



*The Family Development Program (FDP), New Jersey's **Income Security and Job-Oriented Welfare Reform** program, was signed into law in January 1992 by Governor Jim Florio. This program aims to break the cycle of poverty, by encouraging family stability while instilling a sense of individual responsibility and dignity to all participants.*

FDP replaces welfare grant dependency with job-training, education, social support and a reinforcement of the importance of the family in decision making.

New Jersey's efforts reflect some fresh thinking and new common-sense approaches to address welfare dependency. The current system increasingly traps generations of families in poverty, offering parents and their children little hope for the future.

When did the Family Development Program (FDP), New Jersey's Income Security and Job-Oriented Welfare Reform program, begin?

The Family Development Program began on October 1, 1992 for AFDC recipients in Essex, Hudson and Camden counties. The program will be phased into the remaining 18 counties over a two-year period, starting July 1, 1993.

What does FDP do?

EDUCATION AND JOB TRAINING

- requires AFDC participants with children two years of age or older to participate in training and education.
- requires a participant whose youngest child is less than two years of age to participate in counseling and vocational assessment.
- requires all participants to be involved in the development of a family plan, which includes a signed agreement, to outline each family member's educational and job goals.
- enables each family member to earn a high school diploma, or equivalency, if they are old enough, before that person is assigned to a vocational related activity. Under certain conditions, some recipients are exempt from this requirement.
- sets up a program that will assist in providing tuition and related financial aid, as needed, to each participant or family member accepted into college or a vocational training program. This program will be provided within the limits of funds available through the New Jersey Educational Opportunity Fund, or other scholarship or grant funds available.
- provides Individual Family Development Counseling and other social service supports.

FAMILY BASED SERVICES

- develops family plans that address the needs of the entire family in relation to that family's attainment of self-sufficiency. FDP recognizes that a two generational approach must be used to begin to break the cycle of poverty and dependency. Additional state resources of \$2.5 million were provided in SFY 1993 to broaden the scope of the program in serving families, i.e. developing family resource centers, family case management and expanded educational opportunities.

EXTENDS AND EQUALIZES BENEFITS

- provides for two years of extended Medicaid benefits to qualified participants who have attained employment.

ELIMINATES MARRIAGE PENALTY

- ends the existing 30 percent penalty for some married couples. Previously, some married couples receiving AFDC were subject to a 30 percent penalty on monthly benefits. This took effect statewide October 1, 1992.

MARRIAGE AND BENEFITS

- allows benefits to a child of an AFDC participant after the participant marries a person who is not the natural parent of the child. When implemented this change will take place statewide.

WORKING AND COLLECTING BENEFITS

- allows participants who have an additional child to keep a higher percentage of their EARNED INCOME without losing benefits. On October 1, 1992, the state notified mothers on welfare that if they have children while on welfare, they will not receive additional financial benefits for that child. The family would be eligible for additional food stamps and Medicaid for any newborn child. Although a mother would be denied those additional AFDC financial benefits, she could, under the Family Development Program, work and earn up to 50 percent of her welfare grant without a loss of benefits. This change took effect statewide.

SETS PENALTIES FOR NON-COMPLIANCE WITH THE PROGRAM

- requires a reduction in AFDC benefits for not following the rules of the program. This reduction will be at least 20 percent of the current grant or ineligibility for the individual for at least 90 days.

ESTABLISHES A HOTLINE

- sets up a 24-hour hotline to provide New Jersey residents with information on job-training services, child care, health care, and other human services.

CREATES PARTNERSHIPS

- establishes a community restoration council, within the Department of Community Affairs, to advise the Governor on the priority of resource allocation with the intent of improving and expanding economic development and neighborhood revitalization. This will lead to the creation of jobs and entrepreneurial opportunities.

INTERDEPARTMENTAL COOPERATION

- emphasizes cooperation between state departments to collaboratively meet the needs of the participants and families. FDP also establishes a Community Restoration Council to advise the Governor on allocating resources to improve economic development and community restoration.

Currently, the Department of Human Services is working closely with the Departments of Education and Labor. These departments have established agreements to match their resources with federal JOBS funds to expand services to participants. The Department of Human Services is also developing relationships with the departments of Health, Higher Education and Community Affairs to ensure that FDP participants and their families get the maximum amount of resources that are available.

Efforts with other State Departments include maximizing resources by using the state funds of these departments as match for the federal JOBS funding.

PROVIDES INTENSIVE CASE MANAGEMENT SERVICES

- provides case management services for the entire family to ensure that family members have access to the services they need when and how they need them. Through a Family Resource Center, services are co-located to the maximum extent possible within the communities they serve. Family Resource Centers provide services with an awareness of cultural and linguistic diversities. In addition, a hotline is being established to ease the access to services needed by New Jersey's families.

FOCUS ON YOUNG FATHERS AND MOTHERS

- stresses the responsibilities of unemployed, noncustodial fathers of children receiving public assistance. Through a national project being managed by Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation(MDRC), named *Operation Fatherhood* in New Jersey, young fathers are being encouraged to provide adequate financial support for their children and to participate in the parenting process.
- Programs for adolescent mothers are also encouraged to enable them to continue their education, provide quality child care for their children, and become self sufficient.

The New Jersey Family Development Program stresses total family values, education, job development and private sector jobs for participants. The program provides counseling, vocational assessment, remedial education, English-as-a-Second Language, employment skills, on-the-job training, and support services as available.

As part of a Federal Evaluation process, control groups will be established in 10 counties.

State of New Jersey
Jim Florio, Governor

Department of Human Services
Division of Family Development