Welfare To work

JULY 26, 1999 • CRAIN'S CHICAGO BUSINESS

Writing a new, successful welfare-to-work chapter

The 3-year-old welfare-to-work movement is entering an important phase—one that likely will determine if this crucial national crusade will succeed or just fade away.

To thrive, the welfare-to-work effort must recharge itself by stretching beyond an initial band of dedicated corporate backers, among them locally based UAL Corp. and McDonald's Corp. Going forward, the movement must seriously connect with the multitude of small and mid-sized companies that do the bulk of the nation's hiring, especially at the entry level.

A golden opportunity to improve those links surfaces next month, when Chicago becomes the county's focal point for welfare to work by hosting a three-day nationwide conference of more than 1,000 policymakers, corporate leaders and operators of small and mid-sized companies. President Clinton, who launched the massive welfare reform effort, also is expected to appear.

Skeptics dismiss the conference, scheduled Aug. 2 to 4, as mere political horn-blowing. But, as Washington Editor Paul Merrion reports (*Crain's*, July 19), the confab's managers are determined to keep it real. The conference, which is being sponsored by the Washington, D.C.-based Welfare to Work Partnership, will provide employers with hands-on methods for attracting, training and hiring public aid recipients.

The conference also will give owners of small-to-mid-sized companies an opportunity to meet state officials, whose departments can help calm jittery employers' nerves and get a firm's nascent welfare-to-work effort up and running.

In the past three years, large corporations have made nearly 400,000 new hires from welfare rolls. That's an impressive accomplishment, but there's more to be done.

Next month's conference, along with the spirited participation of small and mid-sized company owners, should strive to become a launching pad for welfare to work's next triumphant era.

Welfare to Work Partnerships -- One America
August 2-4, 1999
Talking Points

About the *One America Conference*

- August 1999 is the three-year anniversary of the signing of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Act. *The Welfare to Work Partnerships -- One America Conference* is an opportunity for the leaders in welfare reform to report to the nation on the early progress of welfare to work and what needs to be done to ensure its continued progress.

- When President Clinton signed the new welfare law, he challenged the business community to take the lead. *One America* will be a platform to learn about the last three years of welfare to work from the business leaders who accepted the president's challenge and are instrumental to welfare to work's continued success.

- *One America* is the culmination of The Partnership's CityLink Program, created to improve private-sector welfare to work efforts in 30 cities with high concentrations of poverty.

- In addition to the more than 1,000 businesses attending *One America*, delegations from 17 of The Partnership's CityLink cities, all with proven welfare to work strategies, will share the best practices and future obstacles with the country. Delegations consist of business leaders, local government officials and community-based organization.

- Participants at the conference include: President Clinton; Governors Tommy Thompson (R-WI), Tom Carper (D-DE) and George Ryan (R-IL); Chicago Mayor Richard Daley; US Secretaries Rodney Slater, Alexis Herman and William Daley; CEOs from the country's Fortune 100 companies; and more than 1,000 business, local and state government and community-based leaders from across the country.

- *One America* will focus on the importance of public/private partnerships -- bringing together national and community leaders, businesses, service providers, government officials and former welfare recipients -- who are critical to making welfare to work a success.

- *One America* will include several curriculum tracks addressing issues such as how to start a welfare to work program, how to access employer tax credits and how to find service providers in your area, as well as child care and transportation solutions. Focus groups will include businesses of all sizes, local, state and government leaders, as well as former welfare recipients who have made the transition into jobs.

New Resources For Businesses

- *The Future of Welfare to Work.* Based on the results of a research study conducted by Wirthlin Worldwide at *One America*, we will determine the critical next steps to ensure that welfare to work reaches all American families.

- *The Crucial Connection.* Any business with a successful welfare to work program will tell you that a major key to success is partnering with a quality service provider that can help train and place welfare recipients into jobs. But many businesses still struggle to find the right service provider for their needs. The Welfare to Work Partnership and IBM Corporation will introduce *The Solutions Network*, an innovative, first-of-its-kind online network that links businesses with the perfect service providers to meet their employment needs.

- *The Transportation Challenge.* Transportation continues to be one of the biggest challenges to welfare to work. US Secretary Rodney Slater will release The Welfare to Work Partnership's *The Road to Work*, a how-to manual that helps companies design customized solutions for their specific transportation challenges.

- *Creating Partnerships.* Partnerships between businesses, service providers, government agencies and communities are a significant key to the success of welfare to work. Based on the best practices of several communities across the country, The Welfare to Work Partnership's *Community Blueprint* describes the critical tools to help local communities create effective welfare to work programs.

- *Smart Solutions Series.* Over the past three years, employers have implemented workplace strategies to help guarantee welfare to work success. The *Smart Solutions* series, is an in-depth look at a wide array of workplace issues facing employers who wish to hire employees from the public assistance rolls— and who want to support them once on board. The *Smart Solutions* series will share some of these proven workplace strategies. **The first topic of the series is substance abuse.** It was developed with the National Center on Substance Abuse and Addiction at Columbia University.

Conference Highlights

- *Town Hall.* President Clinton, national business leaders, faith- and community-based organizations and state and local government leaders will discuss how welfare to work started, how it has evolved and where it's headed.

- *Faces of Welfare Reform.* Presented in a talk show format with interaction from an audience of business, government and community leaders from across the country, *Faces of Welfare Reform* examines the inspirational stories of five former welfare recipients who reclaimed their independence by choosing a paycheck over a welfare check. Each story in *Faces of Welfare Reform* represents one aspect of welfare to work that is critical to its future success, including the so-called "hardest to place," non-custodial fathers, transportation challenges, reliable childcare and partnering with service providers. *Faces* will be hosted by Chicago News Anchor/Reporter Art Norman from NBC-5/Chicago News.

- *Resource Room.* More than 60 representatives from the nation's best government, nonprofit and private service providers will display, demonstrate and share informational resources relating to issues vital to the success of welfare to work, including government programs designed to help your business, tax credits and how to administer them; transit tax credits for transit, car, and vanpooling expenses; Federal Enterprise Zones and other HUD programs; innovative new products that incorporate today's latest technological advances; and how to use *The Solutions Network,* The Partnership's new interactive web database designed by IBM.

- *Community Networking Session.* Delegations from the Welfare to Work Partnership's CityLink program will discuss effective welfare to work strategies. These are real-life task forces that can help businesses and communities benefit from welfare to work.

Welfare to Work Background

- When the Congress passed and the President signed the landmark welfare reform bill, America was challenged to "end welfare as we know it." It was clear then that in order to accomplish this ambitious goal, the business community would have to take the lead.

- The Welfare to Work Partnership was created to energize the business community around welfare to work. At its launch in May 1997, The Partnership had just five founding companies – United Airlines, Burger King, United Parcel Services, Sprint and Monsanto.

- At its one year anniversary, The Partnership had 5,000 Business Partners. Today, only eight months later, it has more than 12,000 Business Partners, all dedicated to hiring and retaining former welfare recipients.

- To date, The Partnership's Business Partners have hired more than 410,000 individuals from the welfare rolls.

Strong Beginning

- Since the signing of the new welfare law, businesses of all sizes, sectors and industries have learned that welfare to work is a smart solution for business.

- The welfare rolls are down all across the country – several states have already cut their rolls in half, and others no longer even have welfare rolls. And studies show that many of those people are leaving the rolls for the right reasons – they have found jobs.

- Welfare recipients are being hired for good jobs with benefits, and retention rates show that they are staying on the job. Many businesses report that the retention rates for former welfare recipients are higher than for other traditionally hired employees.

- American businesses continue to make an investment in welfare to work, with more than 12,000 companies joining The Welfare to Work Partnership by making the commitment to hire and retain welfare recipients without displacing existing workers.

Lessons Learned

- Welfare to work is a smart solution for business. In a growing economy, many industries are facing a shortage of entry-level workers. This means that the ranks of the unemployed will continue to decline – making welfare to work a smart solution for companies looking to expand their job applicant pool.

- Welfare recipients make loyal and dedicated workers. Company after company has found that retention rates for welfare to work employees are actually higher than retention rates for more traditional entry-level employees.

- Welfare to work is not just for the Fortune 500. Small and mid-sized companies are benefiting as well. In fact, of the more than 12,000 businesses who have joined The Welfare to Work Partnership and committed to hire former welfare recipients, 75 percent have less than 250 employees and nearly half have less than 25 employees.

- Partnerships are critical. Partnerships are the secret to a truly successful welfare to work program. Businesses, service providers and government agencies must all work together to move people from lives of dependence to lives of independence.

- Welfare to work is about people. The reason retention rates are high and the reason businesses are succeeding is because, contrary to popular belief, many welfare recipients are ready to work today. According to Urban Institute:
    - 58 percent of adult welfare recipients have completed high school or a higher level of education.
    - Two of every three women on welfare have recent work experience.
    - More than two of every five families on welfare have been on the rolls for less than two years.

Challenges Ahead

- America's goal is not simply to move people off the rolls. The goal of welfare to work is to break forever the corrosive cycle of dependence and move people permanently out of poverty and into the economic mainstream.

- Businesses will continue to have new entry-level hiring needs. That presents us with new challenges and opportunities and if America is to take advantage, we must focus on:

    - Service Providers. Service providers partner with businesses to help train, place and retain welfare recipients. As we go deeper into the available pool of welfare recipients, we will need to focus on the quality and capacity of service providers to deliver work-ready employees.

- Reaching all families. As the rolls decline, companies will soon find themselves going deeper and deeper into the welfare pool. We must marshal our public and private resources so that we reach all families -- long term recipients, people with substance abuse problems, those in abuse relationships and those with inadequate education.

- Increased retention rates. Companies are already reporting that former welfare recipients have higher retention rates than other entry-level employees. In order to continue that trend while building a business, companies are offering promotional opportunities and career tracks to all employees, including former welfare recipients.

- Childcare. Many welfare recipients want to work, but can't find reliable childcare. Many times, childcare facilities are not open during non-traditional hours and only accommodate children of certain ages. In other cases, the quality and cost of childcare became barriers to success. We need to commit new energies and resources to surmount these challenges.

- Transportation issues. We must explore created ways to expand transportation options for welfare recipients who are just starting in the workforce. In too many cases, employment opportunities are far from the residences of prospective employees.

- Reaching non-custodial fathers. Many non-custodial fathers are anxious to take financial responsibility for their children, but they don't have the resources or the training to find jobs. As we move forward with welfare to work, it is important to help non-custodial fathers understand that there are resources available to help them take responsibility for their children and enter into appropriate training programs.

- Tax Incentives. Tax incentives are a logical way to make it more cost-effective for companies to hire and retain former welfare recipients. There are federal and state tax credits available for companies that hire former welfare recipients, but some companies -- especially smaller ones -- have not been accessing them. We need to help companies access this "easy money."

- Cities. The welfare rolls have gone down in the cities of America, but at a slower rate the country as a whole. We need to increase the efforts of The Partnership's CityLink program in cities with the highest concentration of poverty. *One America* is the next step in The Partnership's CityLink Program to address that concern.

The CityLink Connection

- Through CityLink, The Partnership has worked in the most challenging areas of the country, including inner cities and high poverty zones. The CityLink program was launched in St. Louis on August 12, 1997. CityLink's goal is to establish partnerships with local and state government, businesses and service providers to develop and implement creative local strategies for successful welfare to work initiatives.

- CityLink is designed to meet the specific needs of each city. Denver businesses face different challenges than New York City businesses. CityLink provides the catalyst that addresses specific areas of need in each city and works with local leaders to develop long-term lasting solutions.

- In each CityLink target community, The Partnership works closely with the local public and private community to build an advisory group to help develop strategies to promote welfare to work hiring practices.

- The Partnership has recently added a next phase to its CityLink campaign by adding 13 more cities. The Partnership is working with 30 of the highest poverty cities in the country. The next cities include, Cleveland, Columbus, Detroit, Louisville, Milwaukee, Minneapolis, Omaha, Phoenix and Portland.

How The Partnership Can Help

- Membership to The Partnership is free. All it takes is the commitment to start and the will to succeed.

- The Partnership is working to connect businesses of all sizes to high-quality service providers.

- The Partnership is assembling the most comprehensive database of service providers in the United States. Soon this database of more than 12,000 service providers will be available on-line to all our Business Partners.

- In order to meet the growing manpower needs of our Business Partners, The Partnership is working with service providers throughout the country to improve their quality and capacity through our innovative "train the trainers" program.

- The Partnership is formulating a "preferred provider network" of the top service providers in key regions of the country that will be available to all our Business Partners.

- The Partnership will work with businesses to advise state and local governments on ways to spend their surplus welfare funds more effectively on initiatives that improve retention and job-readiness.

- As always, The Partnership provides all its Business Partners with the following resources:

  - *Blueprint for Business.* A user-friendly guide that tells a business everything it needs to know to start a welfare to work program.

  - *The Solutions Network.* The Welfare to Work Partnership and IBM Corporation are proud to introduce *The Solutions Network*, an innovative, first-of-its-kind online network that links businesses with the perfect service providers to meet their employment needs.

- *The Road to Work.* Transportation continues to be one of the biggest challenges to welfare to work. *The Road to Work* is a how-to manual that helps companies design customized solutions to meet their specific transportation challenges.

- *Community Blueprint.* Based on the best practices of several communities across the country, The Welfare to Work Partnership's *Community Blueprint* describes the critical tools to help local communities create effective welfare to work programs.

- *The Road to Retention.* Describes 16 companies that have equal or higher retention rates with welfare to work employees -- and how they did it. *The Road to Retention* offers specific examples – from both large companies like Marriott International, Xerox and TJ Maxx, and smaller companies like Kirkwood Insurance and Rehab Options -- and case studies that any business can emulate to produce positive results.

- Other information resources. Includes a web-page (www.welfaretowork.org); a quarterly newsletter; Weekly News Updates on issues and events dealing with welfare to work; and regular Policy Briefings on key issues like transportation, child care and tax credits.

Declaration FOR Independence

When Congress passed and President Clinton signed the new welfare law in August 1996, they challenged the American business community to take the lead to "end welfare as we know it." Over the next three years, more than 12,000 businesses of all sizes and industries joined The Welfare to Work Partnership by committing to hire and retain people off public assistance.

In order to track the progress and trends of welfare to work within the business community, Wirthlin Worldwide, a national polling firm, conducts regular surveys of The Partnership's Business Partners. The survey has been conducted at the request of the governors on The Partnership's National Advisory Council, chaired by Governor Tommy Thompson (R-WI) and Governor Tom Carper (D-DE). There are 26 governors on the Advisory Council, organized to advise, support and further the mission of The Partnership.

In just three years, the American business community produced the following results:

- **BUSINESSES ARE DOING MORE THAN JUST COMMITTING - THEY ARE HIRING.** More than 410,000 welfare recipients have moved from welfare to work since May 1997 after being hired by the Business Partners of The Welfare to Work Partnership.

- **WELFARE RECIPIENTS ARE LANDING FULL-TIME JOBS WITH FULL MEDICAL BENEFITS.** Seventy-six percent of companies hiring former welfare recipients hire them for full-time positions and 71% of these companies offer health care benefits.

- **COMPANIES WILL CONTINUE TO HIRE AND RETAIN WELFARE RECIPIENTS.** Sixty-seven percent of the Partnership's businesses still believe they are facing a labor shortage in either their company or industry. Almost eight of every ten employers (79%) expect to hire a former welfare recipient this year.

- **WELFARE RECIPIENTS MAKE SUCCESSFUL EMPLOYEES.** More than eight out of ten (82%) executives who have hired former welfare recipients found that their new hires are "good, productive employees." This number continues to improve. It is up 3% from Wirthlin's second survey in August 1998 and 6% from the first survey in February 1998.

- **COMPANIES FIND HIGHER RETENTION RATES WITH WELFARE TO WORK EMPLOYEES.** Sixty-five percent of business leaders report that welfare to work hires have the same or higher retention rates than standard-hire employees. The percentage has increased from 48% in February 1998 and from 53% in August 1998.

- **SMALL BUSINESSES FIND WELFARE TO WORK IS SMART SOLUTION.** Eighty percent of Small-business owners (those with 250 or fewer employees) report that the employees hired from the welfare rolls have turned out to be "good, productive workers," and that level of satisfaction has been rising. In fact, 67% of these small business members also report that their welfare to work hires stay on the job as long as – or longer than – other entry-level workers.

- **WELFARE RECIPIENTS ARE RECEIVING TRAINING, PROMOTIONS.** Eight out of ten (77%) companies hiring former welfare recipients hire them for "promotional track" positions. In fact, 91% of companies hiring former welfare recipients offer them opportunities for training that could lead to a promotion and 60 percent of businesses report some promotion of welfare hires -- the same rate as standard hires among member companies.

- **WELFARE RECIPIENTS ARE GAINING SALARY JOBS AND EARNING ABOVE MINIMUM WAGE.** Twenty-seven percent of Partnership businesses are hiring welfare recipients into salaried positions (up from 19% in August 98). The average starting annual salary is nearly $17,000. The average starting wage is $7.20 per hour -- 31% higher than the national minimum wage of $5.50;

- **<u>PARTNERSHIPS WITH COMMUNITY GROUPS ARE KEY TO SUCCESS.</u>** Those companies that have successfully hired welfare recipients are much more likely to have formed partnerships with community-based organizations. The Wirthlin Survey showed that 48% of companies are turning to non-profit, community-based organizations to find candidates to hire. That number is up from 25% in 1998. Community groups often provide key services (like training, mentoring and counseling) that are too difficult or costly for businesses to offer on their own.

- **<u>WELFARE TO WORK PROGRAMS ARE GOOD FOR THE BOTTOM LINE.</u>** Companies say welfare to work programs cost no extra money and in some cases save money. Sixty-five percent of businesses say they run successful welfare to work programs without increasing their costs while 16% companies have actually saved money by creating a welfare to work program, with savings averaging $5,803 per company.

Welfare to Work

(1) Message
(2) Outreach
(3) Input

MEMORANDUM

TO: President Clinton

FROM: Eli Segal ES

DATE: July 22, 1999

IN RE: *One America* Conference: August 2-4, 1999 (Chicago IL)

Well, seven years after the campaign, this is another one for the good guys. No one – not even you in your most optimistic moments -- could have imagined the extent to which the old welfare system could be torn asunder. Whatever the alchemy of (1) the strong economy, (2) the new law, and (3) the business community, you are responsible for each of the three components of this extraordinary transformation.

This is a brief note to encourage you to use August 3 (and the days leading up to it) to make the case not just for the quiet revolution now in place, but the continuing responsibility to complete the job. Look back a little, but only for context. Use the three year anniversary of the legislation to challenge all of us anew: Congress to pass laws, Governors to spend their surpluses wisely and to keep pushing their administrators to move from eligibility clerks to job coaches, service providers to expand their capacity and improve their quality, and businesses to do even more, including investing in our cities and rural areas where our welfare recipients live and helping their new employees develop the skills they will need in the next millennium.

Your great ally in this would be the business community. For the most part, the private sector sees the welfare rolls at over two million as <u>an opportunity</u>, not the foreboding threat that many welfare policy analysts envision. They are prepared to invest in "the hardest to place" (a concept they hate because it suggests predetermined failure). Many are even talking about hiring job ready ex-offenders and all are committed to moving their recent hires up the career ladder. They are ready to be motivated. They know it's going to be harder going forward, but I see very little pessimism.

In short, I think the stars are in place to use the third anniversary to look ahead -- perhaps a Saturday radio address to challenge Congress on the now pending appropriation for the Department of Labor, perhaps a *New York Times* op-ed piece on Tuesday morning of Chicago, certainly a Chicago speech unveiling another reduction in the caseload coupled with a fresh challenge to the private sector, and then the Town Hall meeting. I'm sure that there are additional and better vehicles as well.

There is obvious news value of a roll-out like this -- it would make it possible for us to battle the widely held public notion that welfare reform is yesterday's story, and the increasing chorus of academics who are trying once again to make the case that welfare reform is a cruel hoax on the poor. But even more fundamentally it would continue to shift the debate from time limits and related minutiae to the unfinished business of helping those who have been left behind.

The trip to Chicago for the day will be great; a campaign in behalf of those for whom economic independence was inconceivable just a few years ago would be even better.

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P.S. I include the media advisory for you to see all who will be in attendance on August 3.

The Welfare to Work
PARTNERSHIP

MEDIA ADVISORY

CONTACT: Eric Evans 202-955-3005 ext.319
Nancy Bjorson 202-955-3005 ext.322

NATION'S LEADER IN WELFARE TO WORK MEET FOR WELFARE TO WORK PARTNERSHIPS – ONE AMERICA CONFERENCE

Three Years After Welfare Reform Legislation
Business Community, 30 Cities Focus on Next Steps

WASHINGTON, DC– July 1999– More than 1,000 business, government and community-based leaders from across the country will join President Clinton, Governors Tommy Thompson (R-WI), Tom Carper (D-DE) and George Ryan (R-IL), U.S. Secretaries Rodney Slater, Alexis Herman and William Daley and CEOs from the country's Fortune 100 companies on August 2-4 in Chicago, Illinois for the *Welfare to Work Partnerships -- One America* conference. *One America* is a first-of-its-kind conference in which national leaders in welfare reform will examine the progress of welfare to work and help shape its future.

WHO: President of the United States William Jefferson Clinton
CEO & President of The Welfare To Work Partnership, Eli Segal
CEO UAL & Chairman of The Partnership, Gerald Greenwald
CEO & Chairman UPS, James Kelly
CEO & Chairman Sprint Corporation, William T. Esrey
CEO & Chairman Monsanto, Robert B. Shapiro
President of Burger King North America, Paul E. Clayton
U.S. Secretary of Transportation Rodney Slater
U.S. Secretary of Labor Alexis Herman
U.S. Secretary of Commerce William M. Daley
Governors George Ryan (R-IL), Tommy Thompson (R-WI), Tom Carper (D-DE)
Chicago Mayor Richard Daley
President & CEO of Goodwill Industries Inc., Fred Grandy
Professor of Business Administration at Harvard Business School, Rosabeth Moss Kanter
International President of the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers, R. Thomas Buffenbarger
Representatives from United Airlines; United Parcel Service of America; IBM; Bank America; Burger King; Sprint Corporation; Monsanto Company; Aetna, Inc.; AHL Services; Citigroup Foundation; CVS Corporation; Production Products; Fannie Mae Foundation; Rachel's Bus Company; Boscart Construction; General Converters & Assemblers, Inc.; Sears Roebuck and Co.; The Limited; C&S Paving; Loews Hotels; Time Warner; Cessna Aircraft, a Textron Company; Manpower, Inc; The TJX Companies, Inc.; Chase Manhattan Bank; Chevron Corporation; Mills Corporation; Xerox Corporation; Marriott International and 1,000 more companies.

WHAT: *Welfare to Work Partnerships – One America*, a first-of-its-kind national conference brings together the nation's leading experts in welfare to work to share community and industry-based strategies for welfare to work and determine the next steps of welfare to work.

WHERE: Navy Pier, Chicago, Illinois

1250 Connecticut Avenue, NW Suite 610 Washington, D.C. 20036-2603
Telephone 202 955 3005 Fax 202 955 1087 Email info@welfaretowork.org Web Site www.welfaretowork.org
Toll free for interested businesses 1 888 USA JOB1

WHEN: August 2-4, 1999

WHY: To provide a platform to examine the progress and challenges of welfare reform and to form public/private partnerships that will ensure continued commitment to welfare to work around the country.

STORY LINES:

The Future of Welfare to Work. Through a research study conducted by Wirthlin Worldwide at the *One America* conference, we will determine the critical next steps to ensure that welfare to work reaches all American families.

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