GEOGRAPHIC BREADTH

Only three States introduced Declaration without a tooling up or testing period in a county or district. Most States whose programs are 12–18 months old (6) have extended the project to all parts of the States and all who have drawn conclusions from the test period report their intention to do so. The introductory period involves perfecting forms, changing policies (in some instances) and training staff.

ELIGIBILITY PROCESS

Nine of the 12 States determine both initial and continuing eligibility by Declaration. Only Alabama, Louisiana and West Virginia do not.

CATEGORIES INCLUDED

All 12 States use Declaration in their OAA category; ten of the 12 include all the adult categories (OAA, AB, APTD); surprisingly, eight include or are experimenting with AFDC recipients; three, Wisconsin, New York City and Pennsylvania include general assistance recipients.[4]

Most of the innovations associated with Declaration are internal to the agency. Two seem most likely to rouse strong overt public criticism, inclusion of AFDC recipients and establishing initial eligibility without a mandatory interview. It is striking, therefore, that eight states have included AFDC either in their initial plan (New York City, Iowa, Wisconsin, Pennsylvania) or as an extension of the existing system (California, Alabama, Maine, Colorado). And even more, that two of them, Maine and Colorado, do not require an application interview.

It is evident that Declaration is gaining momentum as it spreads across the country but also that prudent concern over public reaction seems to characterize the extent and structure of the innovations associated with it. Before speculating about the factors that may influence the extent of his innovation, it is useful to examine the amount of ineligibility that may be associated with this process.

D. VALIDATION, HOW HONEST ARE CLIENTS?

Not surprisingly, clients are reported to be as honest as the rest of us, surprisingly honest in many cases. Some examples: forms filled in by clients alone are observed to have fewer errors than those in which someone, caseworker, friend or prominent local citizen, helps them; often clients, when self-reporting, disclose assets not previously reported in interviews and in one state (West Virginia) one-fifth of those found to be ineligible, self-reported this fact on returning their form.

A full assessment of Declaration's effectiveness in determining eligibility benefis would identify four kinds of cases in which discrepancies are found: (1) errors of any kind, "defective applications," (2) errors effecting the amount of benefits thought not eligibility per se, a much smaller number (3) ineligible cases, a smaller number yet, and (4) eligible cases denied benefits, no States reported on these cases, though New York City plans to do so.

Seven States reported the results of validation experience. Rates of defective applications ranged from as high as 30–35 percent to as low as 2–8 percent. The high rate of errors were attributed less to client perfidy than to policy stupidity. Policies were complex and detailed, demanding for example, exact reporting of cash value of insurance, property taxes, birth dates and places; all items in which innocent mistakes abound. Staff produced errors are also frequently reported. Individual workers or whole units will be "overly strict" in finding errors or omissions, e.g., in mail applications, items whose meaning is clear from context will be reported as errors or omissions.

Reported ineligibility[5] ranged from a low of zero to .04 percent to a high of between 6 and 7 percent. All but one State reported less than 4 percent. New York City's rate, including AFDC, is less than 2 percent. California, however,

[4] The States and categories are: *OAA*, West Virginia and Louisiana; *Adult* categories, Connecticut and Michigan; *Adult and AFDC*, Alabama, California, Colorado, Maine, Iowa; all these and other programs, Wisconsin, New York City and Pennsylvania.

[5] The reported percentage of ineligible cases includes an unknown proportion of deliberate attempts to defraud along with ordinary errors of reporting and interpretation.