



**CUISR:**

Community – University Institute for Social Research

***"Off Welfare ... Now What?":  
A Literature Review on  
the Impact of Provincial Welfare to  
Work Training Programs  
in Saskatchewan***

**by Carmen Dyck**



*Building Healthy Sustainable Communities*

## **Community-University Institute for Social Research**

CUISR is a partnership between a set of community-based organizations (including Saskatoon District Health, the City of Saskatoon, Quint Development Corporation, the Saskatoon Regional Intersectoral Committee on Human Services) and a large number of faculty and graduate students from the University of Saskatchewan. CUISR's mission is "to serve as a focal point for community-based research and to integrate the various social research needs and experiential knowledge of the community-based organizations with the technical expertise available at the University. It promotes, undertakes, and critically evaluates applied social research for community-based organizations, and serves as a data clearinghouse for applied and community-based social research. The overall goal of CUISR is to build the capacity of researchers, community-based organizations and citizenry to enhance community quality of life."

This mission is reflected in the following objectives: (1) to build capacity within CBOs to conduct their own applied social research and write grant proposals; (2) to serve as a conduit for the transfer of experientially-based knowledge from the community to the University classroom, and transfer technical expertise from the University to the community and CBOs; (3) to provide CBOs with assistance in the areas of survey sample design, estimation and data analysis, or, where necessary, to undertake survey research that is timely, accurate and reliable; (4) to serve as a central clearinghouse, or data warehouse, for community-based and applied social research findings; and (5) to allow members of the University and CBOs to access a broad range of data over a long time period.

As a starting point, CUISR has established three focused research modules in the areas of Community Health Determinants and Health Policy, Community Economic Development, and Quality of Life Indicators. The three-pronged research thrust underlying the proposed Institute is, in operational terms, highly integrated. The central questions in the three modules—community quality of life, health, and economy—are so interdependent that many of the projects and partners already span and work in more than one module. All of this research is focused on creating and maintaining healthy, sustainable communities.

Research is the driving force that cements the partnership between universities, CBOs, and government in acquiring, transferring, and applying knowledge in the form of policy and programs. Researchers within each of the modules examine these dimensions from their particular perspective, and the results are integrated at the level of the Institute, thus providing a rich, multi-faceted analysis of the common social and economic issues. The integrated results are then communicated to the Community and the University in a number of ways to ensure that research makes a difference in the development of services, implementation of policy, and lives of the people of Saskatoon and Saskatchewan.

CUISR gratefully acknowledges support from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada through their Community University Research Alliance program. CUISR also acknowledges the support of other funding partners, particularly the University of Saskatchewan, the City of Saskatoon, Saskatoon Health Region, Quint Development Corporation, and the Star Phoenix, as well as other community partners. The views expressed in this report, however, are solely those of the authors.

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CUISR acknowledges the following for their contributions to this publication:

Lou Hammond Ketilson, Academic Co-Leader;

Len Usiskin, Community Co-Leader,

Community Economic Development Module, CUISR

Louise Clarke, College of Commerce, University of Saskatchewan

Nazeem Muhajarine, Academic Co-Director, CUISR

Kate Waygood, Community Co-Director, CUISR

Neil Soiseth, Editing, Interior Layout, and Design

Printed in Canada by Printing Services, University of Saskatchewan

## **ABSTRACT**

This research project seeks to understand the effects of Saskatchewan's government job training programs, such as Jobs First, not only on poverty in Saskatchewan, but also on participants in these programs. The provincial government claims that job training programs have decreased the number of people living on social assistance, and while this may be true, it does not capture the realities of people who have been moved from assistance into job training programs or minimum wage full time jobs, neither of which provide an adequate sustainable income. This report gathers and evaluates the literature on welfare to work programs for both Saskatchewan and Canada. It seeks to understand the difficulty of living on assistance rates, regardless of whether they are called training benefits, transitional employment allowances, or supplementary employment benefits, as well as the reality of living on minimum wage, the differences for people in rural areas, and the disparities of these programs for women and men. A discussion on methodologies for the next phase of the research—interviewing individuals who have experienced job training provided by the Saskatchewan government—concludes this report.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

This report was prepared by Carmen Dyck with guidance and assistance from the Anti-Poverty Coalition's Research Steering Committee. However, many groups, organizations, and individuals were involved in this research project.

First, special consideration is given to the community members who brought this important issue to the Anti-Poverty Coalition's attention.

Thanks also goes out to the Community-University Institute for Social Research (CUISR), who funded Phase I and Phase II Part 1 of this project. The Prairie Women's Health Centre of Excellence (PWHCE), one of the Centres of Excellence for Women's Health, which is funded by the Women's Health Contribution Program of Health Canada, also contributed participants' honouraria. The PWHCE supports new knowledge and research on women's health issues, and provides policy advice, analysis, and information to governments, health organizations, and non-governmental organizations. The views expressed herein do not necessarily represent the official policy of the PWHCE or Health Canada.

Special thanks is extended to Janelle Morin and Cheralee Placsko at the QUINT Employment Centre for their help in recruiting participants and providing interview space.

The researcher would like to thank the Research Steering Committee members—Linda Bell, Janet Clarke, Vanessa Charles, and Kay Wilson—for their support and direction, and Kathie Cram for editing, guidance, and assistance where needed.

Special thanks also goes out to the research participants for sharing their experiences. Without them this project would not have been possible.

## INTRODUCTION

Poverty is a significant concern for most Canadians. Whether living in poverty themselves, opposed to or disgusted by it, seeing poverty as something that happens to others, or working towards its elimination, it affects everyone in different ways. National and provincial governments have a responsibility to citizens to protect and ensure that they are provided with essentials, such as housing, nourishment, and health care. Although governments make certain efforts, their initiatives and actions have not made an impact on eliminating poverty. Examples of new initiatives (albeit based on an old idea) for reducing poverty include job training programs, which have been introduced in Saskatchewan as the Building Independence initiative.

The recent restructuring of Social Services in Saskatchewan, spearheaded by the current provincial NDP government, claims to have substantially cut the number of welfare recipients through the Building Independence program. However, it has not yet been discovered how these job training programs have impacted those who have been through them.

The Saskatoon Anti-Poverty Coalition is a group of concerned citizens and organizations dedicated to addressing the root causes and effects of poverty. As such, they wanted to address these welfare to work initiatives. The Coalition formed in October 2000 as a response to changes to the income assistance policy under the auspices of the Department of Social Services, now known as the Department of Community Resources and Employment (DCRE). (Please note that Saskatchewan Community Resources and Employment and the Department of Social Services is used interchangeably throughout this document.) One of the Coalition's concerns was about these changes in relation to the focus on welfare to work, or labour force attachment programs, which are part of the Building Independence initiative.

While the Anti-Poverty Coalition welcomes support for people who are able to work, there is no evidence that these labour force attachment programs are having a positive effect on participants. The Coalition believes that the effects of restructuring these Department of Community Resources and Employment programs requires further investigation. Accordingly, the Coalition decided to conduct research to determine exactly what impact these programs have had on people living in poverty, and how the Anti-Poverty Coalition can respond to the effects.

This research project explores the impact of recent public policy changes on economic status and the quality of life of the people living in Saskatoon. The Coalition is interested not only in the impact, but developing more effective government and community supports that increase both long-term economic sustainability and quality of life for people on social assistance. The Coalition has long understood the link between economic vitality and the social well-being of people in our community. It is hoped that this research project will be used to challenge the methods used to understand poverty's effects by looking through a qualitative lens at people's experiences with labour force attachment programs.

People's conditions and circumstances vary widely. As such, it would be impossible to collect information that applies to all people who have participated in labour force attachment programs. For this reason, a sample group of participants has been used in this project in the hope of capturing as many stories and experiences as possible for the time period involved.

This report covers the work that has been completed for Phase I and Phase II Part 1 of the research project. The first section of this report contains an overview of the project. A condensed literature and information review combines Social Services documents, media reports, and other relevant research with applicable theoretical explanations and information. The second section outlines the methods used in this research. The final section consists of the proposed Phase II Part 2 plan and preliminary findings based on the literature and information review and completed interviews.

Phase II Part 2 will continue to focus on answering the primary research question. Subsequent analyses and conclusions will follow in a future report.

## **BACKGROUND AND LITERATURE REVIEW**

### ***OVERVIEW OF THE RESEARCH PROJECT***

Phase I of the research project focused on a primary research question: What is the impact on quality of life for people who participate in labour force attachment programs in Saskatchewan? More specifically, the Coalition is interested in the extent to which participation in the labour force attachment programs—the Jobs First and Transitional Employment Allowance programs started by the Building Independence initiative—has affected the economic status and overall sense of health and well-being for its recipients.

The 2002-2003 Annual DCRE Report claims that there have been significant reductions in the number of people receiving income assistance, stating that the Saskatchewan Assistance Plan caseload averaged 29,863 cases in that period, a decrease of more than 10,500 from 1994-1995. It further states that cases where children were involved have

decreased more rapidly than others (Government of Saskatchewan, 2003: 10). Many regard reductions in the number of those accessing social assistance as a success, but the quality of life for those leaving social assistance is less certain. To answer this question, the Coalition focused on assessing the impact on a sample group of people who have experienced this shift.

Explaining the shift in DCRE programs and focus on welfare to work programs, the Saskatchewan Minister of Social Services indicated, in a 2000 address to the Saskatchewan Association of Social Workers, that “it had become clear that social assistance was not providing a way out of poverty, nor was it serving as a transition to sustainable jobs for recipients” (Department of Community Resources and Employment, 2000: 3). The need for new ways of working toward the elimination of poverty was apparent, but there is nevertheless a concern that these welfare to work initiatives do not provide that way out of poverty.

In seeking to understand whether the Building Independence initiatives are providing a way out of poverty for the citizens of Saskatchewan, this research will examine a more thorough collection of qualitative indicators that point to quality of life and well-being, not just the number of people who have been taken off welfare rolls.

### ***LITERATURE AND INFORMATION REVIEW***

This investigative literature and information process begins with, but is not limited to, a thorough search for documentation on the Building Independence program and its components, claims made by the current provincial government based on this program, and other research and literature, both specific and theoretical, that has been carried out in this area.

### ***BACKGROUND TO THE RESEARCH PROJECT***

Saskatchewan is a vibrant province with great potential for economic growth. Its agricultural sector provides Canada’s major export crops—wheat, oats, barley, rye, flaxseed, and canola—as well as a variety of services and products to the farm sector. Value-added food processing is one of the province’s fastest growing industries. Mining is another important part of the provincial economy. Nearly two-thirds of the world’s recoverable potash reserves are located in Saskatchewan. The province is the world’s largest uranium exporter. Saskatchewan is also historically known as a province concerned about the well-being of its citizens, and is the birthplace of universal public healthcare in Canada.

Despite economic opportunities and growth, and a history of pioneering social welfare programs, Saskatchewan has a 12% poverty rate according to Statistics Canada’s Low-Income Cut-off (LICO), which is used to measure poverty’s extent (Canada Census, 2000). It should be noted, however, that Canada has no official poverty line, and that there is no general agreement on what constitutes poverty (Hunter, 2002). The lack of agreement notwithstanding, this means that at least 31,000 Saskatchewan families are economically marginalized.

The current minimum wage in Saskatchewan is \$6.65 per hour, which, based on a 40-hour work week, translates to a gross income of \$12,768 per year. It is no wonder, then, that 22% of Saskatchewan's residents have reported visiting food banks and soup kitchens at least once, and that the number of people accessing these services grows each year.

In both Canada and Saskatchewan, economic restructuring has deregulated the labour market to create more flexible wage structures. While this has increased employment, it is mainly in low-end, low-paying jobs, which, even if full-time, still result in below-LICO living standards (Mulvale, 2001).

This reality has been reflected in a national community research study on gender and poverty. The Pan-Canadian Vibrant Communities Gender and Poverty Project was a unique partnership involving six Canadian communities. Vibrant Communities' sponsors worked with facilitators to apply a gender analysis to local poverty reduction work. Gender defines the learned roles and responsibilities that women and men fulfill in society, and gender inequality has been recognized as a root cause of poverty (Leong and Lang, 2004). National trends of labour market restructuring collected through Vibrant Communities' research include:

- An increased culture of fear and uncertainty due to job insecurity and cutbacks;
- A growing distinction between "deserving" and "undeserving" poor;
- Mental, physical, and emotional stress, particularly among women, related to fulfilling multiple roles in home, community, and workplace;
- Men, particularly poor men, feel "disposable" with evolving gender roles and changes/cutbacks in primary industry sector jobs;
- More women in the workforce with little access to pensions;
- Men and women in less secure and lower paying jobs that require higher or more specialized qualifications;
- Continuing gender inequity in pay and inflexible work conditions for women, particularly lone parents;
- Fewer public services, with existing services becoming more difficult to access, especially for the "waged poor";
- Women are more affected by recent public service and job cuts;
- Programs that result in revolving door syndrome and band-aid approaches that are ineffective for enabling work transitions; and
- Removal of stringent "labour force attachment" rules for social organizations (Lang and Leong, 2004).

## *A HISTORY OF WELFARE IN CANADA*

To understand why families and individuals end up in poverty without support from provincial or federal governments, it is necessary to be familiar with the history of welfare in this country. Canada has been characterized as a liberal welfare state, having adopted Keynesian welfare state ideologies that were popular from the 1940s to the mid-1970s. This means that most Canadians were provided with an adequate level of economic security and social support from the federal government, but still subscribed to a more traditional work ethic (Scott, 1999). The federal Canada Assistance Plan (CAP) was introduced in 1966 and allocated federal money to the provinces and territories with the understanding that it was to be used to “provide assistance without qualification or condition to all people judged to be ‘in need’” (Herd, Mitchell, and Lightman, 2003: 7).

Since the mid-1970s, “the Canadian version of the Keynesian welfare state has been dismantled through a combination of funding cutbacks, program restructuring, and adoption of the new social policy assumptions by both federal and provincial levels of government” (Mulvale, 2001: 23). The decrease in federal funding for welfare programs, along with the move from universal to targeted or specific programs, further contributed to the deterioration of economic and social security for marginalized people in Canada. “As national entitlements have been replaced with local obligations,” Herd et al (2003: 13) state, “decentralization is not only changing the hierarchy of the regulation of poor people, but also the form and function of provision.” This trend, along with two decades of increasing global power of transnational corporations, has meant that effective social equality has not been a priority for Canadian governments. According to Mulvale (2001: 3), “[t]he growing reach of global capital over and against public policy formulation and Keynesian economic measures at the national level has brought to an end the social democratic welfare state project.” A narrow political debate and an unchallenged economic philosophy has increased the popularity of the idea that poverty’s causes are due to individual behaviour, and therefore not the responsibility of the political or economic structures at hand (Herd et al, 2003).

Although progressive groups and organizations, such as social policy advocates, feminists, labour groups, and the New Democratic Party, have fought to keep social programs and spending in line with the Keynesian philosophy, successive provincial and federal governments have embraced the idea that a new market economy would provide a solution to the equality issue by providing economic growth and prosperity for those who wanted it (Mulvale, 2001). This new perspective also helped create the dichotomy of “deserving” versus “undeserving” poor, a prominent characteristic of the post-welfare state. Previously, welfare programs made distinctions only between those able and unable to work (Theriault, 2003).

Throughout Canada’s welfare history, regardless of the program, philosophy, or government, women have been portrayed and treated as dependent on a male breadwin-

ner. As in other areas of historical (and sometimes contemporary) sociological study, the “norm” or target of a policy is considered to be male. As such, welfare programs have historically been set up to provide for men, and assumed that their provisions would also take care of women. Any specific programs or policies targeted specifically towards women were “needs tested, subject to bureaucratic discretion, and premised on implicit and sometimes explicit forms of stigmatization and moral correction” (Mulvale, 2001: 11).

Limited governmental resources, exasperated by ever-increasing transnational corporate power, has created a vacuum that has made it increasingly difficult for those responsible for welfare policy (i.e. the provinces) to play a primary role in creating adequate social policy:

[T]he traditional social democratic strategies for achieving equality and well-being that characterized the Keynesian Welfare State are no longer adequate. Social democratic theoretical approaches no longer adequately address, conceptually or programmatically, the questions of how to curb the power of transnational capital, how to reorganize economic activities for the public good, or how to ensure that politicians and bureaucrats ... are working in the interests of citizens rather than to protect and enhance accumulation of wealth by economic elites (Mulvale, 2001: 16).

However, changes in women’s social and labour roles and in the economy have created the possibility of redefining gender differences within the welfare state:

The trend toward greater individuation holds out promise to establish a greater equality between men and women by linking entitlement to the individual rather than the position of wife or mother within the family (Scott, 1999: 211).

### ***THE “WELFARE TO WORK” PHILOSOPHY***

Welfare to work programs are not a new phenomenon. Indeed, they have been a part of Canada’s liberal welfare state since its inception. After World War II, national welfare programs, including unemployment insurance, family allowance, and housing, were targeted at mothers because of their perceived inability to work. Reforms in the 1960s and 1970s extended welfare to include public health insurance and maternity benefits. Canada did not, however, embrace welfare state ideologies that included universality and wage replacement, which were elements of European welfare states at the time (Scott, 1999). Historically, this led to the idea of different citizenship rights for those who did not have regular employment, were on the margins of economic activity, or were col-

lecting social assistance, and perpetuated the idea of the “deserved” and “undeserved” poor (Scott, 1999).

As a means of addressing this emphasis on “economic activities for the public good,” there has been a renewed interest in labour force attachment or welfare to work programs. These programs use “*active measures* for enticing, or forcing, recipients off the social assistance rolls and into the paid labour force” (Theriault, 2003: 29, emphasis in original).

This historical focus on welfare assistance through the labour market has also contributed to women’s inequalities within the welfare system. It has disadvantaged women in the work force by treating them like men, but, at the same time, has stigmatized women as mothers fulfilling a social role, while treating them as different from men who are dependent on welfare programs (Scott, 1999).

Women’s welfare needs are distinct from men’s and must be situated around their family and reproductive choices. Issues such as child care, which affects nearly half of all women on social assistance, creates different needs for women, and is a significant barrier to finding adequate work (Theriault, 2003). Welfare to work programs do not take into account barriers such as custodial parents looking after children, grandparents caring for children, breastfeeding mothers, and other non-traditional child care and family arrangements that have been created to compensate for the lack of flexibility for women in welfare to work programs. In a local community research project entitled “Don’t We Count As People?,” women discussed their experiences with social welfare policy in Saskatchewan:

The expectation to look for paid work can be appealed, if individual circumstances cause the applicant to need more time. Several women have come to advocates in the focus groups about this issue. They reported that the Department’s call centre workers failed to advise these women of their right to appeal these decisions (Kerr, Frost, and Bignell, 2004 : 21).

When children become sick, baby-sitters or daycare arrangements break down, or working conditions are bad, women may drop out of jobs or training programs. When this happens, benefits may be cut, though this is a discretionary action determined by the individual workers and supervisors (Kerr et al, 2004: 21).

Interestingly, the rise in women’s participation in the labour force coincides with an increased need for service-oriented job positions. As more of these jobs are created, women will be increasingly expected to participate in the labour force, but will be mostly locked in to historically “female jobs” and “occupation ghettos” (Scott, 1999).

Welfare to work programs are typically managed around strict administration processes and compulsory participation, with sanctions for those who do not participate. Clients are closely supervised and their lives micro-managed by case workers who are taught to pressure clients into available work (Herd et al, 2003).

International evidence demonstrates that welfare to work programs are “reinforcing fundamental shifts in the nature of work and in the organization of labour markets ... and reflects the search for regulatory strategies suitable for flexible labour markets where polarizing wages, rising inequality and contingent employment are increasingly the norm” (Herd et al, 2003: 3). Welfare to work programs present an economic approach to the labour market and social policy while reflecting a fundamental change to the capitalist state’s structure (Herd et al, 2003).

### ***LABOUR FORCE ATTACHMENT PROGRAMS IN SASKATCHEWAN***

The Building Independence program (the restructuring project of the Department of Social Services) was launched in July 1998 as Saskatchewan’s version of a reformed and inventive welfare to work program. It consists of five programs:

- Family Health Benefits, which provide a small amount of supplementary health benefits to low income working families;
- The Provincial Training Allowance, which provides a monthly allowance to students enrolled in education or education-related courses;
- The Saskatchewan Employment Supplement, a monthly payment to supplement lower income families;
- The Saskatchewan Child Benefit, which is a monthly allowance for low income families with children; and
- The Youth Futures Pilot Project, which works under the assumption that “young people become dependent upon social assistance and do not learn to become independent” (Theriault, 2002). This thesis, however, has never been tested.

**Figure 1. Department of Social Services’ Goals, 2001-02.**

Goal 1 – People in marginalized or disadvantaged circumstances improve their economic and social well-being.
Goal 2 – People in marginalized or disadvantaged circumstances are included and supported in their families and communities.
Goal 3 – Effective policy, programs, services, and systems support citizenship and inclusion of people in marginalized or disadvantaged circumstances.

Source: Government of Saskatchewan, 2002c: 12.

The restructuring of the Department of Social Services included a name change on 1 April 2003—Saskatchewan Community Resources and Employment—although many, both inside and outside the system, do not recognize or use this new name.

Saskatchewan Social Services Annual Reports for 2002 and 2003 both report that the number of families with children living in poverty has “declined significantly,” but do not articulate how this has occurred (10). The report recognizes, however, that “household incomes in Saskatchewan have not kept pace with the cost of living and income growth remains well below the national average [particularly among] Saskatchewan’s Aboriginal population” (10).

To deflect prospective welfare recipients from receiving social assistance, new programs were implemented that focus on immediate job search. A program was developed to focus on steering potential welfare recipients into the workforce before they became part of the welfare system. The Jobs First initiative, intended to fulfill this role, was first piloted in Regina and Yorkton as part of the Building Independence program.

Jobs First provides information on how to look for work and find employment. It also claims to provide an individual’s rights and responsibilities while on social assistance benefits (Government of Saskatchewan, 2002a). The Saskatchewan Social Services Annual Report for 2002 stated that in March of that year the Social Assistance Plan had 32,000 open cases, down from more than 40,000 cases in 1994-5. “Service delivery changes implemented in 2001-2, along with enhanced benefits, ensure that this progress will continue” (12). Reporting on the Building Independence initiatives, the report stated that the Saskatchewan Employment Supplement “supported a parents’ *decision* to work by assisting with the child-related costs of going to work” (14, emphasis added).

The first contact with Jobs First is through the Call Centre, where clients are given information on attending a Jobs First session. Subsequent sessions might include group sessions, resume creation or updating, help in using the Saskatchewan Jobs website, and advice on how to look for a job. Participants are usually involved in Jobs First for three months.

Clients who have no income may be eligible to receive the Transitional Employment Allowance (TEA) while in Jobs First. The TEA assists in paying for necessities, such as food, shelter, and possibly child care while looking for work.

Statistics provided by DCRE indicate that 72% of clients involved in TEA in 2003 did not have “subsequent SAP [Social Assistance Plan] involvement,” meaning that they did not go on to receive social assistance benefits. Their conclusion is that TEA’s long term success rate is 81%, which assumes that success is measured in terms of no longer receiving TEA and SAP benefits. “We are aware that the major success here is that TEA participants are getting jobs” (Department of Community Resources and Employment, 2003: 1).

**Table 1. Transitional Employment Allowance Rates.**

Type of Family*	Room and Board (\$)	General Living Allowance (\$)		
		Tier 1 <sup>†</sup>	Tier 2 <sup>‡</sup>	Tier 3 <sup>§</sup>
One Adult	270	405	400	395
Two Adults	540	755	735	720
One parent, one child	380	615	590	575
Two parents, one child	625	800	775	760

Source: Jobs First and TEA Question and Answer brochure.

\* The allowance is increased for northern residents, additional children or dependent adults, and standard rates for utilities being paid.

† Regina, Saskatoon, Prince Albert, Lloydminster, La Ronge, Yorkton, Melville, Weyburn, Estevan

‡ Moose Jaw, Swift Current, North Battleford, Melfort, Nipawin, Fort Qu'Appelle, Kindersley, Rosetown, Humboldt, Dalmeny

§ Town and rural areas

Jobs First and other provincial training programs are intended to provide people with support systems and income while they look for work or go to school in order to keep their independence from social assistance (Department of Community Resources and Employment, 2003). Potential clients who used to qualify for social assistance are now redirected to these labour attachment programs first instead of immediately qualifying for social assistance.

However, research on those who receive social assistance shows that many move back and forth between low-wage employment and social assistance, regardless of the work or training program in which they are involved (Scott, 1999). The preliminary findings of this research attest to this phenomenon.

Although these welfare to work programs have created a drop in the number of people receiving assistance, the Coalition believes, as do other organizations, researchers, and concerned citizens, that this has created a misrepresentation of the levels of poverty and the need for adequate wages for social assistance in Saskatchewan. There is little information provided by the provincial government about the well-being of those no longer on social assistance. For example, Saskatoon DCRE data for June to December 2003 shows that of those invited to the Jobs First Program, 39% did not attend. Of the 61% who did participate, only 21% either found employment or defaulted, which means that their files were closed. In the second stage of support, the Transitional Employment Program, from February to September 2003, 72% of those assisted no longer required assistance. There is no follow-up conducted on clients once their files are closed, regardless of the program they are on. Furthermore, during these individuals' involvement with these programs, they do not appear in caseload social assistance statistics. In other words, these statistics do not take into account the well-being and quality of life of those who find work but are still unable to sustain themselves and their families with basic

necessities. These people represent the working poor, and although they may not be on the social assistance radar, they nonetheless need assistance.

Paid work does not necessarily ensure quality of life and self-subsistence, and unpaid work that is equally beneficial to families, communities, and societies is often discounted. In the local community research project “Don’t We Count As People?,” research participants reported that:

There are wage exemptions allowed for work incentives, but the amounts are so low it does not seem to pay to work, especially, if you have to pay for childcare or buy special clothes for work ... the amounts are too low to cover the actual costs. Also one does not receive childcare until the receipts are submitted. This is a catch 22 situation, because how do you pay for childcare without the funds and no funds are given until the receipts are received. The person working while on assistance never knows if the worker will release their cheque for sure and how long it will take (Kerr et al, 2004: 24).

Preliminary findings of research participants’ interviews have also reported that there is little incentive to find and keep work when it is likely that it will create more hassle, more paperwork, and fewer earnings for people already on assistance.

#### *Assessments of programs and customer service*

Changes in welfare policies have altered the way that programs are delivered and potential recipients and clients are serviced. In 2001 and 2002, the Department of Social Services provided training to all social assistance workers about the new redesigned systems and processing for case planning (Provincial Auditor of Saskatchewan, 2002: 265). The approach is called the “Transition Planning Model,” and strives to be solution-focused, strength-based, and client-centered. It is intended to help clients “build their capacity towards maximum self-sufficiency and full participation in the labour market” (Government of Saskatchewan, 2002c: 15).

The Building Independence initiative included the creation of a Call Centre as the first point of contact for Social Services applicants. Program administration services, such as the Call Centre, are important elements to further address and assess as barriers of potential assistance recipients in Saskatchewan (Therriault, 2003). Whether these assessments are accurate, useful to the client, or address barriers to employment remains to be seen.

Applicants who phone the Call Centre are assessed as to whether they are ready to work and are then referred to the Jobs First program in their area. “This service provides potential social assistance clients with access to employment as a first choice before becoming involved in the welfare system” (Government of Saskatchewan, 2002c: 15).

However, if they fail to meet the Jobs First requirements—i.e. if they are unable to work—they are directed to other programs so as to keep them off of social assistance.

Zero-tolerance policies for fraud, changes in rules and regulations, and modifications in welfare rates have all affected program service, and meant that “less attention has focused upon significant changes to the *way* welfare is delivered” (Herd et al, 2003: 2, emphasis in original). As such, program administration strongly determines access to welfare:

Essentially, by rationing access to nonwage income, welfare regulates (and makes moral judgements about) who must work. Administrative processes perform a key role in this regulation by imposing secondary barriers to receipt (Herd et al, 2003: 2).

These barriers have become known as the “rituals of degradation” within welfare programming, which include, but are not limited to, excessive requests for information, long application processes and appeals, and confusing language (Piven and Cloward, 1971). Herd et al (2003) refer to this phenomenon as “bureaucratic disorientation,” meaning that potential recipients are unable to supply all the information needed to qualify, or are discouraged by long and tedious application procedures.

Potential clients who are most likely to quickly achieve financial independence are processed first. For the most part, new clients have been the initial focus of the Call Centre. Assistance from DCRE may also depend on the case worker assigned. “Don’t We Count As People?” reported a range of experiences with assistance workers:

Some participants described workers who provided information and helped them access benefits. Yet several of the participants in this study described being treated with suspicion and very little respect. They also described having difficulty reaching their workers to have their questions answered (Kerr et al, 2004: 27).

The relationships between clients and staff also affect the effectiveness of labour force attachment programs. High staff turnovers, high case loads, and various workers on the same cases have negative effects on clients looking for work. Theriault (2003) states:

Serving these people would probably require a return to the true principle of case management. That is, a return to case workers being able to gain the confidence of the client and gaining sufficient insight into their problems to take appropriate measures. But . . . there is a tendency in Canada to load too many cases on each worker. This results in very infrequent contacts that are not in the spirit of case management and it means that little real support is given to increasingly isolated clients (29).

Theriault concludes that what needs to be known is “whether the services needed exist or not and, if they are available, who does or should provide them,” and “the need to providing some continuing job retention support to the former recipient” (2003: 30).

### *Barriers to employment*

Barriers to employment may directly or indirectly affect the type of work for which one looks when on a labour force attachment program. These barriers may or may not be known to the client’s case worker, thereby potentially hindering the search for work. These barriers might include, but are not limited to: child care; disability (either physical or learning); transportation; relationship abuse or domestic violence; substance abuse; housing instability; food insecurity; low education; mental health; and discrimination and/or harassment (Theriault, 2003).

In a survey of 437 applicants for social assistance in Saskatchewan, 25% had no barrier, 28% had a single barrier, 34% had two or three barriers, and 13% had four or more barriers to employment (Theriault, 2003).

The Department of Community Resources and Employment Media Room website provides internal news releases, some of which have focused specifically on these labour force attachment programs. In a 28 September 2001 news release entitled “Welfare Re-design Success,” Social Services announced that the Building Independence program was focused on “reducing child and family poverty and decreasing reliance on welfare” (Government of Saskatchewan, 2001: 1). “By increasing the number of people enrolled in, and aware of, the Saskatchewan Employment Supplement,” Harry Van Mulligen, former Social Services Minister, said, “we believe we can make it easier for people to stay in the work force and further reduce the number of families on social assistance” (1). Van Mulligen further stated that “public opinion polls show that the vast majority of Saskatchewan residents believe that social assistance caseloads in the province are increasing, despite the fact that caseloads dropped by 20% over the last seven years” (Government of Saskatchewan, 2001: 3).

Research by Garson Hunter through the University of Regina Social Policy Research Unit reports that “the provincial restructuring of the Saskatchewan social assistance program (Building Independence) has not made a meaningful reduction in the intensity of child poverty in Saskatchewan. Child poverty has not appreciably altered in the province of Saskatchewan between 1989 and 1998” (Hunter, 2002: 5). Van Mulligen stated, however, that the child poverty rate was dropping as more families move from welfare into the workforce. This was contradictory to what was reported by the Child Poverty Report Card (2001), an evaluation tool created by Saskatoon Communities for Children, the Community-University Institute for Social Research, and the Saskatoon Anti-Poverty Coalition.

In April 2002, media reports located on the DCRE website stated that social assistance caseloads were dropping in every region of the province. Glenn Hagel, then

Social Services Minister, credited the Building Independence program. He claimed that almost 6,000 families, including 13,000 children, no longer received welfare payments, a cumulative savings of \$345 million for the province (Government of Saskatchewan, 2002). In a 29 October 2002 news release, Hagel claimed that welfare caseloads in Saskatchewan reached their lowest levels in a decade (The Commonwealth, 2002).

Pilot projects in Regina and Yorkton were in the Government of Saskatchewan News Releases on 10 May and 13 May 2002, respectively. Hagel reported that the Jobs First initiative helped people find out about local job opportunities as a first choice before social assistance (Government of Saskatchewan, 2002a, 2002b). On 17 June 2002, the Saskatchewan Government issued news releases in 20 towns and cities, claiming that "Welfare Decline Continues in..." that particular community. Each news release had the same general information, but failed to provide specific results for the community where it was claimed that welfare reliance had declined. After announcing 150 more child care spaces, Hagel further stated that "initiatives such as this also improve or remove a significant barrier to participating in the workforce for low-income families" (Saskatchewan Hansard, 2002: 1621). However, research specifically conducted in Saskatchewan showed that:

[a]n examination of welfare caseload totals in Saskatchewan before and after the introduction of the Building Independence program demonstrates ... that there is no statistical evidence to support the Social Services Minister's claim that welfare reform has reduced poverty and moved people from the welfare rolls to the workforce (Therriault, 2002 : 8).

The Saskatchewan New Democratic Party Caucus website has also cited the benefits of the Saskatchewan Employment Supplement (SES) (Saskatchewan New Democratic Party, 2001). The income supplement, created in 1998 under the Building Independence program, is available to help families with child-related costs find and/or maintain jobs. In June 2001, the maximum SES benefit was between \$46 and \$83 per month, depending on the number of children in the family. There are no SES benefits for single employable people.

The NDP newsletter, *The Commonwealth*, also touted the Building Independence program, stating that "welfare caseloads in Saskatchewan reached their lowest levels in more than a decade" (The Commonwealth, 2002: 1). Hagel claimed that Saskatchewan had the second largest decline in family poverty between 1992 and 1999. Research by Therriault (2003), however, indicates that there is no evidence to conclude that the Building Independence program has had any significant effect to lower welfare caseload numbers. He argues that the lower welfare rate is better explained by economic growth after a recessionary period in Canada.

Perhaps the most disturbing aspect of the labour force attachment initiatives is that these programs only promote one kind of work—paid labour. In reality, however, well-being and quality of life involves more than just paid employment. Work done in the home and in the community is of equal importance, but in a patriarchal, capitalist society it is not considered an economic benefit and is therefore deemed as minimal, limited, non-useful, replaceable, and not worth counting. The focus on paid labour as the most important aspect of one's self-worth and well-being sends a dangerous message to Saskatchewan's residents, and minimizes other kinds of work that also needs to be done, mostly of which is performed by women.

As a solution to a new perspective on social welfare programming and welfare to work ideology, Theriault (2003) calls for a life-first approach, instead of work-first, to welfare to work programs, which would allow people a space to sort out their lives and address the barriers that they face. "[A]vailable, long-term, flexible support services for people with multiple barriers," he writes, "are needed if long-term, stable employment is the desired outcome. Without appropriate and well-managed support services, any employment gains risk to be short-lived" (30). The new Building Independence initiative is outcomes-oriented, but the positive or negative experiences during the process can be just as crucial.

It is with this perspective and these initial hypotheses in mind that the Coalition interviewed research participants and will perform further analysis to complete this research project. The following sections summarize the methodologies and preliminary findings of the research interviews.

## **METHODS OF RESEARCH**

The primary goal was to find research methods that were not only respectful to research participants, but also useful in looking beyond the traditional, quantitative analysis used by the provincial government to analyze Jobs First and other job training programs. In this way, an additional dimension of analysis could be discovered and used, not in opposition to previous qualitative research, but as a complementary means of understanding how these programs affect people, not just welfare numbers.

An inductive method of theorizing has been used throughout this research process and will be continued in the analysis of the final report. Inductive analysis does not impose theory on the research before it has been completed, but rather theory and analysis is allowed to emerge from the data. "In inductive reasoning, researchers use specific instances or occurrences to draw conclusions about entire classes of objects or events. ... Inductive reasoning begins, not with a pre-established truth or assumption, but with an observation" (Leedy and Ellis Ormrod, 1985: 35). In this case, observations were made by community members about the effectiveness of the job training programs being provided by the Saskatchewan government.

Working from an inductive analysis method, Glaser and Strauss' method of grounded theory (1967) was used to analyze participants' understanding of the training that they received through Jobs First or other welfare to work training programs. Grounded theory—"theory that *emerges from* research" (Palys, 1997: 79, emphasis in original)—was chosen to ensure that the research collected played a major role in the research project. The principles that were important and which grounded theory encompassed include the identification of relevant categories and the ability to organize and combine the information in a conceptual capacity. Grounded theory is also capable of presenting a bigger picture from small pieces of information, which was important because a small population sample was used to analyze a large concept (Glaser, 1992). In some ways the research deviated from grounded research prescriptions so as to fit the research needs. Glaser and Strauss advocate for simultaneous coding and collection of research, and suggest that research collection should end when a saturation point has been reached in the material. This research collection and coding did not take place at the same time and the end of the field research was dependent on the saturation of information. However, being aware of this principle of grounded theory, the idea of information saturation was kept in mind during the interview process.

Feminist researcher Patricia Maguire notes that feminist participatory research is "a three part process of social investigation, education and action to share the creation of social knowledge with oppressed people" (Maguire, 1987: 3). Defined as a type of research in which the goal is to create a solution to a problem (Leedy and Ellis Ormond, 1985), action research also encompasses the aspect of evaluating a "bigger picture" while focusing on a local reality. Action research mirrors feminist thought: "Feminism is a way of both thinking and acting; in fact, the union of action and thought is central to feminist programs for social change" (Anderson, 1993: 7). Feminist participatory research methodologies seek to investigate reality while simultaneously changing it and removing "the traditional separation between knowing and doing" (Maguire, 1987: 3). This research project strives to incorporate these ideas to ensure that the end result is not just a research report that sits on a shelf. Using feminist participatory research methods, which include open-ended questions and the opportunity for participants to share their experiences, frustrations, and achievements, allowed the participants to guide the research collection. In keeping with a feminist methodology, semi-structured interviews geared towards dialogue were used to ensure that participation in the research would not be impacted by differences in class, race, and power between the researcher and the participants. This approach allowed for participants' interests and input to become a part of the research information (see **Appendix A** for the complete interview guide).

### ***VOICE OF THE RESEARCH***

A Research Steering Committee made up of four Anti-Poverty Coalition members was formed to ensure that the research being conducted was conducive to the Coalition's vision of this project. The Committee met with the primary researcher once a month.

The researcher provided monthly progress reports and the Committee provided guidance, support, and editing at these meetings. Steering Committee members voiced their opinions, ideas, and offered support when needed. Information from these meetings was then reported at the following Anti-Poverty Coalition meeting. The involvement of the Steering Committee and the Anti-Poverty Coalition has ensured that the viewpoints expressed through this research project are in line with not only the researcher's perspective but also that of the Steering Committee, which represents the Anti-Poverty Coalition.

### ***POSITION OF THE RESEARCHER(S)***

Sandra Kirby and Kate McKenna, in *Experience Research Social Change: Methods from the Margins* (1989), suggest that researchers explore their own "conceptual baggage" before embarking on any research project that involves human participants. "Conceptual baggage is a record of your thoughts and ideas about the research question at the beginning and throughout the research process. It is a process by which you can state your personal assumptions about the topic and the research process" (Kirby and McKenna, 1989: 32). Similarly, Palys (1997: 205) observes that "we cannot study the world without acknowledging the "we" that is doing the studying." This encouragement to acknowledge limitations as a researcher was helpful in furthering a research project that is respectful and knowledgeable about the issues surrounding qualitative analysis, and will prove to be most beneficial when analyzing the results of the fieldwork. This process of self-reflection also allows the researcher to become "another subject in the research process [who] is left vulnerable in a way that changes the traditional power dynamics / hierarchy that has existed between [the] researcher and those who are researched" (Kirby and McKenna, 1989: 32), and helps to acknowledge and make provisions for the differences between the research participants and the interviewer. Realizing the conceptual baggage of both the researcher and the Steering Committee members was accomplished on a continual basis, as Steering Committee meetings often resulted in further self-reflection of those involved through investigation of their perspectives and assumptions about welfare to work programs and its recipients.

### ***SCOPE OF THE INTERVIEW PROCESS***

Interview questions were developed that allowed for reflection on both knowing and doing. Elizabeth Shrader (2001) promotes the use of methodologies that can be used to provide a holistic, interdisciplinary approach to working with research participants, especially those who have experienced and survived violence. The goal of the interview, following her suggestion, was to collect information that would be guided by what the research participants knew about Jobs First, other training programs, and social assistance programs, and their own experiences as people who have been through the social assistance system.

There was also an assumption about who holds the knowledge and why that person is in a position of privilege to have it (Code, 1991). With this understanding, participants were treated as the experts in the field during the course of the research.

## ***RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS***

Research participants were recruited through local employment centres and other organizations that assist people in finding work and/or assistance in meeting basic needs. Participant criteria included adults who had taken Jobs First or other provincial training programs. In total, twenty-five participants were interviewed. Special consideration was given to ensure that a rural sample would be included in this research. Demographics were not skewed to represent an equal sample between women and men.

## ***ETHICAL RESEARCH USING HUMAN SUBJECTS***

When interviewing research participants, it is required that research tools meet ethical research standards before entering into the research field. An ethics review board at the University of Saskatchewan assessed the research interviews to ensure that the research process met with the University's ethical standards.

## ***INTERVIEW TOOLS AND TECHNIQUES***

It was decided that the best method to collect information was by using individual, in-depth, one-on-one interviews. The interview guide was made up of thematic areas that the researcher used as guided questions to form the conversation. The research questionnaire was completed with input from the Steering Committee members. Feminist participatory research interview methods allowed for interactive interviews and oral histories to be collected from the research participants.

The interview guide was first tested on a sample participant to ensure that the questions being asked were providing the information for which the researcher and Steering Committee was looking. After the sample interview was transcribed, it was presented to the Steering Committee for closer scrutiny to ensure that the research tool was successful in answering the research question. Changes to the interview guide were made as needed.

## **ANALYSIS TOOLS**

The primary researcher plans for critical reflection on the social context of the information collected by looking at the social reality of the participants involved and how they are functioning. Social change researchers Kirby and McKenna (1989) explain that:

context is the fabric or structure in which the research, or the research participants' experience, has occurred. It only makes sense that if we are to fully understand the data and effect change, we must try to understand contextual patterns and how they are sustained and controlled (129).

A preliminary thematic analysis, as well as a guided analysis based on these themes, will be conducted with the Research Steering Committee. The researcher will attempt to facilitate a “hurricane thinking” (Kirby and McKenna, 1989: 146) analysis with Steering Committee members, where the central research questions will be placed in the middle of a table, and properties and categories arranged around the question, depending on which have the strongest ties to the research question. This exercise is hoped to find links between themes, which will create the narrative string within the analysis report.

After the analysis has been completed, a focus group will be held with the research participants to ensure that the themes and findings are appropriate to their experiences. This will also be a unique means for research participants to have further input into the research outcomes, and to meet each other, share stories and experiences, and find support in their job searches.

These findings will then be presented to the Saskatoon Anti-Poverty Coalition for further discussion and defense. After approval of the findings, the researcher will continue to write the analysis aspect of the research report, using appropriate writing styles and methods, and highlight applicable theory.

The report will document the discovery process. Direct quotations from participants’ interviews will be utilized to highlight the research analysis findings and give a voice to participants.

Because of the gendered nature of poverty and the predominance of women in situations of oppression, a gender analysis will be applied to this research project to ensure that both women’s and men’s separate experiences are documented. Differences between men’s and women’s experiences of poverty and social assistance programs can be different due to the inequality and marginalization of women. Women’s separate experiences often go unnoticed in traditional research endeavours. How this analysis is determined will depend largely on the random selection of participants involved in the study.

### ***PRELIMINARY FINDINGS***

Several themes have become apparent during the literature review and in discussing the research project with members of the Coalition and partner organizations. These themes also resonated when conducting interviews with the research participants.

- It has become apparent that while labour force attachment programs teach skills to look for work, they have not directly affected welfare recipients’ ability to find work in today’s challenging labour market.
- The importance of volunteer and unpaid work, which is performed mostly by women, has not been given value within the Saskatchewan labour force attachment programs.

- The shortage of childcare in the province has been exacerbated by welfare to work programs, further ignoring women's unpaid and invisible work.
- Labour market opportunities are different for men and women. Therefore, their job search experiences will be different because women tend more often to take part-time, service-oriented, or lower skilled work.
- Rural residents do not have access to Jobs First or other training programs offered in Saskatchewan cities due to transportation restraints.
- There is little incentive to find and keep work when it will likely create more hassle, more paperwork, and fewer earnings for those already on assistance.
- Many people on assistance move between low-wage employment and social assistance, regardless of the work or training program in which they are involved.
- Barriers to accessing social assistance include excessive requests for information, long application processes and appeals, and confusing language. The phenomenon of "bureaucratic disentanglement," as defined by Herd et al (2003), is present in the interviews collected, meaning that potential recipients are unable to supply all the information needed to qualify or are discouraged by long and tedious application procedures.

### *ANALYSIS*

Analysis of this research project will be completed as funding permits, and will include:

- Focus Group Response
- Hurricane analyses
- Conclusions
- Recommendations

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**Appendix A. Interview Themes and Possible Questions.**

**Off Welfare ... Now What?  
Saskatoon Anti-Poverty Coalition  
CUISR Research Sabbatical  
Interview Themes and Possible Questions**

The interview procedure will follow an open-ended, conversational format. The interviewer, also the primary researcher, will ensure that proper interview techniques are utilized to ensure that the participants are comfortable and understand their rights, roles, and responsibilities in this interview process. Questions will be directed by themes of the interview and by the natural flow of conversation.

<b>Themes</b>	<b>What We Want to Find Out</b>	<b>Possible Questions to Ask</b>
Introduction to interview, to create comfortable atmosphere	Introductions between interviewer and participant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• How are you finding the weather?</li><li>• How did you find out about the study?</li><li>• How long have you lived in Saskatchewan?</li><li>• What neighbourhood do you live in?</li><li>• Other questions to ease into the next theme.</li></ul>
Stories/anecdotes/experiences with labour attachment programs (LAP) or Social Services (positive and/or negative)	Work history	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Can you tell me about your employment history?</li></ul>
	History with Income Employment services in Saskatchewan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Can you tell me about your experiences with income security services in Saskatchewan?</li></ul>
	Specific information on which LAP the participant was involved	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Which labour attachment program (Jobs First, etc.) did you participate in?</li></ul>

<p>Stories/anecdotes/ experiences with labour attachment programs (LAP) or Social Services (positive and/or negative)</p>	<p>Call Centre Effectiveness</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Did you have any communication through the Call Centre in Regina?</li> <li>• What was your experience?</li> <li>• Do you feel that your placement appropriate to your situation?</li> <li>• Did this help you understand what your options were in order to qualify for social assistance?</li> </ul>
	<p>Specific experience with LAP</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What were the options presented to you? Did you find these options adequate?</li> <li>• How would you describe the level of customer service given to you by Social Services employees (or, how were you treated)?</li> <li>• How would you rate them, from 1 to 10 (1 being the worst service, and 10 being excellent service), on:                         <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Friendliness</li> <li>• Ability to help you understand Social Services rules, regulations, and policies</li> <li>• Ability to assist you in getting your basic needs met</li> <li>• Ability to ensure that your children are getting their basic needs met</li> <li>• Presenting your options to you</li> <li>• Providing you with a Social Services policy document</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Was the Social Services staff person you deal/dealt with helpful?</li> </ul>
	<p>Possible coercion/isolation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What was your level of comfort when utilizing the Call Centre and the options given to you?</li> <li>• What choices did you feel you had? Can you give an example?</li> <li>• What other kinds of supports did you have? (if any)</li> </ul>
	<p>Opportunities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can you tell me about any positive aspects of being involved in the Jobs First and other DCRE training programs?</li> </ul>

Stories/anecdotes/ experiences with labour attachment programs (LAP) or Social Services (positive and/or negative)	Barriers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can you tell me about any barriers/ problems/ issues that came about due to your involvement with Jobs First and other DCRE training programs?</li> </ul>
	Other information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Other questions related to Social Services/ LAP experiences, as directed by flow of conversation</li> </ul>
Demographics of interview sample		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is your age?</li> <li>• What is your household situation? (ie. relationships, children, extended family, etc.)</li> <li>• What is your economic status (using the Canada Census range*)?</li> <li>• Others</li> </ul>
Quality of life/well- being	Effectiveness of income security programs on well- being and quality of life	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do you think that the labour assistance program that you were involved with helped you meet your basic needs more easily?</li> <li>• Has the labour assistance program increased your well-being? What has it improved for you (using indicators of well-being)?</li> <li>• Do/did you feel better working than on welfare assistance?</li> <li>• Do you think that the labour assistance program was beneficial to you and your family? How?</li> <li>• Were the services that you received from Social Services positive and reaffirming? Or did they have a negative impact on you, your family, and your experience applying for assistance?</li> </ul>
	Preference for work (not necessarily paid—childcare, household work, volunteer work are all acceptable; ex- plain this to participant)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What kind of work do you want to do?</li> </ul>
	Reason(s) for wanting to work/find work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What do you hope to accomplish?</li> </ul>

Wrap-up	Other information	• Is there anything else that you would like to tell me about your experience in these programs, with the Department of Social Services, or about the type of work that you do/want to do, etc.?
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**\* Income Groups**

- A: Less Than \$5,000**
- B: Between \$5,000 and \$10,000**
- C: Between \$10,000 and \$15,000**
- D: Between \$15,000 and \$20,000**
- E: Between \$20,000 and \$25,000**
- F: Between \$30,000 and \$35,000**
- G: Between \$35,000 and \$40,000**
- H: Between \$40,000 and \$45,000**
- I: Between \$45,000 and \$50,000**
- J: Between \$50,000 and \$55,000**

## **Appendix B. Free and Informed Consent Release Form.**

### **Free and Informed Consent**

You are invited to participate in a study entitled "Off Welfare... What Now?" Please read this form carefully, and feel free to ask any questions you might have.

This research is being conducted by the Saskatoon Anti-Poverty Coalition, and funded by the Community-University Institute for Social Research (CUISR). It is not in any way being funded, directed, or monitored by any government agency.

The Researcher's name is **Carmen Dyck**. Her capacity in this research can be verified by Linda Bell, Communities for Children, and the Anti-Poverty Coalition, at 956-6107. Carmen's academic credentials can be established by telephoning Dr. James Bayer, Dean, Royal Roads University, at 250-391-2568.

This research is being done to determine if the new Saskatchewan Employment programs are indeed being effective in reducing poverty in Saskatchewan. Individuals who are on these employment programs are being asked questions in an interview to see if these programs are helpful for them. An interview will take up a maximum of two hours each.

The research will be made up of a number of questions in individual interviews. The questions will be about the change in quality of life for people who were on Social Assistance and now a part of the Labour Force Attachment Program.

Answers to the questions will be recorded and transcribed into reports. Where appropriate, the information will be summarized, in anonymous format, in the final report. At no time will any specific comments be attributed to any individual unless specific agreement has been obtained beforehand. This means that no one will be able to know the identity of anyone who has participated in this research.

The final report will be the property of the Saskatoon Anti-Poverty Coalition and CUISR. It will be publicly accessible. A copy will be made available to each research participant.

Prospective research subjects are not compelled to take part in this research project. If an individual does elect to take part, he or she is free to withdraw at any time with no prejudice and will have no negative consequences. Similarly, if individuals elect not to take part in this research project, this information will also be maintained in confidence. If you decide to withdraw from the research project, any data that has been collected relevant to you will be destroyed.

The Saskatoon Anti-Poverty Coalition and CUISR have no direct communication with Social Assistance and Labour Force Attachment decision-making personnel and so participation in this research will not affect the participants' status in these programs.

If you have any questions concerning the study, please feel free to ask at any point. You are also free to contact the researcher at the number provided above if you have questions at a later date. This study has been approved on ethical grounds by the University of Saskatchewan Behavioural Sciences Research Ethics Board on August 4, 2004.

This letter is an agreement between Carmen Dyck and \_\_\_\_\_, to take part in this research project, and gives free and informed consent to participate in this project.

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Signature

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Date

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Witness

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Date

**Appendix C. Transcript Release Form.**

**Off Welfare... What Now?  
Transcript Release Form**

I, \_\_\_\_\_, have reviewed the complete transcript of my personal interview in this study, and have been provided with the opportunity to add alter and delete information from the transcript as appropriate. I acknowledge that the transcript accurately reflects what I said in my personal interview with Carmen Dyck, researcher. I hereby authorize the release of this transcript to Carmen Dyck, to be used in the manner described in the consent form. I have received a copy of this Data / Transcript release form for my own records.

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Participant

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Date

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Researcher

---

Date



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289 John Mitchell Building  
118 Science Place  
Saskatoon SK S7N 5E2 Canada  
Phone: 306-966-2121  
Facsimile: 306-966-2122  
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