

RF Bd. of Trustees 12/11/90

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**Minority Female Single
Parent Program**

RF 90102

GUIDELINE: Equal Opportunity for the Urban Poor

GRANTEE: For allocation by the officers

OBJECTIVE: To complete evaluation research of the Minority Female Single Parent Program and dissemination of the research findings.

AMOUNT: \$700,000 in addition to RF 89083, to be charged to the 1991 EO budget

DURATION: Period ending December 31, 1991

This tenth and final appropriation for the Minority Female Single Parent program will bring to \$17,504,000 the Foundation's total investment in an initiative created in 1981 as the result of a special Board exploration of new ways the Foundation could address the growing problem of poverty in minority communities. The MFSP demonstration program culminated this September with a major release of findings from the rigorous evaluation study made of four comprehensive employability projects, all operated by community-based organizations. Sounding an alert to those responsible for the design of employment training programs under the Family Support Act, the findings identify two basic approaches to employment training. The predominant one, implemented in three of the MFSP sites, is the schooling-first approach; that is, applicants are first tested, then placed in education programs geared to their test scores, and only much later given the opportunity to gain job training and placement. An alternative approach, called training-first (although the study found it much more than that), skips the testing and starts training immediately, embedding schooling in training tailored to the trainee and local industry jobs.

The study found that the training-first approach led in the short term to 27 percent more jobs and 47 percent higher pay while the schooling-first approach led to little or no improvement in either job placement or earnings. Early analysis of the long-term outcomes found little deviation from this pattern. A 60-month follow-up survey will be used to discern even longer-term outcomes and fortify the benefit-cost assessment.

The dissemination of the findings has stimulated great interest in the training-first approach. Special briefings, presentations, and consultations have begun and will continue in 1991 to government agencies, service providers, employer groups, advocacy and public policy groups, and funders who express interest in learning how to begin training-first programs in their communities. Research reports on the long-term impact findings will be issued as they become available, as well as other materials adapting the findings to particular audiences.