



# Policy Creation and Evaluation: Understanding Welfare Reform in the United States (Pocket Guide to Social Work Research Methods)

*Richard Hoefer*

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Although practitioners do not often identify an explicit focus on social welfare policy, the analysis (what it is) and evaluation (what it does) of policy is basic to social work practice. This unique pocket guide presents a case study on one of the most important domestic policy decisions in the post-WWII era, the passage of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA) of 1996. This law ended welfare as we knew it by creating the Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) program and closing the Aid to Families with Dependent Children program.

Examining the law through three decision-making models assists readers in understanding TANF's historical antecedents, its political and power implications, and the way in which it meets social and economic goals. Individual chapters demonstrate how programs such as TANF are evaluated and the methods that can be used, such as primarily qualitative, primarily quantitative, and mixed methods evaluation techniques. Illustrating the advantages and disadvantages of each approach for evaluation, Hoefer makes use of the numerous studies undertaken in the thirteen years since welfare reform and its 2006 reauthorization. Part history text, readers will also learn about the details of the TANF legislation creation and evaluation, but will finish with a greater understanding of the policy creation and evaluation processes.

This pocket guide will be useful to researchers and students of advanced social policy who seek to understand the two stages of policy-making, to develop policy, or to describe the impact of social policy on social problems.



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