THE REALITY OF PRIVATE SECTOR SUBSTITUTES
FOR PUBLIC ASSISTANCE

October 2000

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The Center for Public Policy and Administration at the University of Utah is very pleased to present this report, *The Reality of Private Sector Substitutes for Public Assistance*, by Professor Garth Mangum of the University of Utah and the National Council on Employment Policy.

One of the fundamental premises underlying the congressional and national policy debates related to the passage of the 1996 federal welfare reform legislation, PRWORA, asserted that the charitable sector should shoulder more of the welfare burden in the United States. Churches and other religious institutions have been expected to play a dominant role.

This premise raises the critical policy issue of what can reasonably be expected of charitable efforts, vis-à-vis governmental efforts, to assist society’s poor. This is the issue addressed in this insightful essay by one of our nations’ foremost social policy analysts.

We are grateful to all the supporters of the Welfare Reform Initiative for providing the funding for this report.

Laurie N. DiPadova, Ph.D.
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<table>
<thead>
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<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AFDC</td>
<td>Aid to Families with Dependent Children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BMS</td>
<td>Basic Maintenance Standard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JOBS</td>
<td>Job Opportunities and Basic Skills (JOBS)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LDS</td>
<td>Latter-day Saints</td>
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<tr>
<td>PRWORA</td>
<td>Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SSI</td>
<td>Social Security Income</td>
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<tr>
<td>TANF</td>
<td>Temporary Assistance for Needy Families</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UMAP</td>
<td>Utah Medical Assistance Program</td>
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<tr>
<td>WIC</td>
<td>Women, Infants and Children</td>
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INTRODUCTION

Both the Congress of the United States and the Utah State Legislature in their 1996 commitments to welfare reform advanced the opinion that private charitable organizations could and would assume substantial portions of the burden of assisting and supporting the families who lost the funding which had been guaranteed since 1935 as an entitlement to all who were eligible. Others studies from the Center for Public Policy and Administration seek to measure the actual impact of welfare reform on Utah’s private charitable sector. Some 10,000 Utah families have, by choice or by direction, lost access to public assistance income payments over the past six years. What has happened to those families is left to other studies in this series. This essay explores the fundamental question: “What can non-governmental agencies in Utah reasonably be expected to be able to do in regard to poverty alleviation among families losing or exiting from the support of what was Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) and now is Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF)?”

COMMONALITIES

First, one might ask, “what did those 10,000 families and others who will inevitably follow them out of the realms of public assistance support in the months and years ahead have in common?”

1. They had dependent children, two on the average, though some might have many more.
   Enabling support of dependent children was the essential purpose of both acts of legislation.

2. The head of the family was either single or married to someone unemployable because of disability. Otherwise, they would not have been eligible for either AFDC or TANF.
3. They had low incomes, lower even than the federal poverty threshold for their family size.
Subsequent research has demonstrated that only about one household out of each seven of those leaving public assistance behind have earnings at least equal to the federal poverty threshold, even as much as five years after leaving public assistance. Only about 2 percent have achieved 150 percent of poverty, the least amount that could realistically be described as a family-sustaining income.

4. They are a shrinking minority of Utah’s poor. AFDC recipients were about one-half of Utah’s poor before the decline of public assistance beginning in 1994, primarily the one-half not having an employable male parent. Since most of them remain poor as noted above, those once on but now off public assistance represent about one-third of Utah’s poor.

5. While enrolled in AFDC or TANF they were eligible for Medicaid and, upon leaving public, assistance, risked its loss after a transition period.

6. Unless they make an extraordinary step upward in income, they had not been and would not be able to afford decent housing at market rates. Their typically low incomes would keep them eligible for subsidized housing but long waiting periods impede access to those subsidies.

7. They had little work experience and, typically, little education.

8. In addition to these universal characteristics, there was a higher than average incidence of physical and mental health problems among them. Their children were more likely than most to attend school with others from deprived backgrounds and to do poorly in school themselves. They tend to be over-represented proportionately in neighborhoods characterized by poverty and problems such as gangs and drugs. They are also over-represented proportionately in some rural areas and on Indian reservations where opportunities for any employment is limited and especially that employment which pays what might realistically be considered a family-sustaining wage.
Those being universal or highly likely characteristics, what can private charitable organizations do to replace governmental assistance relative to these ills?

**THE NATURE AND NUMBER OF CHARITABLE ORGANIZATIONS**

Response to that question requires an examination of the highly diverse community of charitable organizations, their resources, their structure and their purposes. An appropriate place to begin such an appraisal is the Human Services Directory maintained and published by the Salt Lake Community Council. While it is limited to Salt Lake County, it lists and describes the types of organizations which can be expected to exist to some degree throughout the state, though to a lesser extent in the more rural areas. Of the 530 organizations listed, approximately 200 of them are taxpayer-supported federal, state, local government or school-district supported organizations—not the private charitable organizations which are expected to provide some alternative to declining public assistance. Many of them could be expected to assume some of the load shed by AFDC and TANF and assist notably in people’s transition to self-reliance but not in a non-governmental context. Fifty-five are advocacy organizations which play an important role in calling attention to needs and promoting the allocation of resources, but which do not provide incomes nor perform direct services to the poor.

Examined by services offered, 26 are concerned with alleviating violence and abuse in home and family situations. Nine assist in child adoption. Six assist autistic children. Ten either advocate for or assist the blind. One provides burial services to the indigent. Thirty-one advertise themselves as pursuing civil rights, especially for minorities and women. Thirteen have clothing available for those who cannot afford commercial sources. Twenty-one serve those involved in the correctional system. Ten counsel the bereaved, 21 provide individual and family counsel and nine offer financial counseling; 55 offer crisis intervention of various kinds; 17 assist victims of domestic violence. Twenty-three are listed under the child day care heading but most of these are routes to information about or supporters of child care rather than
child care providers. Of six which are listed for adult day care, three are providers. Eight providers offer services for the deaf. Ten organizations offer free or reduced cost dental services. Sixty-eight organizations are listed under the physically disabled category, 41 of them service providers and the remainder advocacy groups. Two residential facilities for the disabled are listed. Fifteen sources of adult education are listed, nine for alternative education, 11 for education of the disabled; 77 are listed for health education, 37 for parent education, nine for tutoring, and 19 for vocational education. Most of these education organizations are privately provided, though a substantial minority are governmental or part of the public education system. Twenty organizations are listed under employment and 12 under disabled employment, most of which are sources of information about employment opportunities rather than sources of employment. Four sheltered workshops are listed. Seven organizations are sources of financial assistance. Nineteen are emergency food sources and one provides access to food stamps with which to purchase food. Eleven offer access to foster care. There are 17 providers of home health care and nine of homemaker services, some of them listed in both categories. Eleven hospitals and four hospices are listed. Ten organizations offer access to home maintenance, 11 access to subsidized housing, three assist in landlord/tenant disputes and 18 are listed as homeless shelters or sources of temporary lodging. Fifty medical clinics are listed, along with 38 sources of mental health assistance and 28 for assistance to the mentally retarded. Sixteen organizations list themselves for nursing services, 29 for pregnancy-related services. Twenty-nine organizations provide access to legal assistance, primarily for the poor. Twenty-one organizations offer recreation for a broad population and 22 recreation for the disabled. Fourteen want to serve refugees and immigrants and 28 consider senior citizens to be among their clientele. Twenty-six organizations are engaged in substance abuse counseling, education and treatment with 19 providing residential treatment. Three thrift stores are listed, though there are obviously more including the several LDS Deseret Industries stores. Seven organizations are listed for transportation and six for public utilities. Thirty-seven organizations are listed as serving women, 33 for youth guidance, and 18 for services to various minorities. Obviously, there are many duplications among those multi-service organizations listed among various categories. The point is that there many organizations in the Salt Lake Valley and, by imputation,
in the State of Utah, dedicated to the service of various groups within the population, including the poor and present and past recipients of public assistance. Not included in this listing thus far because not listed in this source are Utah’s churches, almost all of which provide some services to the economically needy. The Salt Lake City Regional Telephone Directory lists over three hundred churches other than the ubiquitous LDS congregations. Based on Utah membership, availability of resources and historical commitment, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS) is the primary actor on behalf of Utah’s poor within the faith community, but the contributions of others are impressive within the limits of their resources.

THE REPLACEMENT NEEDS OF FORMER PUBLIC ASSISTANCE RECIPIENTS

Those who have or will leave the rolls of AFDC or TANF are deprived of a relatively small but totally dependable public assistance income plus the certainty of access to a number of other publicly-provided benefits such as Food Stamps and Medicaid. If the single parent is to go to work, the child care previously self-supplied must be obtained elsewhere. Cutoff from these various benefits is not automatic, but the probability of continuance shifts to income eligibility rather than programmatic eligibility. A few former public assistance recipients may qualify for Supplemental Security Income on the basis of disability, though it is likely that the same disability that qualified one for SSI benefits would have also qualified that same person for an exception allowing continuance of TANF benefits.

Those leaving AFDC or TANF have an automatic 24 month transitional access to Medicaid. Thereafter, they may remain eligible if their income is below what is known as the Basic Maintenance Standard (BMS), a figure approximately two-thirds of the poverty level and generally well below that previously received as public assistance. If the post-public assistance income is too high, that household can still retain access to Medicaid by “spending down” to the BMS level. That entails a substantial income loss but, if the medical cost involved are high enough, that may be the best alternative. In addition to income obstacles, there are stringent asset obstacles to Medicaid eligibility, once the automatic programmatic
eligibility is lost. The Utah Medical Assistance Program (UMAP) may also be available to the former public assistance recipient, but only if the family is at a near-indigent level of income.

Despite having left the public assistance rolls, Food Stamps remain available on a sliding scale to those households with incomes up to 130 percent of poverty, as long as they have very limited assets. The Special Supplemental Food Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC) is available to infants and children up to age five and to pregnant, breast-feeding and postpartum women with incomes below 185 percent of poverty. Free meals at school are available at participating school districts for those children from families with incomes below 130 percent of the poverty line, along with reduced price meals for those up to 185 percent of poverty. There are food programs for the elderly, which are not relevant to the public assistance leavers. In addition, food pantries affiliated with the Utah Food Bank provide emergency food to those who come for it, but with strict limits as to how often such food may be obtained by an individual or household. Child care subsidies are available for families with incomes as much as 135 percent of poverty for small families but down to 100 percent of poverty for larger ones, but with required co-payments which may be up to one-half of the cost for those at or near these limits.

Families with annual incomes below a level ranging from about $20,000 for a family of two to $30,000 for a family of six are eligible for Section 8 housing and public housing which require them to pay 30 percent of their income as rent. However, the amount of available funding is so low that a wait of two to five years is likely before having access to such rental assistance, unless one qualifies for a number of exceptions such a those for the disabled or HIV/AIDS victims. Housing purchases and rehabilitation of owned homes subsidized in various ways are possible for households in those income ranges and above.

Tuition for school attendance and skill training is also available for low income people who want to upgrade their skills, though assistance is not directly provided to enable school attendance for those with no other income source.
PRIVATE CHARITABLE CONTRIBUTIONS

Within that context of organizations, needs and public programs, what is the potential role for private charitable organizations?

Income Replacement

There is no private charitable organization on the Utah scene capable of providing cash incomes as a substitute for the cash public assistance of AFDC and TANF. The closest to that is the authorization of the bishops of LDS Wards to provide the crucial necessities of life that would have been purchased by the recipients had they the money to do so. For instance, an LDS bishop, at his discretion, can issue a check to pay the rent of a ward member. The source of those funds is the fast offering each member family is expected to pay, foregoing two meals on the first Sunday of each month, primarily for spiritual reasons, then contributing some multiple of the cost of those two meals as an offering to assist the poor. Traditionally, LDS bishops have limited their assistance to LDS Church members, but increasingly they are being encouraged by their superiors to take responsibility for all of those living within the geographical boundaries of their wards, regardless of church affiliation. The bishop is not limited to the fast offerings contributed by the members of his own ward but can, by simply writing a check, call upon the fast offerings of the entire church. It is assumed, and has been generally true since the end of the American Great Depression of the 1930s, that the surplus fast offerings of the more affluent wards will exceed the deficits of the needy wards.

That same bishop can also obtain food for those within his ward boundaries merely by writing an order upon the nearest Bishops’ Storehouse which looks like and functions like a supermarket except that the bishops’ orders take the place of cash. Most of the food there has been raised by the efforts of volunteer labor upon farms owned by the LDS Church Welfare System and processed, also by volunteer labor in church-owned canneries, milk plants, bakeries and other facilities. Those few food items not
available through the church production system are purchased and supplied from the storehouse shelves. Used clothing, furniture and other donated items are available at bishops’ order from Deseret Industries stores, along with some furniture, mattresses and other items manufactured anew at Deseret Industries Manufacturing.

Those recipients of such LDS assistance who are not prevented from doing so because of health, family responsibilities or employment are supposed to be asked to provide volunteer labor on church projects. However, it is totally up to each bishop to decide whether or not to impose that requirement.

Thus, basic subsistence could be and is provided to some without luxuries. In general, it is LDS welfare policy to use these funds and commodities for short-term emergency help to get a family back on its feet and self-reliant. However, it is also common for such support to be provided on a continuing basis for someone incapable of self-reliance because of age or disability. Those in need are expected to obtain whatever assistance they can from families and whatever they have a legitimate right to from public programs, then look to the church for needed supplementation, up to total support if needed. Again, those decisions are left to the local bishop within the guidance of a few general rules in church handbooks.

The proportion of LDS membership among the body of present or past public assistance recipients is unknown, but there is no reason to believe it is far from the approximately 70 percent which the LDS membership represents among Utah’s total population. Thus, support at a subsistence level of the needy LDS membership among those leaving public assistance in Utah as a result of welfare reform would not be beyond the capacity of the LDS Church. Though the church would encourage families to absorb as much as possible of the burden and would be constantly encouraging the recipients to become employed and self-reliant if their health and family status made that possible.

No other private charitable agency on the Utah scene has that capability, though most other churches provide limited amounts of short-term emergency help. Provision of income where it cannot be earned remains a governmental responsibility.
Employment

Another income replacement option could be the provision of employment by charitable organizations. Temporary help agencies put people on their payrolls, then sell the services of those people to employers for a profit. Some of those so-employed are former public assistance recipients, but they are hired for their capabilities and the willingness of the customer organization to pay for the use of their productivity, not as a charitable gesture. A number of sheltered workshops do exist to supply employment to the disabled at below market wages to compensate for the limited productivity. Some of these private organizations are government-subsidized but some manage to meet their own costs through carefully managed private production and market sale of the products.

Beyond those examples, the LDS Church is again the only private entity in Utah providing a substantial amount of employment on a charitable basis. As noted, LDS bishops providing assistance from fast offering funds or bishops’ orders usually expect those not prevented by health, age or child care responsibilities to volunteer work without further pay at church facilities. But, in addition, Deseret Industries, Deseret Industries Manufacturing, and the Humanitarian Service Center (which prepares donated items for overseas shipment) see as part of their reason for being the provision of work experience and on-the-job training to those of limited employability. In fact, they deliberately foster high turnover and consider it accomplishment of their mission to not only provide market wages but to prepare their employees for and encourage the moving on to other jobs as an upward step in a career process. In fact, they sponsor on-site remedial education and skill training during working hours and even pay wages to some of their trainees taking classes at the Salt Lake Community College. But, though significant, the numbers of those so employed and trained are relatively few—only a few hundred per year throughout the state, limited by the total output of the facilities.

Food
Food is, of course, one of the necessities obtained by public assistance recipients in part from expenditure of the cash received. But more of their food needs are met from the federal food stamps. The value of those stamps (which are really not stamps but a plastic card like any debit or credit card) could have been merely added to the cash benefits of AFDC and TANF, but two political needs had to be served. There was the suspicion that the poor were not to be trusted but might prefer to use the money for alcohol or drugs rather than food. (In actual fact, they tend to be more likely to forego food to pay the rent.) More important politically was the support of the agriculture industry which perceived the result primarily as an increase in the demand for their products. That political support has also been important historically in the provision of breakfast and lunch through the schools and occasional public distribution of surplus foods.

As already noted, eligibility for Food Stamps is automatic for public assistance recipients but continues thereafter as long as low income levels from other sources justifies it. In fact, recent studies have demonstrated that a high proportion of those who have ceased receiving cash welfare benefits over the past few years of rapid decline in Utah’s welfare rolls have continued to receive Food Stamps as an income supplement, often for years afterward. At the same time, many of those who are eligible for Food Stamps but have never been on public assistance and therefore exposed to that source of food forego seeking it. Access to publicly provided food through the schools is an issue of family income, not an issue of public assistance recipiency.

What are the alternative food sources for the poor in absence of the public agricultural largesse? The Food Bank volume, distributed by food pantries throughout the state is immense—3.9 million pounds in the 1999-2000 fiscal year. The primary sources are unsold surpluses from grocery stores, restaurants, and institutional cafeterias, as well as the surplus of the LDS Church welfare system. Food drives by the Boy Scouts, postal employees and others are useful for publicity but are not large producers of volume. Private individuals and families who contribute food stuffs to the Food Bank system, after all, have to purchase the food and could as well contribute the money, though they might not then be as conscious of the need and would be less likely to respond. The volume of food available through the Food Bank system fluctuates widely, dependent primarily upon the publicity given to the need, but rarely is it in surplus supply.
The speculation is often advanced that, because other costs of living, such as rent, are fixed and inflexible, low income families pay those first, relying on charitable food sources when money runs out. In response, the various food pantries ration their distribution by limiting the number of times over a calendar period any individual or household is allowed to receive food. Free meals to the homeless are also provided regularly by several entities in the neighborhood of the Travelers’ Aid homeless shelter. Area churches and civic groups sporadically appear at the shelter or in the neighborhood to provide an evening or weekend meal. The Cathedral of the Madeline also provides a cold lunch to whoever drops by—8000 sandwiches a month at last report, but there is obviously a limit, both to how many can call there and how many can be fed.

So once again, the major alternative charitable food source in Utah, in the absence of Food Stamps, is the LDS Church. Food from the Bishops’ Storehouses is available only upon written order from an LDS bishop specifying which items and how many a recipient is entitled to. As noted, bishops are increasingly under instruction that they are responsible for anyone living within their ward boundaries, whether or not an LDS Church member. A bishop can, if he so chooses, issue such a food order, or an order to Deseret Industries for clothing or other items. That would ordinarily be done only in perception of an emergency situation or when the bishop had been persuaded that the church contribution would be a significant step in a planned progress to self reliance. There are also officed at the LDS Welfare Square in Salt Lake City two ordained bishops without geographical jurisdiction assigned to assist transients, the homeless and others without connection to a specific address. They can also issue bishops’ orders and frequently do so, but under the same rule of thumb.

The church does not release information concerning the volume and value of its food production and giving. But it is obviously large, meeting all of the needs of its Bishops’ Storehouses and, at the same time, giving freely and without publicity to the Food Bank and to the various free meal suppliers, and shipping substantial volume throughout the nation and internationally. In response to queries concerning the impact of welfare reform upon demands for its various welfare offerings, including food, LDS welfare officials responded that any increase had not been noticeable. The volume of its production and distribution is already a substantial supplement and could be a significant replacement for some of the public Food Stamp provision. But, for Latter-day Saints, in Utah and elsewhere, that would mean substituting for what
they now pay in taxes to support the Food Stamp system what they had provided through their fast offerings and their volunteer labor. There is still no free lunch.

Clothing

The small and sporadic charitable expenditures of area churches could go for clothing as well as for other necessities and organizations such as the Crossroads Urban Center distribute clothing donated to them. However, the only organization in the state that has a substantial and continuing supply of used clothing is Deseret Industries. Their donated clothing supply is available for purchase or on bishops’ order, but is also made available upon request to other charitable organizations in the community.

Housing

As noted, an LDS bishop can choose to pay the rent of someone living within his geographical jurisdiction. The agent bishops on Welfare Square frequently pay for the motel lodging of a stranded transient or someone temporarily homeless and likely to find early access to more permanent housing. Other churches could pay temporary rent for someone, but few, if any, have a charitable budget adequate to do so. LDS and other church congregations get together on an ad hoc basis to help rehabilitate the housing of needy neighbors. A few other organizations marshal skilled help to meet rehabilitation needs. However, these sporadic efforts are not of a scale that could to any reasonable extent replace the housing subsidies provided to the communities within the state by the federal Department of Housing and Urban Development and state programs such as the Olene Walker Housing Trust Fund. Some other charitable organizations, such as the Community Action Program, assist people to find access to housing and occasionally have access to governmental funds to pay temporary rent. Other private organizations such as the Utah Nonprofit Housing Corporation build and manage housing to be made available at below market rates, but they are dependent upon government housing funds in order to do so. Habitat for Humanity is the only charitable organization in the state constructing housing for charitable purposes using
privately-generated donated funds, and its efforts, though important, generate only a few additional houses a year.

Education and Training

A reality coincident to the transfer between the 20th and the 21st centuries is that very few are able to earn a family-sustaining income without substantial post-secondary education and/or skill training. Provision of 12 years of free public education is accepted in the United States but the needs are for at least 14 years. In its absence, how is post-secondary education to be paid for? The full cost must be paid up front for training from private proprietary schools. Therefore, its tuition is very expensive. Both taxpayer-supported public colleges and universities and endowment-supported private ones still confront the potential student with higher tuition costs than recent public assistance leavers are able to pay and still support their families. As already noted, most of those who have left public assistance in Utah over the past few years have merely transferred from the status of welfare poor to working poor. The only realistic escape appears to be further education and skill training. Who is to pay for both the tuition and the accompanying child care? Obviously, the recipient cannot pay up front and few are likely to be able to command earnings after training sufficient to repay educational loans. Tax-supported scholarships, accompanied by child care and some kind of subsistence payments during training, are familiar approaches. What is the private sector alternative? Is it reasonable to suppose that sufficient funding can be generated through private contributions to undergird the mini-GI bill approach that would really be necessary to bring these veterans of combat with poverty to adequate earnings victory?

Support Systems

Comparing the lifestyles of public assistance recipient families with the other families in the community, noticeable is the frequent absence of any support system of extended family and friends not burdened by their own resource shortages. An ambition of the social work profession has always been to
substitute for that support system by serving as mentors to those in need of friendship and counsel, but caseload realities, as well as the necessity of enforcing distasteful rules generally make that impossible. Here in reality is an area in which the private charitable sector could excel, if it could recruit the necessary volunteers, where public agencies are unlikely to ever be adequate. Most LDS homes in Utah are visited monthly by home teachers representing the priesthood quorums and visiting teachers representing the female Relief Society. Conceptually, they are to serve as mentors, as well as sources of communication between the families and the ward leadership, but in fact these visits are generally quite pro forma. The experimental LDS Inner City Project and the LDS Family Support Service, the latter housed at LDS Welfare Square, have demonstrated the values of mentorship and the possibilities of getting it done through the efforts of several hundred volunteer couples over the past few years. Sporadic mentoring efforts by organizations such as Big Brothers/Big Sisters and by ad hoc efforts of various churches demonstrate the value of mentoring and the difficulty of finding sufficient volunteers to get it done. Even the LDS Church, with its historical tradition of responding positively to calls from those in authority, finds it difficult to recruit enough volunteers to meet its own needs, let alone supply mentors to other organizations. Nevertheless, here is the one valuable services where public provision is impossible but private provision at least within the realms of possibility.

THE REALITIES OF PUBLIC VERSUS PRIVATE PROVISION OF CHARITY

Little can be accomplished in human society without combining the skills and commitments of a multiplicity of people in some kind of organization, be it the family, the neighborhood, the social club, the church, the business organization, or the government. But there is a fundamental difference between all of the rest of these organizational forms and the latter. That is the availability of compulsion. Individuals can choose whether or not to become involved with private organizations, whether as volunteers or as employees. Individuals and organizations can choose whether or not to contribute resources to private charities and whether or not to do business with private for-profit businesses. But if the representatives of
the majority in a democracy—or the rulers themselves in a non-democratic government—decide to allocate resources obtained through taxation to a particular cause, those who pay the taxes have no choice but to contribute. That is simple reality to which one objects only when found in the political minority. From 1935 to 1996, representatives of the majority in these United States concluded that there was a minimum family income below which those families without an employable family head should not be allowed to fall. They also decided that such families should have a right to such minimum family income, regardless of the state of the public purse. Public assistance was to be an entitlement, funds for which simply had to be provided.

In 1996, the representatives of the majority again spoke and eliminated that entitlement, evidently assuming two things: (1) that most of those dependent upon the public purse could become self-supporting, and that (2) there were “out there” private charitable organizations which could provide most of the foregone income and services.

Evidence thus far is that, in a prosperous economy, most families can move from a situation of taxpayer-supported poverty to personally-earned poverty incomes. Whether those same public assistance leavers can be assisted to learn to earn above poverty incomes has not been tested. In fact, the policy has been work first, with very limited access to skill training. Of course, for a person of limited work experience, it make sense to begin with that, as long as that first rudimentary and probably low paid job is not allowed to become permanent status.

But all of that adds four realities:

- The need for income supplements to the low earnings of that first job
- The need for child care to make the time of single parents available for either employment or training
- The need for an effective “second chance” education and training system to assist that former public assistance recipient to increase her skills until she can earn a family-sustaining income
- The need for a mentoring support system on that long trail to that family-sustaining income
Only the latter can be reasonably expected from the private charitable sector. The number of Utah organizations dedicated to improving the well-being of those unable to adequately support themselves and their families is impressive and heartening. They could do more with greater resources, but where are those resources to come from? Private sector possibilities have not been exhausted, but further expansion will be difficult. Government, in a democracy, is simply the device a free people uses to provide those services, be it defense, education, or care for the poor, among other possibilities, that it considers too essential to depend upon the vagaries of private charity. Sharp lines cannot be drawn between the needs most appropriately met by each of the private and public components of the society. Both are necessary and an appropriate partnership between them is the best hope for a rise out of poverty for those families leaving public assistance in a time of welfare reform.