

## **APPENDIX B.**

# **MEASURES OF PERSONAL LIABILITIES**

We used data collected in the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) Caseload Surveys to create 16 measures of personal liabilities that TANF case heads bring to employment that are discussed throughout this report. These measures are defined as follows:

### **Human Capital Deficits**

1. ***No high school diploma, GED, or more.*** Did not complete high school, its equivalent, or receive any education beyond the high school level.
2. ***Limited recent work experience.*** Worked for pay less than 50 percent of the time since turning age 18, based on a self-report.
3. ***Performed fewer than four common job tasks.*** Has performed fewer than four of the following common job tasks on a daily or weekly basis: (1) talk with customers face to face, (2) talk with customers over the phone, (3) read instructions or reports, (4) write letters or memos, (5) work with a computer, such as word processing or data entry, (6) work with another electronic machine such as a cash register, bar code scanner, or calculator, (7) do arithmetic, including making change, (8) fill out forms, and (9) keep a close watch over gauges, dials, or instruments of any kind. The questions and scoring methods for this measure were adopted from the Women's Employment Study of the Poverty Research and Training Center, University of Michigan.

### **Personal Challenges**

4. ***Physical health problem.*** Self-reported fair or poor general health *and* a physical functioning score in the lowest quartile based on national norms adjusted for age and gender. Physical functioning was determined following the methodology of the Physical Functioning Scale of the SF-36 Health Survey that asks about ease in performing vigorous physical activities such as running or lifting heavy objects, moderate physical activities such as moving a table or pushing a vacuum cleaner, and daily physical activities such as carrying groceries, walking, and climbing stairs.
5. ***Mental health problem.*** Experienced psychological distress in the past 30 days *and/or* probable major depression in the past year. Psychological distress was measured using the K6 Psychological Distress Symptom Scale that asks the frequency of feelings such as depression, hopelessness, restlessness,

worthlessness, and nervousness. Individuals who scored 13 or more points on the K6 scale, which ranges from 0 to 24, were classified as experiencing distress. This validated scale has been used in the 2002 National Health Interview Survey and the 2001 National Household Survey on Drug Abuse. The probability of major depression was determined following the methodology of the Composite International Diagnostic Interview Short Form (CIDI-SF). Under this methodology, individuals with three or more of seven symptoms of major depression were classified as being at probable risk of major depression. Individuals who volunteered that they were on medication or anti-depressants also were classified as being at probable risk of major depression.

6. ***Criminal Record.*** Self-report on the presence of a past criminal record.
7. ***Severe physical domestic violence in past year.*** Experienced severe physical violence--hitting, beating, choking, using or threatening use of a weapon, or forcing sexual activity--from a domestic partner in the past year. This measure is based on a modified version of the Conflict Tactics Scale used in the Women's Employment Study of the Poverty Research and Training Center, University of Michigan.
8. ***Chemical dependence.*** Assessed as having probable alcohol dependence *and/or* probable drug dependence. The probability of having alcohol or drug dependence was determined following the methodology of the CIDI-SF. Under this methodology, individuals with three or more of seven symptoms of dependence were classified as being at probable risk of dependence.
9. ***Signs of a learning disability.*** A total score of 12 or more out of a possible 30 points on the Washington State Learning Disabilities Screener.
10. ***Difficulty with English.*** Self-reported difficulty speaking, reading, or writing English because it is not her native language.

## **Logistical and Situational Challenges**

11. ***Child or other family member or friend with a health problem or special need.*** Self-report on having a child with health, behavioral, or other special needs *and/or* caring for an elderly, disabled, or sick family member or friend.
12. ***Child under one year old.*** Self-report on presence of a child under the age of one in the household.
13. ***Pregnant.*** Self-report on pregnancy.
14. ***Child care problem.*** Self-report on having a child care problem that inhibits ability to take a job, to keep a job, or attend education or training activities. This

summary measure was developed from a direct question about child care problems asked of case heads with children under the age of 15 and from two additional questions in which respondents could volunteer that child care was a reason for leaving her most recent job or for never having worked for pay.

15. **Transportation problem.** Self-report on having a transportation problem that inhibits ability to take a job, keep a job, or attend education or training activities.
16. **Unstable housing.** Moved two or more times *and/or* was evicted in the past year.

**TANF RECIPIENTS AS POTENTIAL  
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of Columbia, Illinois, Maryland  
and South Carolina**

PDF Files Available for This Report

Main Report <http://aspe.hhs.gov/daltcp/reports/TANFItc.pdf>

APPENDIX A: Summary Table for the TANF Caseload Surveys  
<http://aspe.hhs.gov/daltcp/reports/TANFItcA.pdf>

APPENDIX B: Measures of Personal Liabilities  
<http://aspe.hhs.gov/daltcp/reports/TANFItcB.pdf>

APPENDIX C: State-Specific Data on Employment, Demographic Characteristics and  
Employment Liabilities  
<http://aspe.hhs.gov/daltcp/reports/TANFItcC.pdf>

APPENDIX D: State-Specific Predicted Employment Probabilities  
<http://aspe.hhs.gov/daltcp/reports/TANFItcD.pdf>