeguards that rely on subjective criteria such as "diligence" or "compliance." FTP has chosen not to create written definitions of these terms; a multi-step review process seeks to ensure that the policies will be applied consistently and equitably. It is not clear that this process would be feasible in a larger jurisdiction. And yet, without a careful process, ambiguous definitions might place tremendous discretion in the hands of line workers, making it difficult to administer the safeguards fairly and equitably.

So far, very few FTP participants who were deemed "compliant" have reached the time limit without jobs. Although the program has certainly achieved a high success rate, several caveats are needed. First, as noted earlier, the FTP group may not include some of the least employable recipients in Escambia County's welfare caseload. Second, it appears that some participants who staff believed were "compliant but not progressing" were ultimately deemed by the review process to be "noncompliant." Third, while it seems clear that most of the participants who were deemed noncompliant missed many scheduled activities, it is important to note that, relative to most welfare-to-work programs, FTP imposes an unusually demanding set of requirements and closely monitors participation. Fourth, interviews with staff suggest that some of the "noncompliant" clients had serious personal or family problems that did not qualify them for an exemption but that nonetheless may have made it difficult for them to comply with all program requirements. FTP staff make diligent efforts to identify such problems but cannot always solve them. In some cases, there may be a fine line between unwillingness to comply and inability to comply.

The FTP experience focuses attention on special issues concerning people who reach time limits employed. A substantial fraction of those who reached FTP's time limit were "compliant" clients who were earning above the welfare payment standard; FTP's earned income disregard allowed them to continue receiving welfare while working (and, thus, caused them to reach the time limit faster). These participants are seen as success stories, not in need of extensions or other safeguards. In fact, although FTP understandably focuses on participants' status at the point they reach the time limit, previous research suggests that at least some of these people will later lose their jobs.

FTP's results may help to shed light on the causes of the overall decline in welfare caseloads in the past few years. There is a lively debate about the extent to which the recent decline in welfare caseloads has been driven by welfare reform policies versus the strong economy or other external factors. The results in this report show that FTP generated little or no reduction in AFDC receipt rates during Years 1 and 2 of the study period, when Escambia County's overall welfare caseload was dropping dramatically. This suggests that, to a large extent, the caseload decline is not attributable to FTP.

However, two important caveats are needed. First, as noted earlier, part of the caseload decline was likely driven by a reduction in the welfare application rate, and FTP may have affected that rate in ways that the study cannot measure. Second, while it appears that most members of the AFDC group understood that they were not subject to FTP's policies, it seems likely that they may have been affected by "welfare reform" in a broader sense. For example, the intense discussion about FTP and other welfare reforms at the local, state, and national levels may have convinced some of these individuals that the future of welfare was more uncertain, which may have spurred them to find jobs and leave assistance. This broader impact is also not captured in the study.

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## Notes:

<sup>1</sup>L. Jerome Gallagher et al. 1998. *One Year After Federal Welfare Reform: A Description of State Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) Decisions as of October 1997*. Washington, D.C.: The Urban Institute.

<sup>2</sup>Recipients are assigned a 36-month time limit if they (1) received welfare for at least 36 of the 60 months before entering FTP or (2) are under 24 years old and have no high school diploma and little or no recent work history.

<sup>3</sup>The term "AFDC/TANF payments" refers to cash assistance previously provided under AFDC and currently provided under the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families block grant. The FTP group is subject to rules that are consistent with TANF, while the AFDC group is subject to traditional AFDC rules.

<sup>4</sup>The following are exempt from FTP: caretaker relatives whose needs are not included in the welfare grant, incapacitated or disabled people, children under 18 years old who are in school or working at least 30 hours a week, people who are caring full time for a disabled dependent, parents/caretakers of children age six months or younger, and people who are 62 years of age or older.

<sup>5</sup>Initially, sanctions for both groups involved removing the noncompliant individual (generally the parent) from the grant calculation, resulting in a lower benefit amount. Since mid-1997, both groups have been subject to "full-family sanctions" that can close the entire cash assistance case (and, in some situations, the Food Stamp case as well). The data discussed in this section were collected before the imposition of full-family sanctions.

<sup>6</sup>This total includes all FTP group members with a 36-month time limit who enrolled between May 1994 and July 1995, and all those with a 24-month time limit who enrolled between May 1994 and July 1996. (In both cases, some people who are not members of the report sample are included.)

<sup>7</sup>If an impact estimate is statistically significant, one may conclude with some confidence that the program really had an effect. If an impact estimate is not statistically significant, the non-zero estimate is more likely to be the product of chance.

<sup>8</sup>Although the bars in Figure 3 for both groups are getting smaller over time, it is not necessarily true that people's income is dropping. This trend reflects the fact that a growing percentage of people have no income from any source recorded in the administrative records. These people may be living or working outside Florida, working off the books, or living with a partner or relatives.

<sup>9</sup>Specifically, the data used to create the groups were drawn from the Background Information Form (BIF), which was completed for each sample member just before she or he was randomly assigned. The BIF includes data on all of the criteria that staff later used to assign time limits to FTP group members, but the BIF data are self-reported, and thus more subject to error. For example, the BIF included an item that asked whether the sample member had received AFDC for 36 of the previous 60 months. People who answered "no" were usually assigned to the 24-month subgroup by MDRC (if they did not meet any of the other criteria for a 36-month time limit). However, it appears that, when staff later researched these clients' AFDC histories, it was discovered that some of them had, in fact, received AFDC for 36 of the previous 60 months. These individuals were thus assigned a 36-month time limit by FTP. Overall, about 19 percent of the FTP group members in the 24-month time-limit subgroup were actually assigned a 36-month time limit. Similarly, 33 percent of the FTP group members in the 36-month time-limit subgroup actually had a 24-month time limit.

<sup>10</sup>MDRC has tested several possible formulas for creating these subgroups, and has found that the impact results are somewhat sensitive to the definition used. In fact, the definition used in this report is slightly different from the one used in prior FTP reports. Thus, the results reported here for Years 1 and 2 for these subgroups differ from those presented in prior reports.

<sup>11</sup>For example, according to FTP rules, a participant with no diploma and no recent work history would have been assigned a 24-month time limit if she was at least 24 years old and had not received AFDC for 36 of the 60 months prior to enrollment.

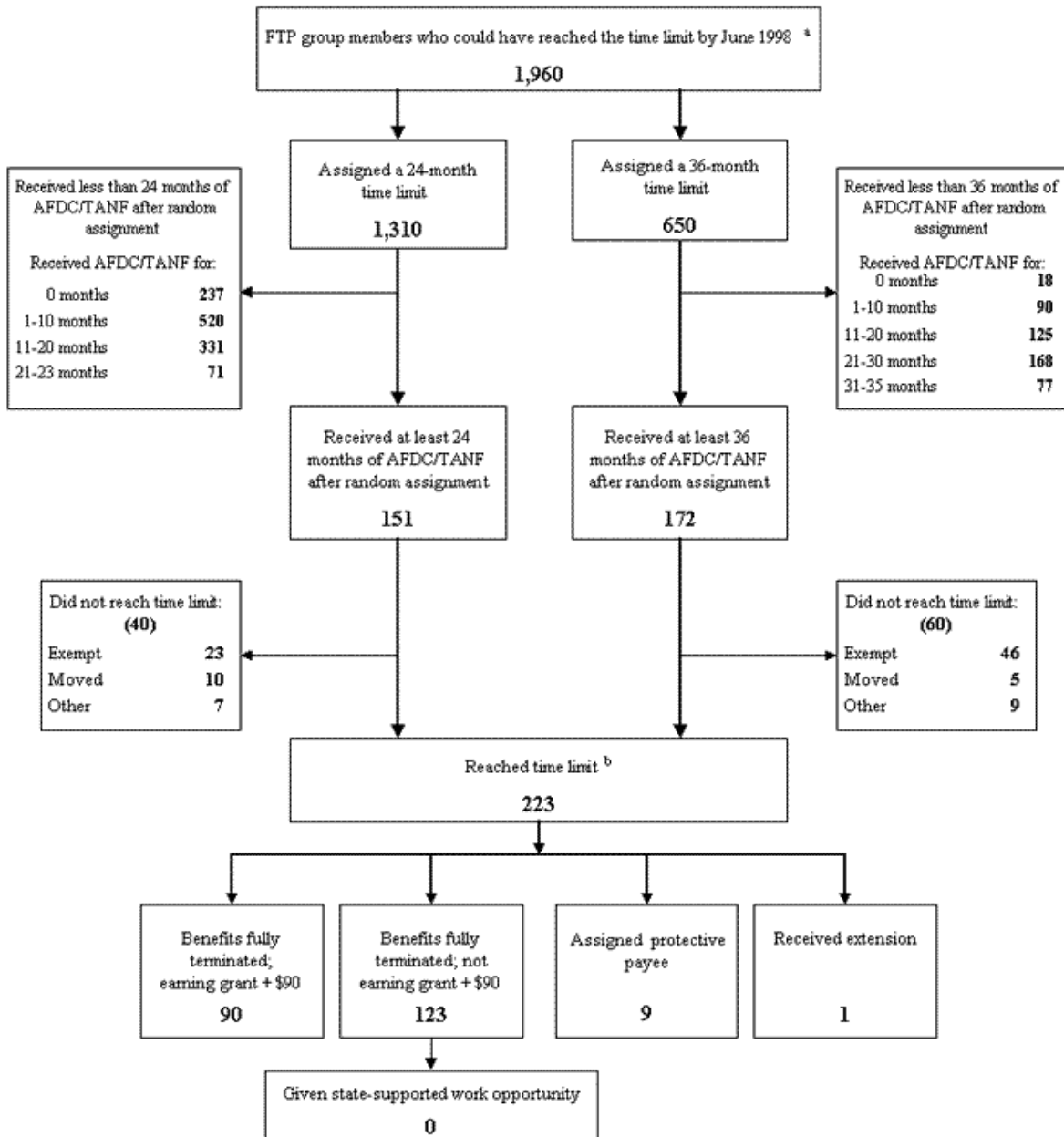
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## Funders

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The findings and conclusions presented in this report do not necessarily represent the official positions or policies of the funders.

**Figure 1**  
**Florida's Family Transition Program**  
**Status as of June 1998 of Single-Parent FTP Group Members**



NOTES: <sup>a</sup>This total includes all FTP group members with a 24-month time limit who enrolled between May 1994 and July 1996 and all FTP group members with a 36-month time limit who enrolled between May 1994 and July 1995.

<sup>b</sup>Of this group, three individuals were granted a four-month extension before their benefits were terminated.

**Table 1**  
**Florida's Family Transition Program**  
**Summary of Three-Year Impacts**

Outcome	FTP Group	AFDC Group	Difference	Percentage Change
Ever employed, years 1-3 (%)	81.6	77.7	3.9 ***	5.0
Last quarter of year 1	45.2	40.8	4.3 **	10.6
Last quarter of year 2	52.8	44.5	8.3 ***	18.7
Last quarter of year 3	49.7	44.2	5.5 ***	12.5
Average total earnings, years 1-3 (\$)	11,442	9,679	1,763 ***	18.2
Year 1	2,759	2,518	241 *	9.6
Year 2	3,942	3,281	661 ***	20.1
Year 3	4,741	3,880	862 ***	22.2
Ever received any AFDC/TANF payments, years 1-3 (%)	84.1	83.5	0.5	0.6
Last quarter of year 1	56.6	54.4	2.2	4.1
Last quarter of year 2	36.3	38.5	-2.2	-5.7
Last quarter of year 3	18.6	27.9	-9.3 ***	-33.3
Average total AFDC/TANF payments received, years 1-3 (\$)	3,703	4,147	-444 ***	-10.7
Year 1	1,981	1,990	-9	-0.5
Year 2	1,157	1,291	-134 ***	-10.4
Year 3	565	866	-301 ***	-34.8
Average number of months receiving AFDC/TANF payments, years 1-3	16.5	17.4	-0.9	-5.0
Ever received any Food Stamp payments, years 1-3 (%)	90.5	90.1	0.3	0.4
Last quarter of year 1	68.6	68.3	0.2	0.3
Last quarter of year 2	55.2	56.4	-1.3	-2.2
Last quarter of year 3	42.6	45.4	-2.8	-6.2
Average total value of Food Stamp payments received, years 1-3 (\$)	4,938	5,389	-451 ***	-8.4
Year 1	2,129	2,292	-163 ***	-7.1
Year 2	1,621	1,796	-176 ***	-9.8
Year 3	1,188	1,301	-112 **	-8.6
Average total income from earnings, AFDC/TANF, and Food Stamps, years 1-3 (\$)	20,083	19,215	868 *	4.5
Year 1	6,869	6,801	69	1.0
Year 2	6,719	6,368	351 *	5.5
Year 3	6,495	6,046	449 **	7.4
Sample size	1,405	1,410		

NOTES: Dollar averages include zero values for sample members who were not employed or were not receiving AFDC/TANF or Food Stamps. Rounding may cause slight discrepancies in the calculation of sums and differences.

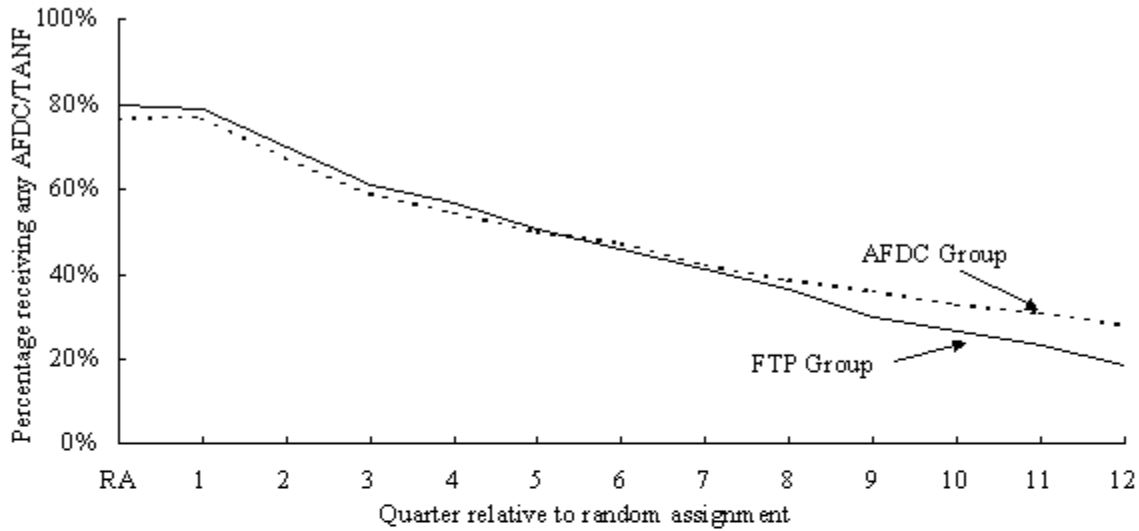
A two-tailed t-test was applied to differences between the FTP and AFDC groups. Statistical significance levels are indicated as \*\*\* = 1 percent, \*\* = 5 percent, \* = 10 percent.

Figure 2

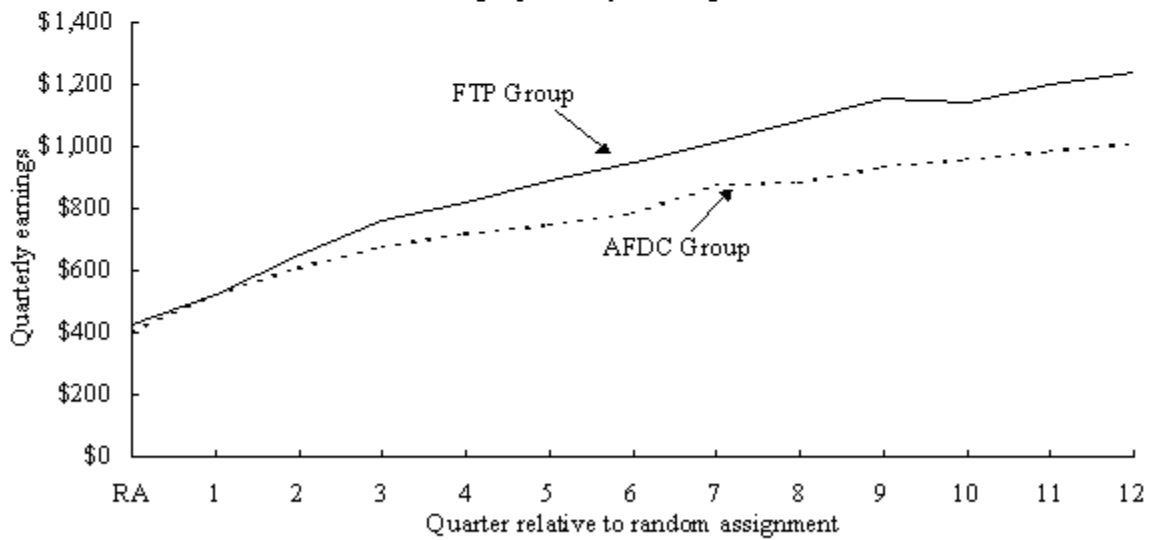
Florida's Family Transition Program

Average Quarterly AFDC/TANF Receipt and Average Quarterly Earnings

Average Quarterly AFDC/TANF Receipt



Average Quarterly Earnings



NOTE: RA refers to the calendar quarter in which random assignment occurred.



**Figure 3**  
**Florida's Family Transition Program**  
**Composition of Income, by Year**

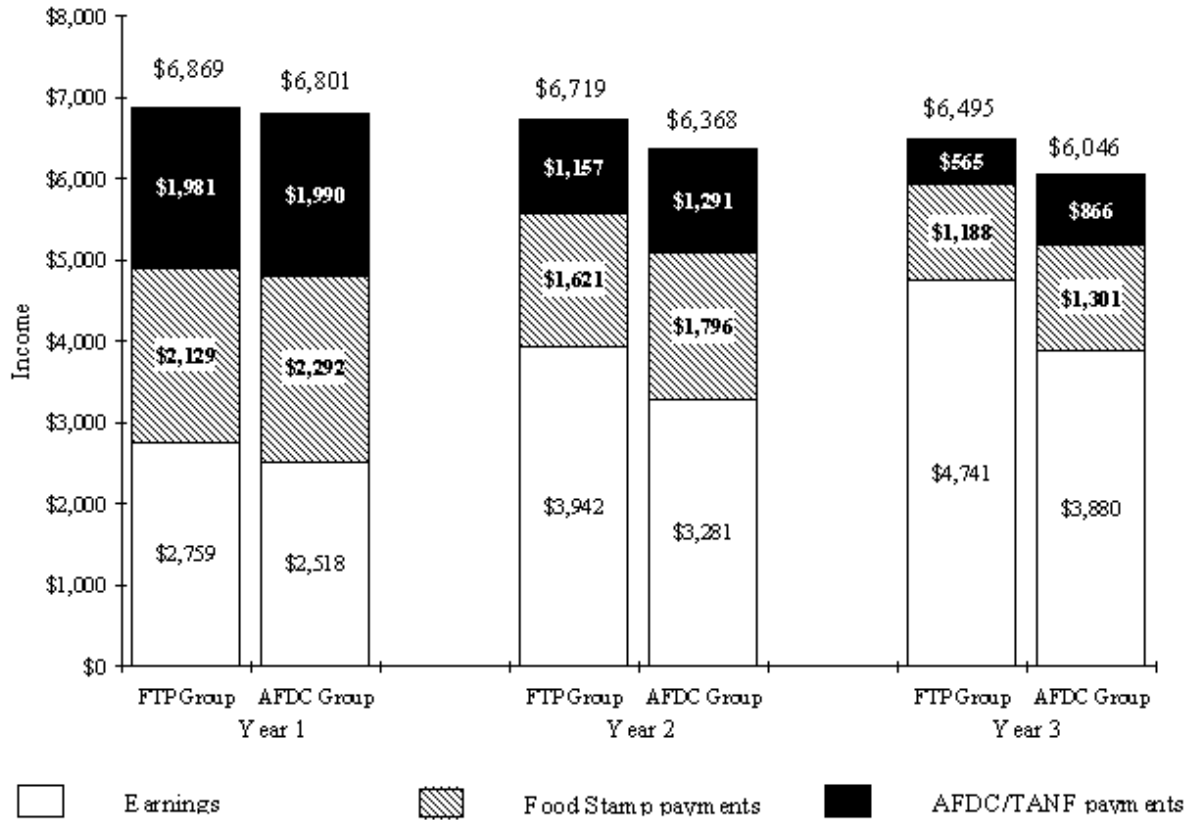
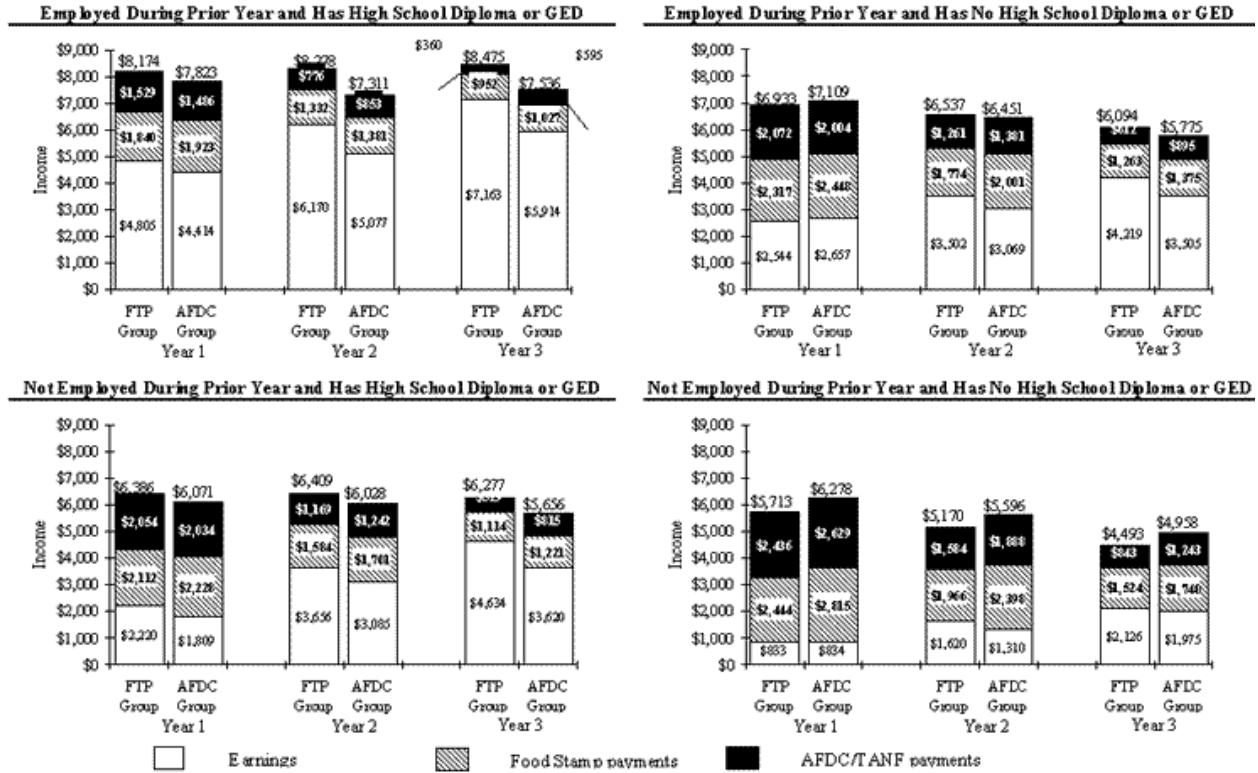


Figure 4

Florida's Family Transition Program  
Composition of Income, by Year and Job-Readiness Subgroups

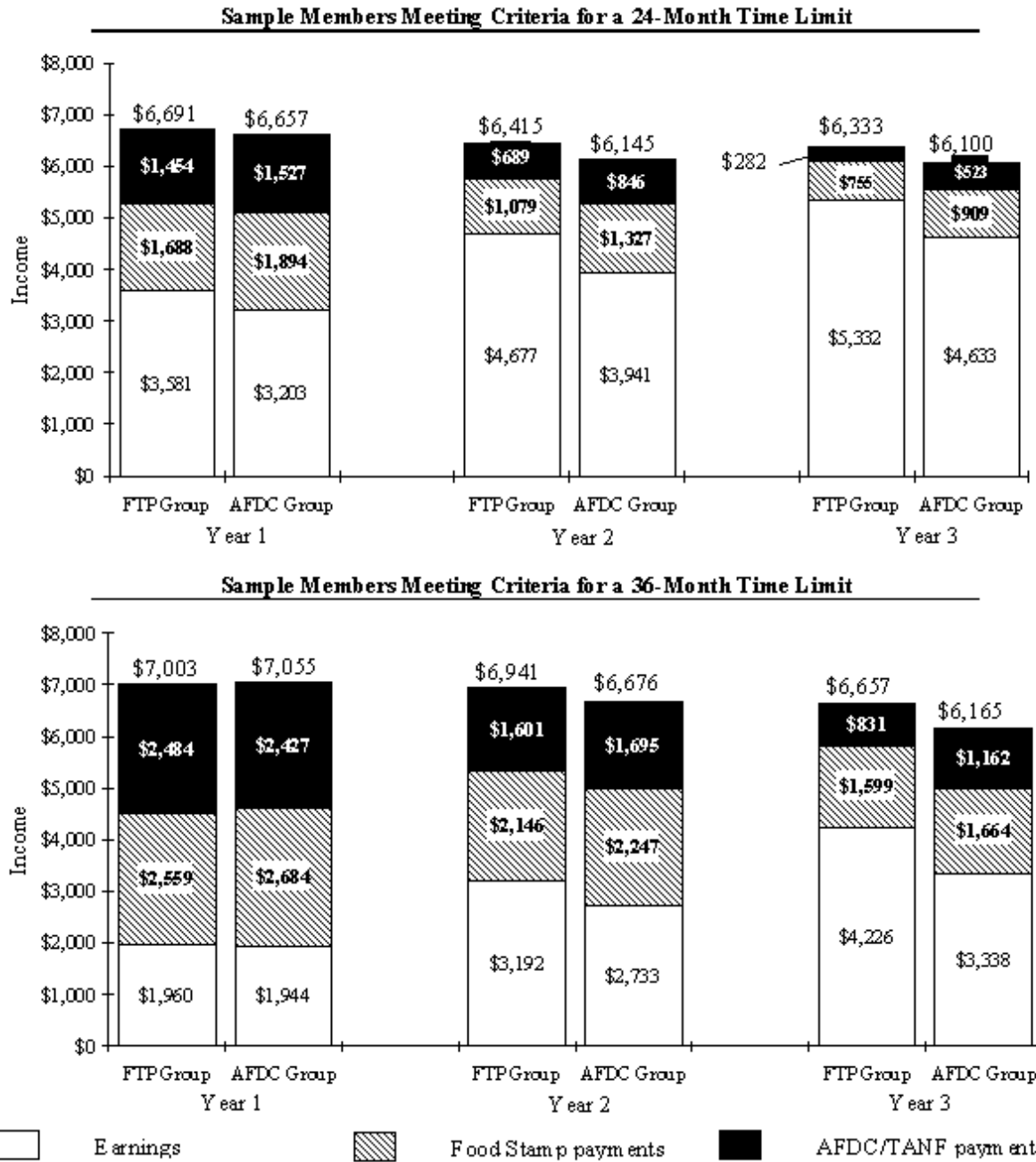


NOTE: The General Educational Development (GED) credential is given to those who pass the GED test and is intended to signify knowledge of basic high school subjects.

Figure 5

Florida's Family Transition Program

Composition of Income, by Year and AFDC/TANF Time-Limit Subgroups



NOTES: Sample members were likely to be assigned a 36-month time limit for the purpose of this analysis if they received AFDC/TANF for 36 of the 60 months prior to enrollment in FTP, or received AFDC for five or more years on their own or their spouse's AFDC case, or were under 24 years old and did not have a high school diploma or GED, or were under 24 years old and had worked fewer than three months in the year prior to enrollment in FTP. Otherwise, sample members were likely to be assigned a 24-month time limit.