

***A NATIONAL SURVEY OF AMERICAN ATTITUDES TOWARDS
LOW-WAGE WORKERS AND WELFARE REFORM***

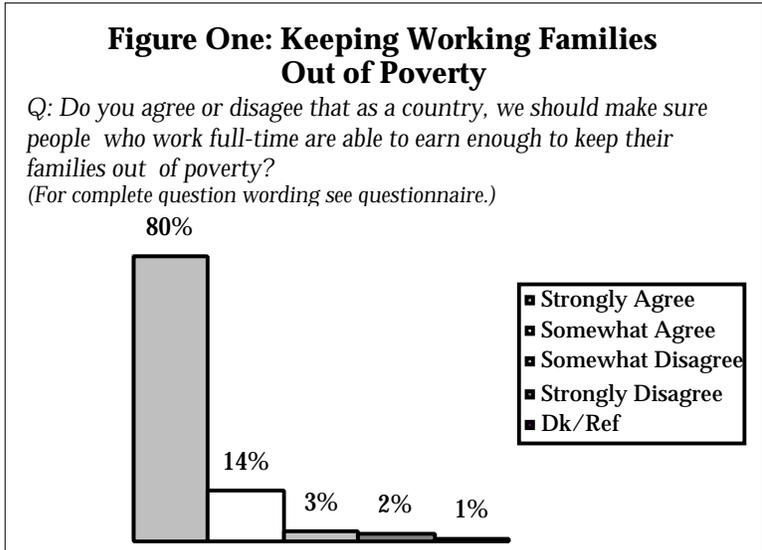
SURVEY SUMMARY

These are the results of a national telephone survey of 1,001 Americans age 18 and older conducted April 27-30, 2000. Lake Snell Perry & Associates conducted this survey for Jobs for the Future, a Boston-based employment research organization. The margin of error is plus or minus three percentage points.

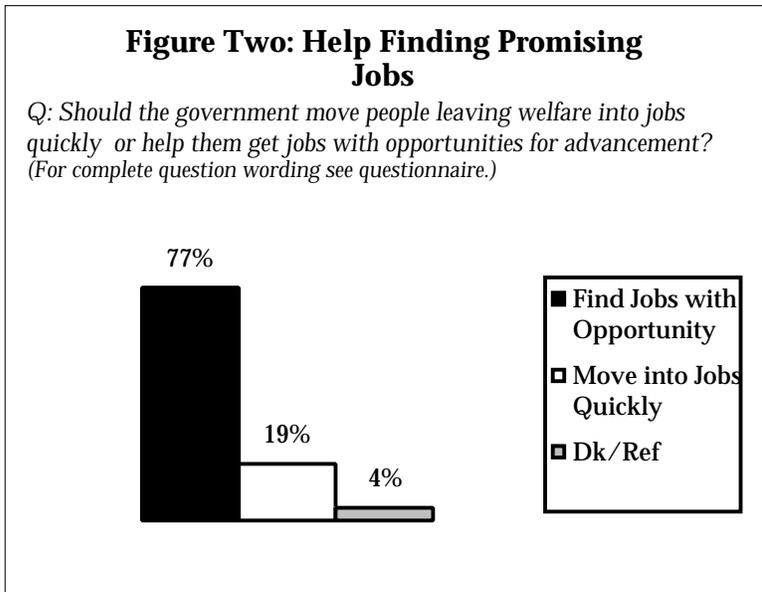
For information about the poll, contact Richard Kazis at Jobs for the Future, 617-728-4446 or Susan Kannel, Senior Analyst, Lake Snell Perry & Associates (202) 776-9066.

Americans support policies that go beyond placing welfare recipients into the first available job. In fact, there is strong support for policies that help people get, keep, and advance in good jobs that pay family-supporting wages.

- There is almost universal agreement that “as a country, we should make sure that people who work full-time should be able to earn enough to keep their families out of poverty.” Over nine in ten (94%) agree with this statement, including eight in ten (80%) who agree strongly (see Figure One). Support for this goal exists across all demographic groups.



- As Figure Two shows, three-quarters (77%) of Americans feel the government should help people moving from welfare to work to get training and find jobs that offer opportunities for advancement so that they increase their chances of building careers and remaining self-sufficient. Conversely, two in ten (19%) feel it is more important for beneficiaries to be moved into jobs as quickly as possible regardless of the jobs’ potential.

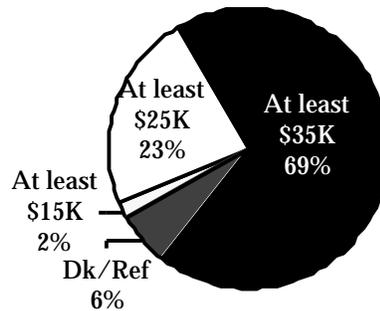


- Of those who said they considered welfare reform to be a success, over half said they would *not* consider it a success if most of those newly employed people still lived in poverty.

- Survey results suggest that most Americans believe the amount it takes to live modestly far exceeds the poverty limit. Respondents were asked how much annual income a family of four needs to “make ends meet.” As Figure Three shows, seven-in-ten majority (69%) said it takes at least \$35,000 a year – double the federal poverty limit for a household of this size (roughly \$16,000 to 17,000).

Figure Three: Income Needed to Make Ends Meet

Q: How much income would you say a family of four needs to earn in a year in order to make ends meet?
(For complete question wording see questionnaire.)



Americans see a role for the government and other institutions in helping lower-income workers to succeed.

- Americans believe that the quality of the American workforce depends not just on individual workers themselves but also on the government and on other institutions. As Table One shows, this responsibility is shared among the public education system and individual job seekers, as well as federal and state governments, and employers.

Table One: Responsibility for the Competitiveness of the American Workforce	At Least Some Responsibility			Little or No Responsibility
	Total	A lot	Some	
The Public Education System	92	60	32	6
Individual Job Seekers	88	58	30	7
State Governments	83	39	44	15
The Federal Government	79	38	41	19
Employers	83	36	47	14

Many Americans believe the government should continue to help people with things like childcare and job training, even after they have entered the workforce. Seven in ten feel the government should provide continued support. A quarter disagree, feeling the government role should end once a person is employed – from that point on success is up to the individual.

Figure Four: Continuing Assistance for Success

Q: Should the government continue to help with things like childcare or should help stop once a person has a job?
(For complete question wording see questionnaire.)



Americans support measures to help people find and keep good jobs, even if it means increased government spending.

- Survey respondents were asked about their support for a number of different measures aimed at helping lower-income Americans find and keep good jobs. As Table Three shows, majorities support all four proposed measures, and *strongly* support three of the four. The one idea that does not garner this level of strong majority support, offering tax cuts to businesses who hire people leaving welfare, is nevertheless supported by fully three-quarters of those surveyed.

Table Two: Majorities Support Assistance Measures	Support			Oppose
	Total	Strongly	Somewhat	
Helping to pay for education and job training for people leaving welfare	90	53	37	9
Giving tax cuts to people who work but do not earn enough to keep their families out of poverty	86	55	31	13
Offering tax cuts to businesses that hire people leaving welfare	77	34	43	21

- Those in favor of these measures were asked whether they would still support them if it meant an increase in government spending. The large majority – between 80 and 90 percent – say they would remain committed to these actions regardless of increased spending. As Figure Five demonstrates, when these two data points are considered together, we see that the majority of Americans support these measures regardless of potential budgetary implications. When the subject of spending increases is introduced, support does decline but only very slightly. Once again, majorities or three-quarters or more support three of the four measures despite budgetary implications. Support for tax cuts to businesses that hire people leaving the welfare rolls is slightly weaker, but is still considerable.

