



Highlights of [GAO-03-210](#), a report to the Ranking Minority Member, Subcommittee on Human Resources, Committee on Ways and Means, House of Representatives and another representative

Why GAO Did This Study

Debates surrounding the reauthorization of welfare reform legislation have involved some discussion regarding outcomes for TANF recipients with physical or mental impairments. To inform this discussion, GAO was asked to report on (1) whether recipients with impairments were as likely to exit TANF as their counterparts without impairments and (2) the sources of income reported by leavers with and without impairments. To obtain this information, GAO analyzed self-reported data for the most recent years available from the Census Bureau's Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP) — a national survey of households that includes questions about TANF status and functional impairments.

WELFARE REFORM

Former TANF Recipients with Impairments Less Likely to Be Employed and More Likely to Receive Federal Supports

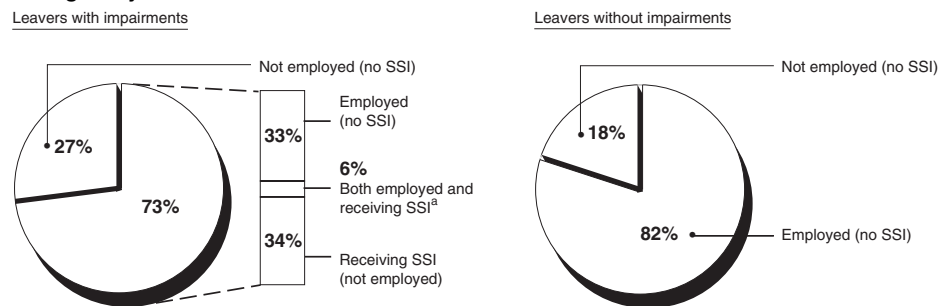
What GAO Found

Recipients of Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) who had impairments were found to be half as likely to exit TANF as recipients without impairments, and recipients caring for children with impairments were found to be less than half as likely to exit TANF as recipients not caring for children with impairments, after controlling for demographic differences such as age, race, and marital status. Although impairments affect exits, other factors, including family support and personal motivation, as well as local TANF policies, may also affect whether recipients exit TANF.

After leaving TANF, people with impairments were one-third as likely as people without impairments to be employed, according to a statistical model that controlled for demographic differences, and they were more likely to receive federal supports. Forty percent of leavers with impairments reported receiving cash assistance from Supplemental Security Income (SSI), a federal program designed to assist low-income individuals who are aged, blind, or disabled. Leavers with impairments were also more likely to receive non cash support in the form of Food Stamps and Medicaid than their counterparts without impairments.

These findings underscore the challenge states face in ensuring that recipients with impairments and those caring for children with impairments receive the supports they need to meet the work-focused goals and requirements of TANF.

Employment and Receipt of SSI among Leavers with and without Impairments, July 1997 through July 1999



Source: GAO's analysis of SIPP data on disability.

^aEmployment and receipt of SSI are not necessarily concurrent.

www.gao.gov/cgi-bin/getrpt?GAO-03-210.

To view the full report, including the scope and methodology, click on the link above. For more information, contact Cynthia M. Fagnoni at (202) 512-7215 or fagnonic@gao.gov.