



Challenges to Self-Sufficiency in New York City's Workforce-Development System

04/01/09

Homelessness Outreach and Prevention Project at the Urban Justice Center examined the experiences of public assistance and food stamps clients as they engage in work activities and found that poor New Yorkers often want to work and have appropriate skills and strengths, but are stymied by the Workforce Development System's "work-first" policy, which emphasizes immediate, low-wage jobs. The policy forces clients into short-term, low-skill jobs that fail to help them attain self-sufficiency and does not allow clients to take advantage of their existing skills, experience or training, while clients who are currently enrolled in independent job training programs are forced to drop out of those programs to comply work requirements and receive benefits.