

**DATA ARCHIVE AND ONLINE TOOLS TO EVALUATE WELFARE REFORM
PHASE I**

The 1996 Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act overhauled the U.S. welfare system by eliminating the Aid to Families with Dependent Children program. In its place, the act created the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program, which stresses self-sufficiency, work, family, and temporary nature of welfare receipt, offering no legal entitlements to government assistance. This major shift in policy has been accompanied by a strong interest in evaluating the consequences of welfare reform. Our broad objectives were to facilitate access to welfare reform evaluation data and to provide documentation and online research resources for use with the data that promoted welfare policy research among a broader pool of scholars and allow researchers to (1) evaluate the extent to which welfare reform has achieved its intended goals and (2) evaluate the consequences of welfare reform for children's health and well-being.

The specific aims of the proposed Phase I project were to test the feasibility of developing three research resources: (1) The Welfare Reform Evaluation Data Archive will consist of a collection of high-quality welfare evaluation studies. The archive includes studies that are not currently available for public use as well as those studies in the public domain that may not have received widespread use among the research community. Datasets will be achieved according to standardized procedures and conventions that Sociometrics has utilized over the past 20 years. (2) The Online Search Assistant for Welfare Evaluation Studies, an online search tool, is intended to help archive users manage the diversity of evaluation studies and to locate studies in the archive that meet their research or analysis requirements. During Phase I, we developed the search framework for the Online Search Assistant, created the web prototype, and conducted usability test of the prototype. (3) Online Documents to Facilitate Secondary Data Analysis (including online summaries of findings of evaluation studies and online charts and tables of caseload trends over time) facilitated and informed secondary analysis of the evaluation data in the archive. During Phase I, we collected relevant information from research reports and published administrative data, compiled it into concise and standard formats, created prototypes of the online documents and their web interfaces, and conducted usability test of the prototypes.

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6100 Executive Blvd, Suite 7A07
MSC 7510
Bethesda, MD 20892-7510
(310) 402-0915

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Staff: T. Wells, T. Kuhn, R. Ruiz, D. Hill