

FACT SHEET: WHY ALCOHOL AND DRUG TREATMENT SHOULD COUNT AS WORK UNDER THE FEDERAL WELFARE/TANF (TEMPORARY ASSISTANCE FOR NEEDY FAMILIES) PROGRAM

Research suggests that a significant number of families receiving public assistance are in need of treatment services for alcohol and drug addiction.

- Overall, best estimates suggest that 8 to 20 percent of women on TANF have a substance use problem that probably interferes with their functioning.ⁱ Women with substance use disorders experience substantially more barriers to employment and are less likely to become employed and more likely to be sanctioned and lose welfare benefits.ⁱⁱ

Providing TANF recipients with clinically appropriate alcohol and drug addiction treatment will help women move successfully from welfare to work.ⁱⁱⁱ

- An evaluation of CASAWORKS For Families programs across the country found that after 12 months of enrollment, participants' average income from work increased fivefold and the number of participants reporting employment more than doubled.^{iv}
- Numerous studies have shown that treatment for drug addiction can reduce drug use by 40 to 60 percent.^v
- Research has also shown that treatment can improve the prospects for employment, with gains of up to 40 percent following treatment.
- Meta House in Wisconsin, a CSAT Residential Women with Children program, found that after treatment 81.6% of its clients were either gainfully employed or engaged in Wisconsin's welfare-to-work program.

Allowing States to count alcohol and drug addiction treatment as work for the length of time deemed necessary by a qualified addiction professional is consistent with the policies, research, and goals of other federal agencies and with the current practice in the field.

- According to the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA), individuals with severe drug problems and co-occurring disorders typically need longer treatment and more comprehensive services; studies indicate many of these women have long histories of use as well as multiple health conditions.
- Additionally, according to NIDA, better outcomes are associated with treatment that lasts longer than 90 days.^{vi}

ⁱ Metsch and Pollack 2005 cited in "Welfare Reform and Substance Abuse Treatment for Welfare Recipients," by Jon Morgenstern, Ph.D., and Kimberly A. Blanchard, Ph.D., *Alcohol Research and Health*, 2006, <http://pubs.niaaa.nih.gov/publications/arh291/63-67.htm>

ⁱⁱ Id.

ⁱⁱⁱ Id.

^{iv} Developed by the National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse at Columbia University (CASAWORKS) the program is specifically designed to help substance abusing women on welfare; the program relies on treatment plans individually tailored based on the needs of participating women and reassessed after the first three months and periodically readjusted thereafter. This model was implemented in California, Maryland, Missouri, North Carolina, New York, Ohio, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania and Tennessee.

^v Id.

^{vi} National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA), *Principles of for Drug Abuse Treatment for Criminal Justice Populations: A Research-Based Guide*, 2006, http://www.nida.nih.gov/PDF/PODAT_CJ/PODAT_CJ.pdf