

November 1998

# DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

## Prevalence and Implications for Employment Among Welfare Recipients



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**Health, Education, and  
Human Services Division**

B-280099

November 24, 1998

Congressional Committees

The Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (P.L. 104-193) (PRWORA), enacted in August 1996, significantly changed the nation's cash assistance program for needy families with children. Title I of the law replaced the Aid to Families With Dependent Children (AFDC) program with fixed block grants to states to provide Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) and ended families' entitlement to assistance. In fiscal year 1997, \$16.7 billion in federal TANF funds was made available to the states, and states provided assistance to 3.9 million families in an average month. Several goals of the TANF program are specified in the law, including that of ending welfare dependence by promoting work over welfare and self-reliance over dependency, and the law provides states with increased flexibility to help them achieve those goals. The law strengthens existing requirements that most of those receiving assistance seek employment and cooperate with child support authorities. At the same time, to address concerns that some of the new requirements could unfairly penalize victims of domestic violence or put some of them at greater risk of harm, the bill includes a provision (Title I, part A, sec. 402[a][7]), generally referred to as the Family Violence Option, that allows states to identify domestic violence victims and, when appropriate, waive program requirements for them.

The Conference Agreement of the Balanced Budget Act of 1997 required that we study and report on the effects of family violence on the use of welfare programs (the names of addressees are listed at the end of this letter).<sup>1,2</sup> Accordingly, this report provides a summary of the research findings on (1) the prevalence of domestic violence among welfare recipients and (2) the implications of domestic violence for the employment of welfare recipients and other low-income women. We conducted a literature search of several on-line bibliographic databases, including Sociological Abstracts, Social Science Index, ECONLIT, and PsychInfo; reviewed bibliographies of key research studies on this issue; and consulted with experts on domestic violence issues to identify other studies we should consider. In identifying and reviewing studies on the implications of domestic violence for employment among welfare recipients, we included related studies that did not look at welfare

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<sup>1</sup>The House Conference Report, No. 105-217, July 30, 1997, p. 561.

<sup>2</sup>The Conference Agreement does not define family violence. In this report, we use both family violence and domestic violence to refer to violence between adult partners and ex-partners.

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recipients exclusively, when we felt that such studies would add to our knowledge of the situations faced by welfare recipients. We conducted our work from March through September 1998 in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards.

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## Results in Brief

While studies on the prevalence of domestic violence among welfare recipients do not provide national estimates of prevalence and vary substantially in terms of methodology and the samples studied, these studies consistently indicate that a sizable proportion of welfare recipients have been or are victims of domestic violence. The one study of those reviewed that was specifically designed to provide a statewide prevalence estimate was based on a representative sample of AFDC recipients in Massachusetts in 1996. This study found that almost 20 percent of the welfare recipients surveyed had experienced domestic violence in the prior 12 months, and about 65 percent had been victims of domestic violence at some time in their lives.

The research available on the effect of domestic violence on the employment of welfare recipients and other low-income women presents a more complex picture. Some research indicates that welfare recipients and other low-income women who reported ever having been abused were employed at the same rates as those who had never been abused. But no studies compared employment rates among women currently in abusive relationships, as opposed to women who reported having been abused in the past, with employment rates of women who are not now in abusive relationships. However, several studies do identify potential negative effects of current domestic violence on victims' employment.

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## Background

PRWORA gave states the flexibility to design their own strategies for achieving TANF program goals, including the goal of helping welfare recipients move into the workforce. States can establish their own eligibility requirements and decide what assistance and services will be available.<sup>3</sup> At the same time, states must meet federal requirements that emphasize the importance of work for those receiving assistance. PRWORA requires that, to avoid federal financial penalties, states must ensure that specified minimum percentages of their caseloads participate in work or work-related activities each year. In fiscal year 1997, states were to ensure that adult recipients in 25 percent of all TANF families and 75 percent of two-parent TANF families were engaged in work or work-related activities;

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<sup>3</sup>The law does require that states ensure fair and equitable treatment.

these participation rate requirements increase in subsequent years, reaching 50 percent and 90 percent, respectively, in fiscal year 2002. States must impose a sanction on recipients who do not comply with TANF program requirements by reducing recipients' cash grants or, at state option, by terminating the entire family's cash grant. In addition, with the exception of 20 percent of a state's caseload, federally funded TANF assistance is limited to 5 years.<sup>4</sup>

Through the Family Violence Option, states can exempt individual victims of domestic violence from program requirements—including those related to participation in work activities, cooperation with child support authorities,<sup>5</sup> and the 5-year time limit on receipt of federally funded TANF benefits—and refer these individuals to counseling and supportive services. States that choose to adopt the Family Violence Option certify that they will screen TANF recipients for domestic violence; refer them to domestic violence and related services; and, when good cause is established, waive program requirements for them when complying would make leaving an abusive situation more difficult or would penalize those who are, have been, or are at risk of experiencing domestic violence.<sup>6</sup> As of September 1998, 24 states had formally adopted the Family Violence Option.

## Prevalence of Domestic Violence Among Welfare Recipients

Available studies on the prevalence of domestic violence among welfare recipients consistently indicate that a sizable proportion of welfare recipients have been or are victims of some type of abuse by an intimate partner.<sup>7</sup> Although nationwide estimates are not available, we identified some relevant research studies that are based on smaller geographic areas

<sup>4</sup>Families with no adult receiving assistance (commonly referred to as "child-only" cases) are not subject to this limit. States may exempt up to 20 percent of their average monthly caseload from the time limit on the basis of hardship or having been subjected to domestic violence. Also, states may opt to provide assistance beyond the 5-year time limit using state funds.

<sup>5</sup>For more information on issues related to child support enforcement for domestic violence victims, see Jessica Pearson, Nancy Thoennes, and Esther Ann Griswold, *Child Support and Domestic Violence: The Victims Speak Out* (Denver, Colo.: Center for Policy Research, Feb. 1998).

<sup>6</sup>In the description of the Family Violence Option in the PRWORA, subsection to domestic violence is said to have the same meaning as being "battered or subject to extreme cruelty," as defined in another section of the law. According to that definition, an individual has been battered or subjected to extreme cruelty if he or she has been subjected to (1) physical acts that resulted in, or threatened to result in, physical injury; (2) sexual abuse; (3) sexual activity as a dependent child; (4) being forced, as the caretaker relative of a dependent child, to engage in nonconsensual sexual acts or activities; (5) threats of, or attempts at, physical or sexual abuse; (6) mental abuse; or (7) neglect or deprivation of medical care.

<sup>7</sup>In four of the six studies summarized here, questions were asked specifically about a male partner, while in the other two, questions did not specify the partner's gender.

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or participants in particular programs. According to these studies, approximately 15 to 56 percent of the women surveyed reported that they were current victims or had been victims of physical domestic abuse in the 12 months preceding the survey, and between 55 and 65 percent reported that they had been physically abused by an intimate partner at some point in their lives. (See app. I for more information on the findings of the studies we reviewed.) These estimates are higher than estimates of the prevalence of domestic violence among the general population. A 1998 nationally representative telephone survey of more than 8,000 women found that 1.5 percent reported having been physically abused by a partner in the 12 months preceding the survey, and 25 percent reported having been physically abused by an intimate partner at some point in their lifetime.<sup>8</sup> However, surveys conducted by the U.S. Department of Justice show that, compared with women in general, women aged 20 to 34, divorced or separated women, and women with family incomes under \$9,999 are more likely to be victims.<sup>9</sup>

Differences in the definition of domestic abuse used, the circumstances under which women were surveyed, and the sample of women surveyed may explain, at least in part, the relatively wide range of estimates of the prevalence of domestic violence among welfare recipients reported in the studies we reviewed. Although there is substantial overlap among the specific behaviors considered abusive in most of the studies we reviewed, a few studies had more general definitions of abuse or left the definition up to the respondent. Prevalence estimates would also be affected by the extent to which women who have been abused acknowledge that in their survey responses. It is generally believed that domestic abuse is underreported among women.<sup>10</sup> The degree of potential underreporting is likely to vary across studies on the basis of the way the surveys were administered. The surveys summarized here were administered in different settings, ranging from welfare offices to respondents' homes; in

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<sup>8</sup>These data are for women who reported having been physically assaulted or raped by a current or former spouse, cohabiting partner, or date. See Patricia Tjaden and Nancy Thoennes, Prevalence, Incidence, and Consequences of Violence Against Women: Findings From the National Violence Against Women Survey (Washington, D.C.: National Institute of Justice and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Nov. 1998).

<sup>9</sup>U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Bureau of Justice Statistics, Violence by Intimates: Analysis of Data on Crimes by Current or Former Spouses, Boyfriends, and Girlfriends (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Justice, 1995). The definition of violence used here includes rape, sexual assault, robbery, and aggravated and simple assault. The definition of intimates includes spouses, ex-spouses, boyfriends or girlfriends, and ex-boyfriends or ex-girlfriends.

<sup>10</sup>See, for example, Mary P. Koss, Lisa A. Goodman, Angela Browne, and others, No Safe Haven: Male Violence Against Women at Home, at Work, and in the Community (Washington, D.C.: American Psychological Association, 1994), pp. 58-61, and Mary Ann Allard, Randy Albelda, Mary Ellen Colten, and Carol Cosenza, In Harm's Way? Domestic Violence, AFDC Receipt, and Welfare Reform in Massachusetts (Boston: University of Massachusetts at Boston, Feb. 1997), pp. 5 and 17.

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groups or individually; and by individuals with whom the respondents had had time to establish relationships as well as by people respondents had met only at the time of the interview. Finally, the samples of welfare recipients surveyed varied across studies. In some cases, the prevalence estimates reported here were based on representative samples of larger populations, such as all AFDC recipients in a state, while in others, the estimates were based on groups of recipients participating in a particular program or class.

A study requested by the Massachusetts Governor's Commission on Domestic Violence was the only one of those we reviewed that was designed specifically to estimate the prevalence of domestic violence among a state's welfare population.<sup>11</sup> The study was based on a representative sample of 734 women aged 20 and older who were receiving AFDC in Massachusetts between January and June 1996. This study found that almost 20 percent of respondents had been victims of domestic violence in the 12 months preceding the survey and that about 65 percent had been victims of domestic violence at some point in their lives. For purposes of the study, a woman was considered to have been a victim of domestic violence if she answered yes to one or more of six questions about her current or former husband or boyfriend's behavior toward her, including acts of physical violence, threats of harm, and nonconsensual sexual activities.<sup>12</sup> While the majority of the survey questions were administered by an interviewer, who asked the questions and recorded respondents' answers, the questions regarding abuse were put on an audiotape that respondents listened to through headphones. This methodology was used because the authors found through extensive pretesting of the survey instrument that it was the least threatening to respondents, and, therefore, the most likely to produce accurate estimates.

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<sup>11</sup>Allard and others, In Harm's Way?

<sup>12</sup>Those six behaviors most closely match the definition of domestic violence in the 1978 Massachusetts Chapter 209A Abuse Prevention Act, which defines domestic violence as physical harm, involuntary sex, or fear of harm. The behaviors asked about in the survey were being hit, slapped, or kicked; being thrown or shoved onto the floor or down stairs; being hurt badly enough to go to the doctor; having a gun, knife, or other object used against one in a frightening manner; being forced to engage in sexual activities; or being threatened with harm.

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## Implications of Domestic Violence for Employment Among Welfare Recipients and Other Low-Income Women

Research on the implications of domestic violence for the employment of welfare recipients and other low-income women presents a complex picture. Our review of 14 studies that discussed employment-related barriers for domestic violence victims among these populations indicates that while domestic violence does not rule out employment for many of these women, some victims of domestic violence may face a range of employment-related problems related to the abuse.<sup>13</sup>

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### Research Findings Regarding the Employment Status of Domestic Violence Victims

On the basis of the available research, we cannot conclude that being a victim of domestic violence changes the likelihood that a woman will work. We were unable to find any studies that isolate the effects of domestic violence on a woman's employment status by controlling for the effects of other factors that could influence whether a woman is employed or not. Of the 14 studies we reviewed, 2 compare estimates of employment rates among samples of abused and nonabused women without attempting to control for other factors. One of these studies, the Massachusetts study of AFDC recipients described earlier, found similar employment rates among women who reported having been abused (8.8 percent) and women who reported never having been abused (7 percent). Similarly, a study of women in a low-income Chicago neighborhood found that, at the time of the survey, women in the sample who had been abused in the past 12 months or had ever been abused were employed at rates similar to those of women who reported that they had never been abused. However, the latter study also found that, compared with women who reported never having been abused, women who reported having been abused at some point in their lives had experienced more spells of unemployment; greater job turnover; and significantly higher rates of receipt of AFDC, Medicaid, and food stamps.<sup>14</sup>

When attempting to determine the effect of domestic violence on women's employment status, it is important to consider that the effect could be quite different for women who have been abused in the past and for woman who are currently in abusive relationships. This distinction is not

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<sup>13</sup>Of the 14 studies, 7 focused on employment- or training-related barriers faced by welfare recipients. Another study was based on women applying for AFDC, and another was based on women in a low-income neighborhood in Chicago, about one-third of whom were receiving AFDC. The remaining five studies were based on discussions with domestic violence victims who were living in domestic violence shelters or receiving services or assistance related to domestic violence. While these studies did not target welfare recipients, many of the women interviewed had relatively low household incomes, were receiving public assistance, or both.

<sup>14</sup>Susan Lloyd, "The Effects of Domestic Violence on Women's Employment," *Law and Policy* (fall 1997).

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captured in the employment rate comparisons cited above. Current victims are likely to face different circumstances than women who were abused in the past. While research indicates that women may suffer emotionally for some time after they leave an abusive situation, which could affect their ability to work, they might not face the same logistical and safety concerns that women currently in abusive relationships may face, which are discussed in the next section.

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### Research Findings Regarding the Potential Effects of Current Domestic Violence on Victims' Employment

While it appears that having experienced domestic violence at some point does not rule out employment for many welfare recipients and other low-income women, in the studies we reviewed, program staff who work with welfare recipients, as well as abused women themselves, consistently report that obtaining and maintaining employment can be difficult for many current victims of domestic violence. These studies indicate that abusers often feel threatened by women's efforts to improve themselves and become financially independent, since those efforts could provide options to women that would help them leave the abusive relationship. Approximately 16 to 60 percent of the women surveyed in five of the studies reported that their partner had discouraged them from working, and 33 to 46 percent said that their partner prevented them from working. (App. II presents these findings in more detail.)

The research indicates that, in order to keep women from attending training programs or working, abusive partners often try to sabotage women's efforts, in some cases by becoming violent. Abusers are commonly reported to thwart women's attendance at these activities by promising child care that they then fail to deliver; destroying or hiding items the women need for the activities; and inflicting visible signs of abuse, such as bruises, black eyes, and cigarette burns, so the women will be too embarrassed to go to training, work, or a job interview. Welfare-to-work program staff report in one study that domestic violence has prevented program participation for some women who are unwilling to attend for fear of provoking their partners' "anger and further assaults."<sup>15</sup>

Some abusive partners may also try to keep women from participating in work-related activities by calling them frequently during the day, coming to the program or work site unannounced, or both. A survey of battered women who were working at the time the abuse occurred found that

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<sup>15</sup>Janet C. Quint, Barbara L. Fink, and Sharon L. Rowser, *New Chance: Implementing a Comprehensive Program for Disadvantaged Young Mothers and Their Children* (New York: Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation, 1991), p. 171.

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56 percent of the women surveyed reported that their partners had harassed them at work by phone or in person, with 21 percent reporting that their partners frequently harassed them at work.<sup>16</sup> In two other studies, approximately 35 to 40 percent of the women surveyed said their abuser had shown up at their place of work and caused a disruption.<sup>17,18</sup> (App. III presents the findings discussed in this and the following paragraph.)

The research also indicates that the effects of domestic violence on a woman's job performance can make it difficult for some battered women to maintain their employment or to advance in their jobs. According to the surveys of service providers and abused women we reviewed, women may be late for work or miss work entirely for reasons such as those described above, including unexpected lack of child care and visible injuries. In addition, abusers' harassment of women at work could jeopardize their jobs. Three studies that interviewed domestic violence victims who were working when the abuse occurred found that 44 to 60 percent of respondents said they had been reprimanded at work for behaviors related to the abuse, such as being late to work, and 24 to 52 percent said they had lost their jobs because of the abuse.<sup>19</sup> Almost 70 percent of the respondents to one of the surveys said that their job performance was negatively affected by the abuse, and about 50 percent said that they felt they had lost opportunities for salary and career advancement because of problems related to the abuse.<sup>20</sup>

Some domestic violence victims may, in addition, experience emotional or physical health problems that could potentially affect their ability to find and maintain employment. The studies we reviewed found that the women who had been abused often suffered from chronic health problems, low self-esteem, and depression and exhibited behaviors associated with

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<sup>16</sup>Melanie Shepard and Ellen Pence, "The Effects of Battering on the Employment Status of Women," *Affilia*, Vol. 3, No. 2 (summer 1988), p. 58.

<sup>17</sup>Connie Stanley, *Domestic Violence: An Occupational Impact Study* (Tulsa, Okla.: Domestic Violence Intervention Services, Inc., July 27, 1992), pp. 12-13, and Stephanie Riger and others, *Obstacles to Employment of Welfare Recipients with Abusive Partners* (Chicago: University of Illinois at Chicago, May 1998), p. 14.

<sup>18</sup>In Riger and others, *Obstacles to Employment*, 40 percent of the women surveyed said that their abusers came to their school or workplace to harass them.

<sup>19</sup>The 52 percent who had lost their jobs (Riger and others, *Obstacles to Employment*) reported that they were fired or had quit because of the abuse.

<sup>20</sup>Stanley, *Domestic Violence*, pp. 12-13.

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post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).<sup>21</sup> Two of the studies indicate that domestic violence victims may experience such conditions at higher rates than women who have not been abused. The Massachusetts study found that welfare recipients who had reported having been abused at some point in their lives were significantly more likely than those who had not to say that they currently had “a physical disability, handicap, or any other serious physical, mental, or emotional problem.” In addition, the abused women had significantly lower self-esteem, less of a sense of mastery, and more symptoms of psychological distress.<sup>22</sup> The survey of low-income women in Chicago found that women who reported having been abused were significantly more likely to report problems with depression, anxiety, and anger than their nonabused counterparts.

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We provided a draft copy of this report for technical review to officials in the Department of Health and Human Services’ Office of Family Assistance, Administration for Children and Families, and the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation; we also provided a copy to three experts on domestic violence and welfare-to-work issues. The reviewers said we had fairly characterized the research conducted in the area. They also provided technical comments, which we incorporated as appropriate.

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<sup>21</sup>PTSD is a mental disorder whose definition encompasses “a range of psychological responses to traumatic experiences” (Angela Browne, “Violence Against Women by Male Partners: Prevalence, Outcomes, and Policy Implications,” *American Psychologist*, Vol. 48, No. 10 (Oct. 1993), p. 1081). The disorder originally was identified in war veterans, but it is now considered to apply to individuals who have suffered other types of trauma as well, including domestic violence. Behaviors and feelings associated with PTSD include “reexperiencing the traumatic event through recurrent images, thoughts, and dreams, and generally experiencing intense psychological distress” (Allard and others, *In Harm’s Way?*).

<sup>22</sup>This study also found that the negative effects of the abuse appeared to diminish over time. For example, those whose abuse occurred more than 12 months previously had higher self-esteem, more of a sense of mastery, and fewer symptoms of psychological distress than those more recently abused. Moreover, those who had never been abused were even more emotionally well off.

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We will make copies of this report available upon request. If you or your staff have questions, please call me on (202) 512-7215. Other staff who contributed to this report include Gale C. Harris and Susan A. Riedinger.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mark V. Nadel". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping initial 'M'.

Mark V. Nadel  
Associate Director  
Income Security Issues

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List of Addressees

The Honorable William V. Roth, Jr.  
Chairman

The Honorable Daniel Patrick Moynihan  
Ranking Minority Member  
Committee on Finance  
United States Senate

The Honorable William Archer  
Chairman

The Honorable Charles B. Rangel  
Ranking Minority Member  
Committee on Ways and Means  
House of Representatives

The Honorable William F. Goodling  
Chairman

The Honorable William L. Clay  
Ranking Minority Member  
Committee on Education and the Workforce  
House of Representatives

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# Contents

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|  |    |
|--|----|
| Letter   | 1  |
| Appendix I<br>Self-Reported<br>Incidence of Domestic<br>Violence by an<br>Intimate Partner<br>Among Welfare<br>Recipients, as<br>Reported in the<br>Research Literature          | 14 |
| Appendix II<br>Research Findings<br>Regarding the Extent<br>to Which Victims of<br>Domestic Abuse<br>Report That Their<br>Partners Discourage<br>or Prevent Them<br>From Working | 18 |
| Appendix III<br>Research Findings<br>Regarding the Extent<br>to Which Victims of<br>Domestic Abuse<br>Report Specific<br>Impacts of the Abuse<br>on Their Employment             | 19 |

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**Bibliography**

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**Abbreviations**

|        |  |
|--------|--|
| AFDC   | Aid to Families With Dependent Children                            |
| PRWORA | Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity<br>Reconciliation Act |
| PTSD   | post-traumatic stress disorder                                     |
| TANF   | Temporary Assistance for Needy Families                            |

# Self-Reported Incidence of Domestic Violence by an Intimate Partner Among Welfare Recipients, as Reported in the Research Literature

| Study author(s)   | Sample on which percentages are based  | Type of abuse   | Percentage of sample who reported being abused |   |
|---|--|---|--|---|
|   |  |   | Currently or in the past 12 months             | Ever or in the past   |
| Weeks, G., and C. Webster, as reported in R. Lidman (1995)  | Sample of 1,184 women selected at random from all families on public assistance in Washington state in March 1988; a comparison sample of 796 respondents was drawn randomly from neighborhoods likely to have high rates of public assistance receipt.  | "Physical abuse" defined as being hit, kicked, punched, or beaten up.   | <sup>a</sup>                                   | 55 ever abused as adults among public assistance sample; 28 among comparison sample |
| Horizon Research Services, for the Missouri Department of Social Services, Division of Family Services (1996) | 404 women who voluntarily completed a survey they were handed upon checking in at the reception desk when they visited one of three offices of the Jackson County, Missouri, Division of Family Services during 2 months of the summer of 1996 to apply or to be recertified for Aid to Families With Dependent Children (AFDC). | Partner hit, slapped, or kicked respondent.   | 10.6 in past 12 months <sup>b</sup>            | 29 ever <sup>b</sup>  |
|   |  | Partner threatened to hurt respondent.  | 10.3 in past 12 months <sup>b</sup>            | 22.5 ever <sup>b</sup>  |
|   |  | Partner forced respondent to have sex.  | 3.4 in past 12 months <sup>b</sup>             | 13.4 ever <sup>b</sup>  |
| Raphael, J. (1996)  | 91 women receiving AFDC who entered the Chicago Commons West Humboldt Employment Training Center between July 1, 1994, and June 20, 1995.  | Domestic abuse defined as "verbal and physical abuse and coercion by men directed at adult women in intimate relations, which is meant to take in the full range of physical and nonphysical means used by men to coercively control women." Incidence was determined by self-report and staff assessment during a required Life Skills Module. | 56 abused by current partner                   | 26 in the past <sup>c</sup>   |

(continued)

**Appendix I  
Self-Reported Incidence of Domestic  
Violence by an Intimate Partner Among  
Welfare Recipients, as Reported in the  
Research Literature**

| Study author(s)                  | Sample on which percentages are based   | Type of abuse   | Percentage of sample who reported being abused    |  |
|----------------------------------|---|---|---|--|
|                                  |   |   | Currently or in the past 12 months                | Ever or in the past  |
| Allard, M., and others (1997)    | Representative sample of 734 women aged 20 and older receiving AFDC in Massachusetts between January and June 1996.   | Being hit, slapped, or kicked; thrown or shoved onto floor, against wall, or down stairs; hurt badly enough to go to doctor; threatened with a gun, knife, or other object in a way that made respondent afraid; forced to have sex or engage in sexual activity against her will; or threatened with harm.                               | 19.5 in past 12 months                            | 64.9 ever  |
| Browne, A., and S. Bassuk (1997) | Randomly selected sample of 216 female AFDC recipients who visited the Worcester, Massachusetts, Department of Public Welfare office to meet with their caseworker between August 1992 and November 1995; who had no history of homelessness; and who were pregnant or had at least one dependent child under age 17. | "Severe physical violence" defined as one or more of the following: being kicked, bitten, or hit with a fist; being hit with an object; being beaten up; being choked, strangled, or smothered; being threatened or assaulted with a knife or gun; being slapped six or more times; or having one's life threatened in some other manner. | 32.6 abused by current or most recent partner     | 58.1 abused by any partner since respondent was 17 years of age or "on her own," whichever was earlier     |
|                                  |   | Threat by partner to kill respondent.   | 18.1 threatened by current or most recent partner | 30.7 threatened by any partner since respondent was 17 years of age or "on her own," whichever was earlier |
| Lloyd, S. (1997)                 | Approximately 274 women who reported receiving AFDC in the 12 months prior to the survey interview were selected from a random sample of 824 women aged 18 and older residing in Humboldt Park in Chicago. <sup>d</sup>   | "Physical aggression" defined as throwing something at respondent or pushing, grabbing, shoving, or slapping her.   | 31.1 in past 12 months                            | <sup>a</sup>   |

(continued)

**Appendix I  
Self-Reported Incidence of Domestic  
Violence by an Intimate Partner Among  
Welfare Recipients, as Reported in the  
Research Literature**

| Study author(s)                | Sample on which percentages are based  | Type of abuse   | Percentage of sample who reported being abused |                        |
|--------------------------------|--|---|--|------------------------|
|                                |  |   | Currently or in the past 12 months             | Ever or in the past    |
|                                |  | "Severe aggression" defined as kicking, biting, or hitting with a fist; hitting or trying to hit respondent with an object; injuring respondent badly enough that she needed medical treatment; beating respondent up; injuring respondent so she needed to stay home from work; choking respondent; forcing respondent to participate in sexual activities against her will; burning respondent; locking respondent up; threatening respondent with a knife or gun; or cutting respondent with a knife or firing a gun at her. | 19.5 in past 12 months                         | <sup>a</sup>           |
| Curcio, W. (1998) <sup>e</sup> | 846 AFDC recipients in Passaic County, New Jersey, who participated in an 8-week Life Skills Program between December 1995 and January 1997.   | For "physical domestic abuse," respondent was asked "Have you ever been the victim of physical domestic abuse?" and "Are you now experiencing a problem with physical domestic abuse?" The respondent answered yes or no on the basis of her interpretation of what constituted "physical domestic abuse."  | 14.6 abused by current partner                 | 57.3 ever              |
| Pearson, J., and others (1998) | 1,082 women who were new applicants for public assistance in one of four social services offices in three Colorado counties between April and December 1997 for whom a screening form was completed for the study. | Applicants were asked if they had been in a relationship where they were "physically, emotionally, or sexually abused," defined as being pushed, slapped, shoved, or hit; being kept away from family and friends; having phone calls and activities monitored at home or work; being threatened or having children threatened; being threatened with having children taken away; being stalked, followed, or harassed; or being raped/sexually assaulted within the marriage.  | <sup>a</sup>                                   | 40 ever <sup>b,f</sup> |

(Table notes on next page)

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**Appendix I**  
**Self-Reported Incidence of Domestic**  
**Violence by an Intimate Partner Among**  
**Welfare Recipients, as Reported in the**  
**Research Literature**

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<sup>a</sup>An incidence rate was not presented for this category. Four of the eight studies asked specifically about abuse by a male partner, while the other four asked about abuse by a partner without specifying the partner's gender.

<sup>b</sup>Because these two studies estimate the prevalence among welfare applicants instead of among welfare recipients (or, in the case of the Horizon Research Services study, separate estimates are not presented for applicants and women being recertified), we did not include these studies' findings in the range of prevalence estimates discussed in the text.

<sup>c</sup>Since this estimate refers to the percentage of women in the sample who were abused in the past, rather than the percentage who were ever abused, we did not include it in the range of prevalence estimates discussed in the text.

<sup>d</sup>The sample size of 274 is our calculation based on the report's findings that 33.3 percent of the 824 survey respondents reported receiving AFDC in the 12 months prior to the survey interview.

<sup>e</sup>The final report for this study will not be published until late 1998. The data presented here are preliminary findings from the survey portion of the study as of July 1998.

<sup>f</sup>Seventy-four percent reported abuse only by former partners, 24 percent reported abuse by current and former partners, and 2 percent reported abuse only by a current partner.

# Research Findings Regarding the Extent to Which Victims of Domestic Abuse Report That Their Partners Discourage or Prevent Them From Working

| Study author(s)           | Sample on which percentages are based   | Percentage of women who reported that their partner |                             |
|---------------------------|---|---|-----------------------------|
|                           |   | Discouraged them from working                       | Prevented them from working |
| Shepard and Pence (1988)  | The 42 women who completed the first of two surveys administered to a total of 123 women who were attending support groups for battered women.  | 59  | 33                          |
| Allard and others (1997)  | The 476 women who reported that they had ever been abused by a male partner, out of a representative sample of 734 women surveyed who were aged 20 and older and receiving Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) in Massachusetts between January and June 1996.   | 15.5 <sup>a</sup>                                   | <sup>b</sup>                |
| Curcio (1998)             | The approximately 124 women (14.6% of the 846 women surveyed) who reported that they were currently having a problem with physical domestic abuse, out of a total sample of 846 AFDC recipients in Passaic County, New Jersey, who participated in an 8-week training program between December 1995 and January 1997. | 46.7 <sup>c</sup>                                   | 39.7 <sup>c</sup>           |
| Pearson and others (1998) | The 305 women who disclosed abuse by a past partner who was the father of at least one of their children, out of the 1,082 women who were new applicants for public assistance surveyed in four Department of Social Services offices in three Colorado counties.   | <sup>b</sup>  | 44                          |
| Riger and others (1998)   | The 57 women recruited from four domestic violence shelters in inner-city Chicago who were interviewed between February and April 1997.   | <sup>b</sup>  | 46                          |

<sup>a</sup>The women in this group said that they had a present or former partner who, at the time of the survey, would not have liked it if they had had a job, gone to school, or enrolled in a job training program. Only 1.6 percent of the women who did not report abuse said this.

<sup>b</sup>Data were not available for this category.

<sup>c</sup>The women in these groups said that their husband or boyfriend did not encourage education and training or prevented the women from getting education or training. While these percentages are not directly comparable with those in the rest of the table, we have included them since partners who discourage or prevent education and training are likely to also discourage or prevent their partners from working.

# Research Findings Regarding the Extent to Which Victims of Domestic Abuse Report Specific Impacts of the Abuse on Their Employment

| Study author(s)          | Samples on which percentages are based   | Percentage of women who reported that            |  |                                       |  |  |
|--------------------------|--|--|--|---------------------------------------|--|--|
|                          |  | Their partner harassed them at work in person    | They were late for work or left early because of the abuse | They missed work because of the abuse | They were reprimanded at work for behaviors related to the abuse | They lost their job as a result of the abuse |
| Shepard and Pence (1988) | The 71 women who were working during the time they were abused, out of the total sample of 123 women attending support groups for battered women who were surveyed.  | 56 (21 said it happened frequently) <sup>a</sup> | 62 (13 said it happened frequently)                        | 55 (4 said it happened frequently)    | 44 (13 were reprimanded more than three times)                   | 24   |
| Stanley (1992)           | The 81 women who were working at the time the abuse occurred, out of the total sample of 118 women surveyed who were residents at a domestic violence shelter; receiving domestic violence counseling; or plaintiffs at the Protective Order Office some time between October 1, 1991, and March 31, 1992. | 35 <sup>b,c</sup>                                | 62 <sup>c</sup>  | 57 <sup>c</sup>                       | 60 <sup>c</sup>  | 30 <sup>c</sup>                              |
| Riger and others (1998)  | The 35 women who worked or went to school out of a total sample of 57 women recruited from four domestic violence shelters in inner-city Chicago and interviewed between February and April 1997.  | 40 <sup>d</sup>                                  | <sup>e</sup>   | 85                                    | <sup>e</sup>   | 52 <sup>f</sup>                              |

<sup>a</sup>These women reported that their partner harassed them at work on the phone or in person.

<sup>b</sup>These women answered yes to the question "Did your abuser ever show up at your workplace and cause a disruption?"

<sup>c</sup>These percentages are our approximations based on a bar graph of respondents' affirmative answers to questions about the effect of domestic abuse on their work performance.

<sup>d</sup>These women said that their abuser came to their work or school to harass them.

<sup>e</sup>Data were not available.

<sup>f</sup>These women reported that they were fired or had to quit because of the abuse.

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