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ABSTRACT

The impact of population density on the likelihood of Aid to Dependent Children (ADC) clients becoming economically self-sufficient was examined through a study of 2,647 ADC recipients referred to a total of 8 comprehensive vocational assessment centers (CVACs) for ADC clients that were established in Ohio in 1992. Of the CVACs, two were from each of the following county types: super metro, metro, rural, and Appalachian. Overall, 58.8% of the individuals referred to CVACs showed up. The show-up rate was highest for the Appalachian counties (93.2%) and lowest for the super metro countries (39.0%). A random 8% (n=203) sample that was stratified by country type (based on population density) was drawn from each county in proportion to the number of clients who completed the CVA process. Information was collected regarding their education/work status and performance during the CVA process. Compared with their counterparts in rural and Appalachian counties, the CVA recipients from super metro and metro counties had higher reading and math grade equivalent scores and were more likely to be in education/work. The counties with midrange population density appeared to offer the best environment for increasing the economic self-sufficiency of ADC clients. (Contains 10 references.) (MN)

The Impact of Population Density on the Likelihood of Aid to Dependent Children (ADC) Clients Becoming Economically Self- Sufficient

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The Family Support Act (P.L. 100-485) of 1988 provides the genesis for welfare reform as it is being implemented through the Job Opportunity and Basic Skills (JOBS) training program in Ohio. The Family Support Act (FSA) assumes that full self-sufficiency and family responsibility are necessary and achievable goals. The Statue further recognizes, according to the rules and regulations, the mutual obligations of parents who are currently dependent, to work toward self-sufficiency through private employment, and of the government to support that effort.

In Ohio, the primary purpose of the JOBS program is to expand employment opportunities for recipients of Aid to Dependent Children (ADC) and Food Stamp benefits (FS) through training, education, and work experience. JOBS provides extended benefits to all ADC clients who leave the work arena because of un-subsidized employment

This seminar presentation is based on an evaluation of the impact of 8 pilot comprehensive vocational assessment (CVA) centers for ADC clients, established in Ohio during calendar year 1992. The CVA centers operated from April 1 to

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December 31 during 1992, and they continue in operation today. The primary purpose of this study was to describe the program occurring at these centers, highlight strengths for duplication at other locations, and suggest revisions in the program. In the process, several factors emerged to influence the likelihood of ADC clients becoming economically self-sufficient. Population density appears to be one of these factors.

The primary data source for this study was ADC clients referred to the CVA centers. Of the 2647 clients referred from April 1, 1992 to December 31, 1992, over half, 1557 (58.8 %), showed up. The show up rate was highest for the Appalachian counties, 93.2 percent, and lowest for the super metro counties, 39.0 percent as indicated in Table 1. Once the ADC clients attended a session they tended to complete. The super metro counties had a 95.3 percent completion rate compared to a 85.9 completion rate for the Metro counties. No data were available from one of the rural counties because record keeping forms were being developed during this pilot phase, and it was not possible to reconstruct completion data for the early months of one site. The gender of the clients completing the CVA process was predominantly female, ranging from 70 percent in the Appalachian and rural counties to 92 percent in the super metro counties. Program completers tended to be in the 25-32 age range for all county types except for the rural counties. The mode for them tended to be in the 33-40 range.

Table 1

Percent of clients who showed up, and who completed the assessment by county type.

N = 1557

County Type	Clients Referred n	Number Who Showed Up %	Number Who Completed[a] %
Super Metro	1,199	39.0	95.3
Metro	634	79.3	85.9
Rural	475	69.3	____[b]
Appalachian	339	93.2	93.3

[a]The percentage is based on the number who showed up for the evaluation the first day.

[b]Data not useable.

A random sample, stratified by county type, based on population density, was drawn from each county in proportion to the number of clients who completed the vocational assessment. This 8 percent sample of program completers (N=203) was used to evaluate the impact of the CVA centers. The centers were located in Adult Vocational Full-Service Centers associated with joint vocational schools.

Records were accessed by traveling to the 8 centers and reviewing the Individual Career Plan (ICP) of each client in the sample. In addition, interviews were held with clients and with the JOBS workers in the respective County Departments of Human Services between February 1, 1993 and June 30, 1993. At that time, records of clients were examined to determine their education/work status. Some of the client assessments had occurred in April of 1992, so some clients had nearly a year to enroll in education classes or training based on recommendations in the ICP.

The need to collect information from multiple sources prompted the use of different types of data collection instruments: (1) a records form was developed to transfer information from the clients' files--particularly the Individual Career Plan (ICP)--to project data files, and (2) interview forms were developed for the key actors in the assessment/career planning process. Interview forms were developed for the client, the vocational evaluator/counselor, and the JOBS worker.

The eight pilot centers are located throughout Ohio, two centers are located in each of the four types of counties: super metro, metro, rural, and Appalachian. These categories tend to order the counties from the most to the least in population density. These categories emerged as an important variable.

Table 2 shows the reading and math grade equivalent scores by type of county. Note the low reading and math scores for rural and Appalachian counties. In fact, 11 students enrolled in 2-year colleges had an average math grade equivalent of 6.37. Math and reading scores were significantly correlated, $r=-.48$ for math and $r=-.30$ for reading, with county type at the .01 level of significance.

One can only speculate on the reason why county type proved to be so important. Perhaps conditions at the sites were so different and so complex as to defy an examination of intra-relationships between agencies within a county, but the differences between counties were readily explained due to employment opportunities, migration patterns, life styles, etc.?

Important differences existed among the counties in the availability of educational providers. As expected, the more urban the county, the more numerous and diverse the educational providers. The reader should be careful not to equate more educational providers with better educational providers. As the data will show, a very limited number of clients went on to four-year institutions, so it is probably more important for access to two-year colleges and technical

Table 2

Reading and math grade equivalent scores by type of county

N = 203[a]

County Type	n	Reading		Math	
		$\bar{X}$	S.D.	$\bar{X}$	S.D.
Super Metro	55	10.2	3.21	7.90	2.90
Metro	52	10.98	2.78	8.80	2.37
Rural	49	7.82	3.75	5.82	3.0
Appalachian	41	7.67	4.25	4.43	1.29

[a]Missing data = 26

schools to be present than access to four-year institutions except in a few cases. Even when joint vocational schools (JVS) were present within the county, their location may inhibit easy access. In one case, a client would have to change buses twice and walk almost one-fourth of a mile to attend classes at the JVS.

Training status, or educational and training (E&T) placement and education/work status were positively related to county type. The less densely populated counties tended to place students in more upper level E&T situations. When holding a job was added to the above relationship, the significance held although the level of significance dropped from .01 to .05. See Table 3. Education and work status was positively related at the .01 level to number of months of elapsed time since the CVA took place.

The following conclusions were drawn from this study: (1) ADC individuals in rural and Appalachian counties have lower academic achievement in reading and mathematics than ADC clients in metro and super-metro counties; (2) the process of assigning and facilitating enrollment of individuals in educational classes needs to be improved; (3) counties with mid-range population density appear to offer the best environment for increasing the economic self-sufficiency of ADC clients; (4) education and work status of clients was positively related to the number of months of elapsed time since the assessment took place.

Table 3

Proportion of clients in education/work by type of county.

N = 203[a]

County Type	n	Education/Work Status			
		Pending	GED/ABLE Classes	Other Classes	Working
Super Metro	55	78.2	9.1	10.9	1.8
Metro	52	51.9	9.6	23.1	15.4
Rural	49	55.1	16.3	8.2	20.4
Appalachian	41	48.8	17.1	29.3	4.9

[a]Missing data = 6

The following recommendations are offered: (1) attention should be given to the literacy and math needs of ADC clients in rural and Appalachian counties prior to recommending educational classes; (2) the frequency and quality of communication between personnel at the Comprehensive Vocational Assessment centers and the County Departments of Human Services need to be increased in some cases; (3) adult education courses need to be staggered to start periodically throughout the year to better serve the needs of ADC clients; and (4) legislators need to increase funding for adult vocational education.

In summary, it seems to be clear that successful transition from ADC client status to un-subsidized employment depends on many factors. Some of them are the following: (1) communication within and between agencies, (2) availability of education providers, (3) the desire of the client to succeed, (4) family support, and (5) availability of transportation and child care.

The impact of population density on the likelihood of Aid to Dependent Children (ADC) clients becoming economically self-sufficient

The purpose of this study was to follow-up Aid-to-Dependent-Children (ADC) clients who had received comprehensive vocational assessment/evaluation to determine (1) if they had enrolled in education and training programs, (2) if they had obtained employment, or (3) if they were continuing on community work experience programs. Two hundred and three records were examined and 59 clients were interviewed at 8 locations in a midwestern state between February 1, 1993 and June 30, 1993.

Data were analyzed by type of county where the assessment center was located and by other variables, such as, the elapsed time since the assessment was completed, career plans, and last grade completed. Findings indicated that the type of county, size and location, was strongly associated with enrollment of clients in education and training programs, and elapsed time was strongly associated with the ability of clients to find employment.

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