

A Study of Implementation: The Effect of Variables in the Alachua-  
Bradford and Dade-Monroe Counties Welfare-to-Work Programs

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## Introduction

The passage of a policy through an act or an executive order does not guarantee that it will be adequately implemented to achieve its goals and objectives. There are many stages within the policy process that can alter or even kill a policy. One of these stages is implementation, the process of putting in motion the legislation that was passed.

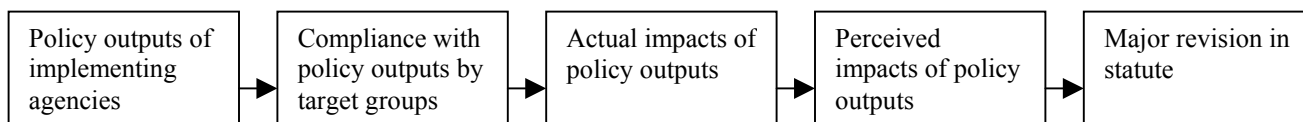
In 1996, Congress passed the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act, a piece of legislation that dramatically altered the welfare system from one of receipts of cash assistance as entitlements to one that requires work in exchange for assistance and limited the amount of that assistance to sixty months or less. As a result, all states passed their own legislation to provide for the provisions and implementation of this act. Five years after the passage of this act, eligibility has been terminated for those who relied on assistance for the 60 consecutive months after it was passed and with each month that passes, many more are cut off from the welfare rolls of cash assistance.

How has the implementation of the federal and state policies affected the success of reaching the established objectives? Are the Welfare-to-Work programs that have been established as a result of this law adequate enough to reach its objectives, given all of the actors within the system? Are the training programs, job placement, and education programs sufficient to provide for the people who rely on them to help them off the welfare rolls? Success is not an option- it is imperative that this policy be implemented to maximize its possibilities.

This purpose of this paper is to analyze the implementation phase of the policy process through a case analysis of the welfare to work programs in Alachua-Bradford and Dade-Monroe Counties. A model of implementation will be presented and discussed, followed by an analysis of this model as it relates to the stated cases, and finally, a conclusion.

## Implementation Model

Implementation is defined as value added to design. Added values can refer to how discretion has been used to change the basic blueprint of the policy, changes in the intended design, or in the policy as it operates in practice (Schneider and Ingram, 89). How a policy is implemented determines its success. Poorly-written policies that are implemented well, though difficult, can succeed, whereas well-written policies that are poorly implemented are often doomed to fail. There are many implementation models available to analyze and use in the discussion of policy. The model presented here is based on the model by Mazmanian and Sabatier, with a few minor variations. This model incorporates factors, often basic yet difficult to control, into a structured framework and attempts to analyze how they affect the implementation of policy. The dependent variables are the stages in the Implementation Process, given below.



There are many independent variables that affect all aspects of policy making. Mazmanian and Sabatier offer three subsets of variables: Those that deal with the tractability of the problem, which is determined by how well individual issues of the problem can be aggregated into a clean simple problem or case; those that deal with the ability of the written statute or policy to structure its implementation; and nonstatutory variables that affect implementation (Mazmanian and Sabatier, 22). Within these subgroups there are numerous variables that can play a role, and I will expand on those later. Welfare-to-Work policies in individual counties are unique in that they are all derived from the same Federal statute the same State statute. Variables that stem from the ability of the statute to structure implementation, such

as the statement of clear directives and objectives, the allocation of discretion granted to implementing agencies, and the opportunities for outside participation, are normally relevant to how policies are implemented. However, these variables are not relevant to this paper because they all relate to the same statute, and as a result they affect all the policies and programs in the same way across the state, so they are not included. I have chosen to focus on a few variables within the two remaining subsets, to present them in the implementation mode, and then to see how they have related to the implementation of policies in two Florida Counties.

#### Tractability of the problem

There are specific aspects of social problems that affect the ability of governmental and private institutions to achieve specified objectives through policies. Three variables that address this tractability of the problem are the percentage of the population that is represented by the group targeted by the policy, the diversity of the target group behavior, and the extent of behavioral change required of this group.

In general, the smaller the group and the easier the ability to isolate that target group whose behavior the policy is attempting to change, the more likely it is that there will be mobilization of political support in favor of the policy or program that it establishes. In the case of welfare policies, the target group, as a percentage of the population, is much smaller than the potential beneficiaries, which is the entire population (Mazmanian & Sabatier, 22). In theory, everyone will be better off with people being dependent on themselves, holding well-paying jobs, and providing for themselves. When the target group is a large percentage of the population, the theory is still held that everyone will benefit from such a policy, though it might be more difficult to effectively implement. Is Dade-Monroe affected more by this variable because of its dense population or is Alachua-Bradford, because of the lack of wealth and the scattered distribution of people?

It is also important to determine the diversity of target group behavior. In theory, the more diverse the behavior being regulated, the more difficult it is to establish clear regulations which can lead to greater discretion being given to implementing agents (Mazmanian and Sabatier, 23). While this is often viewed as negative, in the case of welfare policies, implementation may benefit from this ‘blanket’ statute. Agencies are given broad discretion to achieve the objectives, realizing that each county will have different situations. The ‘normal,’ median behavior of the target groups in Dade and Alachua may differ, as the cultures and demographics of these two counties are different. How this variable affects Miami will be interesting, as Dade-Monroe is a much more diverse county in terms of demographics, truly a ‘melting pot’ of sorts.

The extent of behavioral change required refers to how drastic this policy requires the group targeted by the policy to change their behavior. The purpose of statutes and policy is to attempt to regulate or change the behavior of someone or something, and the same can be said for welfare policies. All participants have experienced a basic behavioral change in that the new acts added work requirements to receive cash assistance when they had not been required before, but some participants will continue to experience these changes, and they may be drastic. Behavioral change can include the requirements for holding a full or part-time job, training, meeting stricter requirements, drug tests, providing or needing transportation, child care, or other assistance, that did not exist before. These changes in behavior are not optional if aid is to continue to be granted, so how does this affect the implementation? It is logical that the greater amount of behavioral change, the more problematic successful implementation will be.

#### Non-legal Variables

It has been shown that there are variables dealing with tractability as well as those that address the ability of the statute to structure implementation. While the basic framework for

policy outputs are given by the statute, which is affected by the ability to define the problem, there are also non-legal variables that influence the outputs of implementing agencies. Two of the more important variables are the socioeconomic conditions and the attitudes and resources of constituencies.

It goes without saying that socioeconomic conditions can drastically affect policy outcome. The wealth of the county, distribution of that wealth, average income, cost of living, availability of low-income housing, and room for expansion within the job market are all aspects of the socioeconomic environment within the community. Significant variation in these conditions can affect the perceived importance of the problem addressed by the statute and successful implementation can be more difficult by local variation in these conditions.

It is understood that public support for policies such as welfare programs is crucial. Somewhat cyclical in nature, public support can create difficulties for the implementation of any program requiring periodic surges of support from sovereigns, be they financial or principled. (Mazmanian and Sabatier, 32). This could not be truer than in the case of welfare policies, where constant, maintained public support of all kinds is needed in order to achieve the stated goals.

The support of the general public for the purpose and outcomes of the statute is important, but the attitudes and resources of the constituency groups and outside actors can be extremely influential in successful implementation. If the implementation is dependent upon certain resources of the constituents and/or outside actors, success can be determined by whether or not those resources will be made available, and it can also be noted that changes in the resources and attitudes can also affect the outcome once the policy has been established. This variable has been crucial in the implementation of welfare-to-work programs. Though funds and

resources are often focused upon, one cannot disregard the role of attitudes of support, for it is these attitudes that often determine whether or not resources will be made available. These resources can include financial support, support of infrastructure, or the provision of transportation and/or child care support, or contracts to hire participants. One of the greatest challenges to implementing agencies across the state is providing and securing transportation to and from jobs for the participants. In Alachua-Bradford, this may be more difficult because the counties are very rural and its people are scattered out across the counties. To what extent does the Dade-Monroe programs benefit from having an established transportation system within the county and surrounding areas?

Funds are allocated to the counties' various initiatives through different federal and state acts, but the boards that oversee these programs are not limited in their scope of activities. The state determines funds by a formula that takes into account many different factors, too numerous and complicated to list here. Each county is encouraged to develop strategies to coordinate greater participation from local employers, community partners, and other stakeholders to leverage additional resources. Does Dade-Monroe have an advantage because of its size and the numerous businesses located there? Or is that advantage cancelled out by the fact that it must deal with so many more people? Is everything proportional, population size to participants and additional resources to the number and size of companies located there? How much of a difference does that make in implementation? This factor is extremely important in dealing with statutes that address welfare, poverty, and benefits, and will be applied to the counties later.

Certain variables can have more or less affect on policy implementation, depending on the subject and scope of the statute. The new statutes regarding welfare-to-work are very different from their predecessors. The above variables may have more extreme effects in

different locations or they may not have any affect at all. To determine the effect that each of these variables can play or has played, it is necessary to look at them in the context of statutes and the policies they seek to implement.

## CASE STUDIES

### Background

Two acts were passed in October 1996, one State and one Federal, that dramatically changed welfare and work programs in the state of Florida. The Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA) passed by Congress ended the Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) entitlement program and replaced it with the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), which requires work in exchange for time-limited assistance. The State of Florida then passed the Work and Gain Economic Self-Sufficiency (WAGES) act to implement the requirements of TANF given by the PRWORA and to emphasize work, personal responsibility and self-sufficiency. The WAGES Act created a WAGES Board for 24 areas within the state that oversaw the programs created by the act, including the provision of child care, transportation, and other support services.

In October 2000, the Florida Workforce Innovation Act was passed that redefined the welfare system by replacing the WAGES program with the Welfare Transition (WT) Program, consolidating the workforce and welfare support services under one united board, Workforce Florida, Inc. (WFI), and creating the Agency for Workforce Innovation (AWI).

The Workforce Innovation Act merged the 24 existing WAGES Boards and the 24 Workforce Development Boards into 24 Regional Workforce (WF) Boards. These new boards are responsible for the delivery of workforce, welfare, and employment support services to be provided and coordinated with local One-Stop centers. It intended to develop and maintain

partnerships within the business community and to have a coordination of community partners. These One-Stop centers, also a provision of the WIA, provide universal access to core, intensive training and employment and other support services, such as child-care, transportation, and health benefits/programs, at a single customer-focused, user-friendly location that is accessible to job seekers and employers alike. The goal was to simplify the process and access to everyone by having everything needed for support services under one roof.

The Regional Workforce boards are guided by the Federal and State statutes, but are given a fair amount of discrepancy in how to achieve those objectives by tailoring and creating a program that will work in each area. Though the statutes are the same, many of the programs created by these acts differ in the programs they provide to meet the stated objectives. I have chosen to focus on two workforce boards in very different areas of the state and to see how the tractability and non-legal variables of implementation affect the programs of the Alachua-Bradford Regional Workforce Board (ABRWB) and the Dade-Monroe Regional Workforce Board. These variables and their effects will be applied to the programs of each Workforce Board individually, since many of the programs are not the same and cannot be accurately or efficiently compared to each other. These two counties are drastically different in their demographics, size, and location within the state, and it is hypothesized that their programs and the impact of the variables on these programs will be fairly different as well. Alachua and Bradford counties are considered to be North Central and Dade and Monroe are South Florida. The population of Alachua and Bradford counties represents 1.5 % of the population of Florida while Dade-Monroe represents 14.6 % of the state's population (2001 U.S. Census). Both have problems that are general to all areas, such as unemployment, but they also have some programs

that target specific problems and issues within each county, such as high teen dropout rates, refugees, and teen pregnancy.

### ALACHUA- BRADFORD

The Alachua-Bradford Regional Workforce Board is responsible for the communities and citizens within two of the more sparsely populated counties of the state. Ms. Brenda Martin works for BCN Associates, Inc., a company located in Gainesville that oversees and staffs the One-Stop Centers of this workforce board. In our interview, she was able to provide facts and insight as to how the different variables affected their programs. This board focuses its programs on youth, defined as 8<sup>th</sup> grade and above, and first-time job seekers, such as formerly incarcerated citizens and displaced homemakers. The programs address issues involving the FCAT achievement test and teen pregnancy, pregnancy prevention, and dropout rates. There are some students that will not graduate from high school because they will not pass their exit exams, which will increase the number of undereducated, unemployed job seekers. These programs include mentoring and tutoring for the FCAT as well as informing the students of other options, such as vocational and technical schools or other non-traditional education as an alternative to unemployment. Teen pregnancy is one of the largest focal points of the ABWFB programs. Three years ago, Bradford Co. had the highest population of teen pregnancies in the state. The partnerships within the community have been strategically created to help with the resource funding and implementation of these programs and as a result Bradford has dropped to the third-highest rate in the state for 2000.

### Tractability Variables

It is difficult to pinpoint the number of youth in these two counties targeted by the programs as the age of ten is a little young for some of these programs and nineteen includes some of college freshman that are not in contact with the provided programs through high

schools and other outlets. In Alachua and Bradford Counties, the percentages of youth, defined as between the ages of 10-19, as a percentage of the county population are 16.2 % and 13.2%, respectively. Ms. Martin believes that the diversity of the target group behavior does not have a large impact in these counties, as she feels that those targeted are fairly homogeneous within the larger group. She said that the extent of the behavioral change required varies depending on whether or not the individual is involved in programs that address both main issues. Changes required by the education of individuals on study skills for testing and other educational alternatives can require small or large changes, depending on the academic position and attitude of the student, whereas change required by the education of sexual activity, teen pregnancy, methods of prevention, alternatives to abortion, etc., can vary depending on the sex of the individual, male or female, and previous history. Ms. Martin said that though there is no statistical data on specific change, of all the variables relating to tractability of the problem, change required of target group has the most affect on the implementation programs in Alachua and Bradford Counties.

#### Non-Legal Variables

The socioeconomic environment of Alachua/Bradford counties and the attitudes and resources of the community have definite impacts on the programs of the ABRWB.

Approximately 25 % of the region's population lives at or below poverty level, and altogether 40% of the population of the region can be defined as 'working poor' individuals and families, many of whom do not receive any cash assistance. A large percentage of their income, around 50%, goes towards housing costs in comparison to the national average of 30%. The per capita income of Alachua Co. in 1999 was \$25,648, as compared to the state average, \$27,781. Ms. Martin sees the impact these conditions have on the ABWFB programs, 'It would be impossible to adequately challenge the housing situation, teen pregnancy, and unemployment issues

together, given our existing resources. It is our hope that our current programs of education and employment opportunities will alleviate some of the issues and problems of low-income housing” (Martin, interview). The WF board has created job opportunities within the market. There are job openings and postings within the workforce program. In October 2001, there were 135 openings and 190 people applied for those openings.

Martin is extremely proud of the success that the Board has had in partnering with the communities. There is a great deal of support from community members, the city of Gainesville, and city commissions, and others. Santa Fe Community College has the largest contract with the board to provide the work initiative for high school students, utilizing \$1.2 million of the \$5 million budget. The teen pregnancy prevention initiative includes Planned Parenthood and other groups within the community that deal with this issue. “The resources and support that we have received from businesses and other non-profits has been outstanding.” Martin spoke of the ‘memorandums of understanding’ that the ABWFB has with both required and solicited partners, including SFCC, UF, the Corner Drug Store, and Front Porch Florida, just to name a few. This allows the Board to pay for rent, supplies, staff salaries, etc., and for the partners to serve the community in various aspects from the One-Stop Centers. For example, computer companies work with those in low-income housing to provide access to computers and network services for students who need them, but do not own personal computers. These computers provide practice for assessment tests, training for vo-tech classes, basic programs, and connections to the Internet. Martin feels that the successes of the programs thus far can be directly attributed to the incredible and continuous support of the communities and the resources that they provide. The ABRWB continue to work on partnerships that target the transportation issue. With the exception of the city of Gainesville, the population of Alachua and Bradford counties are scattered and dispersed

throughout the counties, and the lack of a transportation structure makes it more difficult to provide those services to the participants. According to Ms. Martin, the Regional Transit Service and others continue to work with ABRWB to determine how to more effectively and efficiently transport the participants to and from their jobs and the One-Stop Centers in an accessible and economic manner.

#### DADE-MONROE

The Dade & Monroe County Jobs and Education Partnership (Miami-Dade and Monroe JEP) is the regional workforce board that is responsible for the communities and citizens Dade and Monroe counties, including the city of Miami and its surrounding areas. Like its counterpart in Alachua-Bradford, the JEP creates and maintains the programs of the One-Stop Centers located throughout the area as one of its eight major programs. I was able to speak with Ms. Harriet Spivak, the staff director of the JEP Regional Board, and we discussed the same tractability variables and non-legal variables and their effects on the programs created and managed by the boards. There are eight major funding streams for the JEP programs and this funding is dispersed among the eight programs that focus and target different issues. These programs target youth and adults and focus on disabled workers, unemployed adults, welfare transition participants needing food stamps and other resources, youth at risk of dropping out of school, youth that are neither in school nor working, and refugees. Spivak said that the programs are results of specific funding resources and are in response to the major problems of the community, “If we had one or two major funding streams, we may be able to narrow our focus to a couple of issues, but the fact is that we are responsible for addressing concerns within the community and these concerns are different and equally important. Various funding sources allow us the funds, but target how they are to be used.”

### Tractability Variables

As a general statement, Spivak said that the variables of tractability affect the implementation of the programs of the JEP Board, but whether that affect is positive or negative can depend. “When looking at these variables in terms of target groups, it is difficult to categorize the target groups together as if they were one, because they are not.” The eight major programs target individuals with distinct characteristics, such as youth in poverty, unemployed adults, and disabled workers, but there is a possibility for crossover.. Spivak could not provide any data regarding the target groups as a percentage of the population because these programs are fairly new and do not have hard data. Even though the groups have specific characteristics, it is difficult to generalize where they are in the population- not all youth live in poverty, not all poor are youth, not all disabled workers are unemployed, and not all refugees within the counties are participants of the refugee program. Due to the diversity of the population and the programs that serve them, there is a great deal of diversity in the behavior of the groups targeted, but within each individual program, most behavior is homogeneous which is considered to be an asset, according to Spivak. This facilitates the implementation of individual programs and policies, but to the JEP overall, this diversity can be challenging. The extent of the behavioral change required varies for each specific program and depends on the position of the individual within the program. Some require minor changes by the participants, while other changes are significant. “We do not have cookie-cutter participants and thereby we do not have cookie-cutter programs to assist them in the same way.“ Spivak did comment that the most influential tractability variable to implementation was the variable of change in required behavior of the participants, and that the difference extents of that change could be partially attributed to the socioeconomic conditions. “If the poor have never worked to get assistance, working for that

same assistance is a significant change, whereas helping a disabled worker or newly unemployed worker find a new position is a minor change, because both of them have previously worked.”

#### Non-Legal Variables

The socioeconomic conditions of Dade and Monroe counties are slightly different from those of Alachua-Bradford, but they affect the implementation of policies, nonetheless. The per capita income of Dade County for 1999 was \$24,733, almost 4 % less than that of Alachua, and about 11% less than the average for the state. While the unemployment rate in Alachua exists (approximately 2%), it is much more of an issue to the Dade-Monroe JEP, where the unemployment rate hovers at 6% (2001 U.S. Census).

The sheer size of the counties and the number of companies located there is an asset to the JEP board and its programs, but it must be accounted for that these programs service a population ten times larger than Alachua-Bradford. There is more support, but more people must be served, shown by the fact that One-Stop Centers service over 250,000 people alone each year. Under the JEP Board, there is another board composed of individuals from partner agencies and state and local governments, and together, the boards present themselves to the communities as South Florida Workforce. The partner agencies of JEP and the current programs include Miami-Dade Community College, Florida Keys Community College, Dade County Public Schools, Monroe County Public Schools, Florida Agencies for Families and Children, as well as others. Many non-profits such as Job Corps, United Way, YMCA, and others also work with the JEP and many companies and businesses provide resources or job opportunities to the program. Spivak states that the amount of support and resources provided by the community and constituents is incredible, but that it takes a lot of work to keep everything working in sync. “We [Dade-Monroe JEP] definitely benefit from our location in a large, economic community, but attempting to ensure open and correct communication between all partners can be a challenge.

Having an established infrastructure among all agencies has definitely worked to our advantage.” An example of this advantage would be transportation within the counties. The population of Dade and Monroe counties is not as scattered as in Alachua-Bradford and is grouped around the communities of Miami, Miami Beach, and Hialeah. This area has in place an established transportation infrastructure, be they roads, buses, or Tri-rail that facilitates the provision of transportation services to the participants of the program. If such a system did not exist, Ms. Spivak feels that the board would spend resources it currently uses on other programs on transportation. The system is not perfect and could be expanded but, “It is better than starting with nothing.” There are job opportunities that are being created and filled by these programs. For example, in October 2001, the One-Stop Centers in Dade-Monroe had 2,642 openings and 9,009 applicants. The non-legal variables do play a significant role in the implementation of the programs- some aid in the implementation and others can be a hinderance. The public support and resources has continued to grow in spite of the fluctuating economy, which can lead to dramatic changes of socioeconomic conditions within the area. Though difficult to determine the exact effect of these variables, Spivak said that, overall, the JEP board benefits from its place within the large community and is fortunate to have such support, even though that requires providing services to many more people.

### Conclusion

This paper has shown that there are variables of tractability and non-legal variables within the model of implementation that directly affect the efficiency and success of programs created to reach specific objectives or goals. Some variables play a larger role in affecting that implementation and then others do not. There were questions that I set out to answer that I found no answer to, though it was not for lack of trying. I attempted to examine variables that I thought

could be observed in the analyzing two very different areas. I selected Dade and Monroe counties and Alachua and Bradford counties, hoping that the dynamic differences between the two areas would lead to differences in the effect of the variables on implementation.

Size does make a difference in the effect of variables on the implementation of welfare programs. Each WF board has its own advantages and disadvantages that relate to its size. A larger county in terms of population and support can make it easier to fund programs, but such diversity can also make the establishment of those programs more difficult. Dade-Monroe has more funding and more resources to utilize, but they must service ten times the amount of people that Alachua and Bradford service. They benefit from having an established transportation system and the expanded resources of the two counties, but there are also drawbacks to being so large. Dade-Monroe is diverse in terms of cultures and populations and it is difficult to isolate the target groups of some programs. The people and participants of the programs are extremely diverse, which leads to an extreme degree of diversity among the behaviors of the targeted groups. There are more openings in the job market as provided by the One-Stop Centers due to the size of the community, but there are many more people vying for those limited positions. In October 2001, for Dade-Monroe One-Stop centers there were nearly 3.4 applicants for each job opening. In comparison, the ratio in Alachua-Bradford for that month was only 1.40 applicants per opening. There were fewer openings due to the size of the counties, but there were also less applicants competing for the available jobs. There are advantages and drawbacks for Alachua-Bradford, too. Programs are run on a much smaller scale due to the smaller size of the counties, but they are not necessarily less effective. The communication between the partners, community and the Board is easier to conduct and maintain. There is little diversity among the target groups of Alachua-Bradford, and having a smaller population and more limited resources, the ABWFB

can isolate their target groups and the change required of their behavior more easily. They can have programs that are more specific to the needs of the community and less of them. They can focus on two major problems and tailor their programs to those issues and can more clearly see the effect of the programs on those problems. Alachua-Bradford is negatively affected by the scattered distribution of the population and lack of extensive transportation. It is extremely costly to maintain such a system and the cost-benefit to the overall community may not be worth the investment of the ABWFB.

It is difficult to analyze the effect of these variables on successful implementation within these counties, because there is little concrete data on the programs. These programs are new and constantly evolving- it will be a few more years before hard data is available. These variables can still be observed, as the people who work for the workforce boards observe them daily, and their effects can be felt in day-to-day successes and failures of the programs.

It is too early to determine whether or not the programs established as a result of the new laws are adequate enough to reach the stated objectives. Whether or not the programs and services provided are efficient and effective will be determined a few years down the road, when one can compare current programs and participants to those who preceded and followed them. As was stated before, the system established by these acts must succeed.

The extent of that success has yet to be decided upon, but progress is being made. Since the new programs have been established state-wide, the welfare rolls of the state of Florida have decreased by over 50 % (Gordon, 1). Florida is managing to remove them from the rolls of assistance, but it must be determined whether they continue to support them through other programs and the extent of that support. Are they off the rolls and on their own, or are they dependent on the many other forms of public assistance that the state and counties provide?

This paper set out to determine how variables of tractability and non-legal variables affected the implementation of welfare-to-work policies. Size was undoubtedly be a factor to both types of variables, but I was surprised to see how it hindered and aided the implementation at the same time. The State and Federal government have done well in providing workforce boards with statues containing specific guidelines and the necessary amount of discretion to implement them effectively. Each county and workforce board attempts to maximize the possibilities of positive outcomes given their resources and issues, and only time will tell how much the factors of implementation have truly affected their ability to implement successful programs.

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