



**IMPROVING THE DELIVERY OF
KEY WORK SUPPORTS:
Policy & Practice Opportunities at
A Critical Moment**

By Dorothy Rosenbaum and Stacy Dean

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The Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, located in Washington, D.C., is a non-profit research and policy institute that conducts research and analysis of government policies and the programs and public policy issues that affect low and middle income households. The Center is supported by foundations, individual contributors, and publications sales.

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CONCLUSION

To better serve the tens of millions of Americans who need their help and meet taxpayers' expectation of effective government services, numerous states have improved their delivery of work supports by adopting policy simplifications and streamlined business processes. These measures, particularly with respect to SNAP and Medicaid, can serve as a model to other states.

Never has it been more critical for states to engage in this work. As a result of the economic downturn, millions more Americans are turning to public benefits that can boost their monthly earnings. Also, in 2014 the health care reform law will expand Medicaid coverage to approximately 16 million additional people — many of whom will be eligible for programs such as SNAP and child care as well. And, at the same time, shrinking state budgets are forcing states to do more with less.

To be sure, no individual proposal or set of options catalogued in this report is a prescription for success. States will also need strong leadership, adequate investment in agency operations, involvement of agency workforce in proposed changes, and ongoing monitoring to ensure that efforts to improve delivery of work supports are successful. And, states would benefit from data-driven assessments both of what specific aspects of their policies and operations produce the biggest access barriers for families and of whether their interventions produced the desired results.

Even with the many challenges facing states, this is an exciting time in the health and human services world. States have begun to transform decades-old delivery systems with an eye toward improving customer service, building effective systems, and making better use of available technology. As more states undertake these efforts, we can expect to see even more innovation.