



TABLE OF CONTENTS

Executive Summary	3
Background	5
Leadership and Structure	6
Needs Assessment Survey and Recommendations	7
Resources	9
Programs	11
Dependent Care Subsidy Program	11
Work and Family Resource and Referral Service	12
Dependent Care Facility Grants	14
Telework Survey and Report	16
Outreach to State Employees	17
Work and Family Network	19
Management and Employee Training	20
Other Significant Accomplishments	21
Challenges	23
Participant Feedback and Program Impact	25
Recommendations for the Future	26
Acknowledgements	28

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A survey of California state employees found that 62% have dependents (children, elderly or both). The growing tension of balancing the demands of the work life and family responsibilities is impacting the productivity, morale, and health of our state workers. Nationwide, these concerns have led to an increase in family-friendly benefits and policies to aid employees in balancing their personal and professional lives. A recent survey of U.S. employers concluded that employers have found work life policies and benefits are a cost-effective means to attract and retain a loyal, skilled workforce.

In 1999 legislation passed that appropriated \$5 million dollars to develop programs that would assist California state employees in meeting their family obligations while at the same time providing quality services for their employer. A joint labor/management Committee was established to develop programs and services to meet that goal.

As a result of the Committee's work, thousands of state employees received assistance with dependent care issues and expenses, modified their work schedules, and participated in work and family training programs. The impact on the productivity of employees is not tangible; however, national studies have shown that similar programs have had substantial positive impacts for employers.

The Committee was basically a volunteer group that committed their time and talents including, in some instances, their personal time to this program's success. In many cases the Committee members had to draw upon the resources of their respective agencies to accomplish the work.

With limited dedicated full time staff support throughout the project, the Committee utilized a subcommittee structure to accomplish the objectives and recommendations that they established in 2000. The Committee was challenged to develop processes to implement the various programs. Despite the high learning curve and barriers they were able to expend over 90% of the allotted funding at the conclusion.

The Committee took great pains to research, track and monitor the grants given to organizations to insure the quality and integrity of the program.

In the beginning, the Committee underestimated the difficulties in communicating effectively with a large state workforce which was so geographically dispersed. It is ironic that as the program is sunsetting in June of 2005, their communications efforts are finally paying dividends with more demand for the services and an increase in the number of individuals aware of the benefits available to them.

Included in this report are several recommendations to preserve the work of the Committee and to provide guidance on how to reinstate the programs should funding become available again in the future.

The need to balance the pressures of work and family has not diminished for American workers and employees of the State of California. The benefits provided by this program had a profound impact on the lives of state workers and will be sorely missed by those who were able to participate.

QUOTE IN A RESEARCH STUDY FROM BOSTON COLLEGE:

“Workplace Flexibility: A Powerful Strategy for Today's Dynamic Marketplace

*In the fall of 2000, we released **Measuring the Impact of Workplace Flexibility**. The report, which reflects information from over 1,500 employees and managers, concludes that when managed effectively, greater workplace flexibility is a win-win situation for both companies and the individuals they employ. Among the findings:*

- *87% of employees and 70% of managers report that flexible work arrangements have positive effects on productivity*
- *87% of employees and 65% of managers report that flexible work arrangements have positive effects on the quality of work*
- *80% of employees and 76% of managers report that flexible work arrangements have positive effects on retention*

The results of this study reveal that the most promising form of flexibility is daily flextime, defined as the ability to vary work hours on a daily basis. Today's world is more complicated, the pace of life has quickened dramatically, and technology has placed even greater demands on our time. Employees who are able to adjust their hours to meet the needs of their jobs and their personal lives report higher levels of job satisfaction and better work/family balance.”

BACKGROUND

Mission:
The Work and Family Advisory Committee, a joint labor/management body, identifies, recommends, and advocates for family-friendly work policies and programs to support California State employees in balancing their work and family needs.

A joint labor/management committee was established in 2000 to identify, recommend and advocate for family–friendly policies and programs that support California State employees in balancing the demands of work and family. The Committee was charged with providing recommendations for programs and services, utilizing the monies set aside for this effort.

The impetus for this Committee and its unprecedented work resulted from the growing realization among California’s civil service employees, employee organizations, and decision makers that work and family issues had risen to such a high level of importance within the State workforce that they could simply no longer remain unresolved.

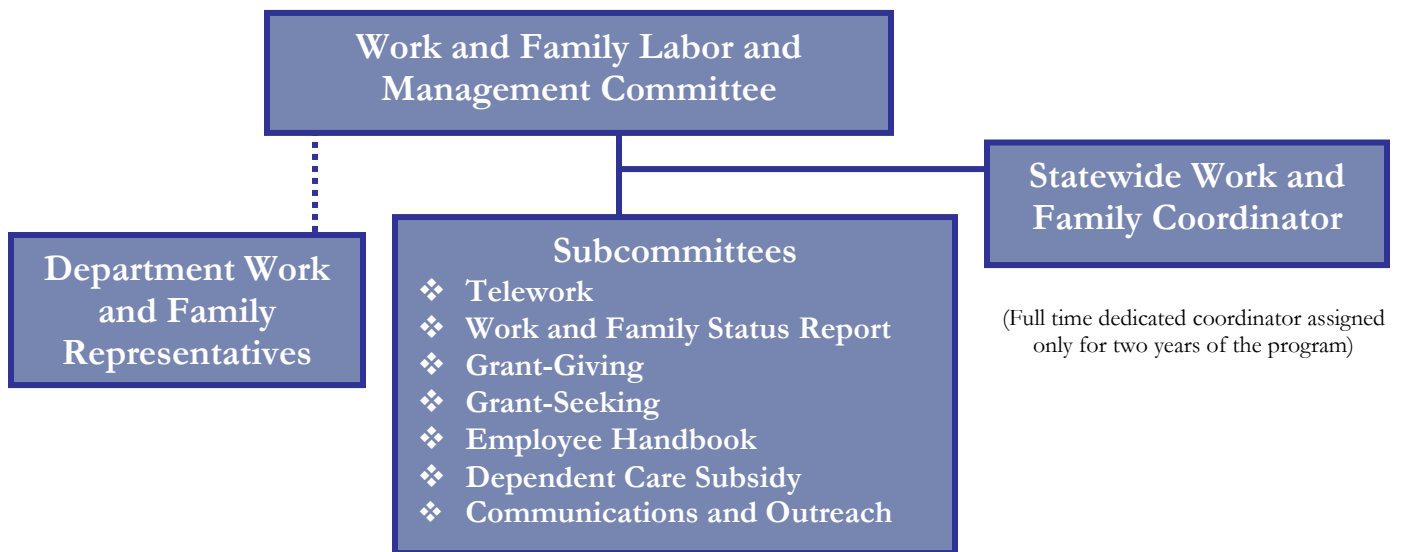
The Committee’s recommendations regarding the Work and Family Program were published in its October 2000 report, *The Future of California: Work and Family Program*. Additionally, an Executive briefing entitled *Work and Family Program Strategy* was published in February 2002 as well as a *Status Report June 2004*.

This Committee was originally made up of 30 members with equal numbers representing labor and management. The primary strength of the Committee was the fact that they represented classified, technical, professional, management and exempt classifications and a true microcosm of the issues all state employees were facing in their lives: dependent care challenges; low income and two income families juggling schedules and resources; supervisors of employees dealing with difficult issues; rural residents with limited dependent care options; 24 hour shift requirements; heavy work related travel burdens; family crises, deaths, and births.

Copies of these reports can be found on line at
http://www.dpa.ca.gov/WorkingFamilies/final_report/main.shtm

LEADERSHIP AND STRUCTURE

The Work and Family Labor/Management Committee was led by co-chairs representing Labor and Management. In addition, the following structure was established to assist the Committee in accomplishing its objectives:



In 2002, the Committee established a network of Department Work and Family Representatives to assist in communicating to state employees the benefits available through the program. This group of approximately 80 representatives attended quarterly forums beginning in March 2003 to learn more about the programs offered and provide input into their successful implementation.

The structure of labor and management leadership proved to be very effective in launching this program. The weakest link in the structure was the lack of ongoing administrative support for the Committee throughout the five year program.

NEEDS ASSESSMENT SURVEY

Drawing upon the Committee members' own family experiences and knowledge of state employment, they realized it was vital to find out directly from California State employees what their needs and priorities were before making any recommendations. The Committee contracted for a needs assessment to be conducted in 2000.

To set the foundation, the Committee hired expert consultants to conduct a statistically valid statewide needs assessment of State employees' work and family issues. The survey was supplemented by 18 focus group meetings. This landmark study set the stage for the Committee to identify priorities and make specific recommendations to improve work and family policies and benefits for the State workforce.

The Committee also reviewed work and family initiatives in other states. Their report identified policy options and actions for further consideration, as outlined in the table below.

Work & Family Issues Identified by California State Workers

- Time off for family member illnesses, routine medical appointments, and children's school-related activities.
- Expanded leave programs to include donated leave pools, expanded bereavement leave, and longer-term crisis leave.
- Flexibility in work hours to allow time off to attend to family needs. Options include alternate work schedules, telecommuting, variable work hours, more part-time options, and flexibility in setting holiday and vacation leave.
- Managers and supervisors who support a workplace culture that is open and accepting of family-friendly policies and practices.
- Information readily available to all employees on family-friendly programs, policies, and benefits in a clear, reader-friendly guidebook.
- Resource and referral service to help find safe, high-quality dependent care, including child and elder care, holiday/summer vacation programs, and programs for dependents with special needs.
- Day care facilities at or near work sites.
- Training for caregiver workers and care providers.
- A monetary subsidy for dependent care, especially for lower-income employees, to provide assistance with dependent care expenses

The data gathered from this effort indicated several key factors for Committee consideration:

- ❖ 50% are expected to be responsible for an adult dependent within the next five years

- ❖ 44% of the workforce has at least one dependent child
- ❖ 15% care for both adult and child dependents

To assist them in balancing work and family demands state employees indicated on the survey a preference for programs that provided:

- ❖ 83% - time off work for family member illness
- ❖ 70% - work hours flexibility
- ❖ 61% - time off work for routine medical appointments
- ❖ 60% - time off work for children's school-related activities

Using the data from the needs assessment, the Committee made the following recommendations in five broad categories:

FRAMEWORK AND INFRASTRUCTURE

1. Provide a framework for implementing the work of the Committee including the creation of a Work and Family Coordinator position at the Department of Personnel Administration; designate a work and family representative from all departments; establish a standing Work and Family Labor/Management Committee; and issue an Executive Order supporting family-friendly programs.

WORK FLEXIBILITY

2. Build work flexibility into California state employment practices including the support of flexibility programs; the development of a family crisis leave program; provide consistent hardship transfer policies across agencies; create an unpaid family leave program; expand leave credit transfer policies; and redesign the calculation for Family Medical Leave Act eligibility.

ADMINISTRATIVE POLICIES AND SUPPORT

3. Provide administration policies and support including a statewide comprehensive training program on work and family; expand minimum qualification criteria on manager and supervisory examinations to include work and family issues; include work and family priorities in manager evaluations; include work and family program initiatives as a management incentive category; implement regular reporting requirements; and develop and implement a comprehensive plan for defining and adopting work and family principles into all state policies.

EDUCATION/RESOURCE AND REFERRAL SERVICES

4. Provide education, resource and referral services to employees, including a Work and Family reference handbook and a comprehensive referral program for dependent care.

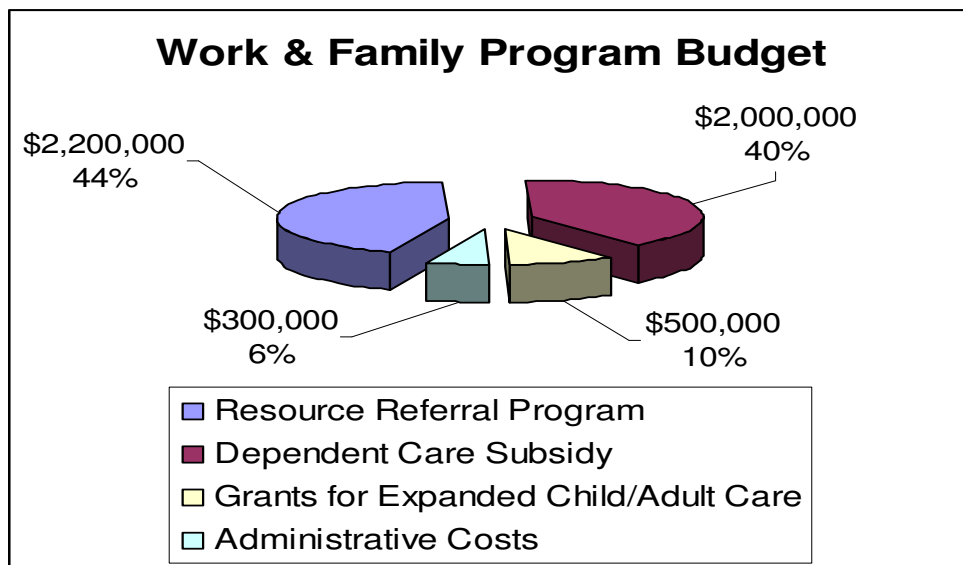
DEPENDENT CARE PROJECT

5. Conduct a dependent care demonstration project at one work site.

RESOURCES

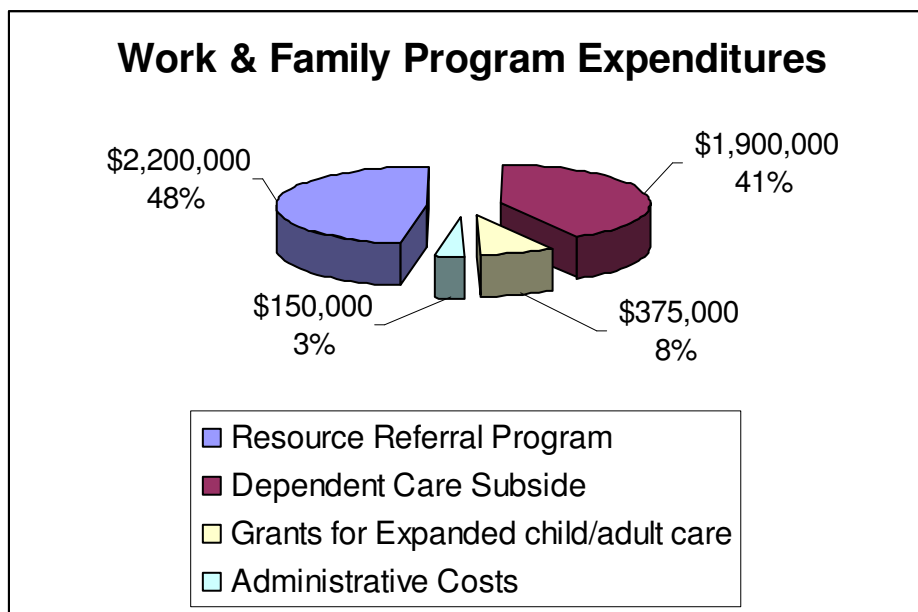
BUDGET

In the 1999 labor negotiations, the employee unions and the state administration agreed to provide a Work and Family Program Fund of \$5 million. The Work and Family Fund legislation AB738 of 1999 also provided an additional \$500,000 for the Work and Family Advisory Committee to conduct committee business. The Committee allocated the \$5 million dollars as follows:



ACTUAL EXPENDITURES

Despite the struggles and challenges the Committee faced in launching these programs, in the end they proved to be very good stewards of the state funds provided to them to administer. Of the funds allocated 97% was spent on direct benefits and services for state employees.



PROGRAMS

The following programs were implemented by the Work and Family Advisory Committee. Each program was designed to directly respond to the needs of state employees as identified in the needs assessment survey

DEPENDENT CARE SUBSIDY PROGRAM

This program offered a subsidy to permanent California state employees with dependent care costs and was administered through the DPA FlexElect Program. Based on the needs assessment feedback this program was given a higher priority and therefore the Committee set aside \$2 million to offer financial assistance with dependent care costs to employees in the lower income range.

When the initial response was not as great as anticipated, the Committee conducted a targeted survey to identify barriers to participation. Based on the findings, the program was revised during FY 03/04 to appeal to a larger target audience, and an outreach campaign was conducted to educate employees and their managers about the benefit and the application process. Participation increased significantly during the second year and continued to increase during FY 04/05.

Income eligible employees were provided subsidy grants for their dependent care expenses, beginning in 2003. Employees were eligible for up to \$400 the first year of the program and \$1000 the remaining years. The state's already established Flex Elect program and its related infrastructure were used to process the payment of the Dependent Care Subsidies (DCS). The following table summarizes the status of awards as of May 2005:

At the conclusion of the first year of this program the Committee launched a comprehensive marketing effort partnering with the Resource and Referral contractor and adjusting the application income requirements to be based only on the base salary of the state employee.

Year	# of New Grants	Total Dollars Awarded
2003	1279	\$92,800
2004	1007	\$ 864,230
2005	1257	\$1,025,000
TOTAL	3543	\$1,982,030

“I requested day care providers (at home) for infant care. It provided me with a starting point without all the headaches of researching the providers. They did it for me so I could better concentrate on my work.”

Jean

“I am a single parent to a seven year old girl working full-time plus attending classes at night. Personally, I benefited from the child care subsidy because the price of child care these days is extremely expensive, especially since I am the sole income provider for my family. The website also allowed me the convenience of accessing a single point of contact for researching important information regarding options for my child.”

Jessica

WORK AND FAMILY RESOURCE AND REFERRAL SERVICE

The Work and Family Needs Assessment reported that 72% of State employees with dependents have difficulty finding dependent care services for children and adults. In response to this need, the Work and Family Resource and Referral Service was launched in June 2003:

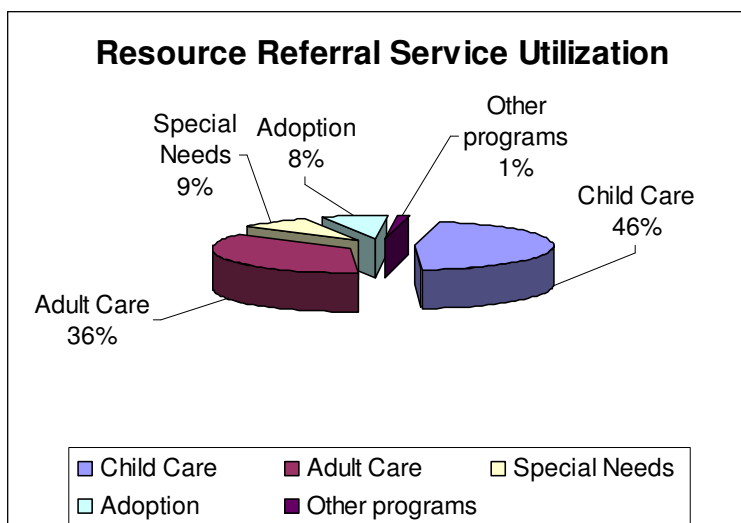
- Resource and Referral Services were provided 24 hours a day, seven days a week for all types of dependent care to California state employees (regardless of time base), their spouses and dependents.
- Customized, case management specialists were available to respond to employees individual dependent care issues.
- Dependent child and adult care providers were located in the employee’s local geographic area including those who offer services after school, during non-core hours, weekends, on holidays, and during the summer. They also had information on providers who can offer care on short notice (i.e. unscheduled or unplanned overtime hours) and those who serve mildly ill children or adults.
- Comprehensive advice on lactation methods and how to purchase breast pumps at discount prices was made available.
- Periodic evaluations were conducted to identify any gaps in services. All State employees using the program were asked to respond to a quality assurance questionnaire rating the services.

Since implementation of this service, more than 96% of all State of California employees utilizing these services rated them as “Good” to “Excellent.”

Promotional materials about the Resource and Referral Service (flyers, e-mail announcements, and newsletter articles) were sent out quarterly to inform employees of this service which was accessible 24 hours a day, seven days a week. These materials included simple, clear instructions so employees could easily access these services.

The following table provides data on the utilization of the Resource & Referral Service provide by LifeCare, which was made available to State employees. Over 25,280 State employees used the service, accessing it through either the toll-free telephone number or the Internet. On average, specialists pre-screened over 39 providers for each case in order to provide an average of 6 qualified referrals to each employee.

Utilization of Resource and Referral Service	
Total Utilization	25,280
(accessing the service by web or phone)	
What Did They Do?	
Requested educational materials	11,253
Spoke with a specialist	5,162
Accessed the reference library	2,696
Logged into the Web site	6,169
State employees who spoke with a specialist asked about:	
Child care	46.5%
Adult care	35.8%
Special needs	8.6%
Adoption	7.8%
Other program areas	1.3%
How did they rate the service?	
Good to excellent	96%
The following areas received high ratings:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Helpfulness and attitude of reception personnel • Helpfulness and attitude of your LifeCare Specialist • Your LifeCare Specialist's professionalism • Education resources • LifeCare's overall service 	



Quotes from employees about this program:

- “You provide an invaluable service and it is greatly appreciated.”
- “Great service for parents ... without LifeCare I would have had to beat the street.”
- “This is the third time I have used your services. First two times were great, this time the information was terrific.”

DEPENDENT CARE FACILITY GRANTS

The Committee's needs assessment survey found that 74% of California State employees reported problems with funding dependent care, and 63% reported problems finding needed services. The Committee set aside \$500,000 for grants to:

“Provide seed money for supporting the growth of more affordable, quality dependent care services for State employees, such as near site or onsite child care, elder care, spouse/partner adult day care, as well as after hours and weekend care in cases of unscheduled/unplanned overtime and emergencies.”

The Future of California: Work and Family Programs, p. 15.

This new Dependent Care Facility Grant Program drew on the successful model established in 1984 with the State Employee Child Care Program. The Committee updated and expanded the model to include adult day care, to fund expansion of existing facilities as well as startup of new facilities, to allow partnership agreements with existing nonprofit facilities, and to reflect cost increases since the 1980s.

The maximum single grant was limited to \$50,000 to dependent care facilities to expand the services and the number of available openings for state employees' dependents, including one adult day care operation. The grants provided new slots for children and adults in new and existing facilities, added a second shift care option at one facility, and expanded one facility's capacity for individuals with physical disabilities.

There was a high learning curve about the grant giving process. The large volume of paperwork required was difficult to process without trained grant giving staff. The Committee established a subcommittee to administer this program and drew heavily on the past experience and expertise of one of their members to bring this program on line. For the Committee members the cumbersome process to track the grant recipients to maintain program integrity and insure recipients met their obligations was a true challenge.

This particular program was designed to address some of the specific child care and elder care issues that face state employees, such as shift work and limited number of elder care facilities. The Committee was able to award grants to the following facilities throughout the state.

Facility	Grant	Location
Building Blocks Child Care Atascadero State Hospital, Dept. of Mental Health	\$50,000 for program expansion to add a swing shift option	San Luis Obispo
East End Child Care Dept. of Education and Dept. of Health Services	\$50,000 for program start up	Sacramento
Poppy Patch Child Care Franchise Tax Board	\$50,000 for program expansion by opening a new center	Sacramento
Tiny Dots Child Care Dept. of Transportation	\$50,000 for program start up	Los Angeles
Humboldt State University	\$50,000 for program expansion to include services for individuals with physical disabilities	Arcata
One Generation	\$50,000 for elder and child care program expansion	Van Nuys
C5	\$50,000 for program expansion	San Francisco
Kid Ease Environmental Protection Agency	\$25, 000 for program expansion	Sacramento

“I received information regarding finding an assistance living facility for my aging father. I felt relief from stress knowing that a knowledgeable, caring person was assisting me with something for which I had no knowledge or experience, at a difficult time.”
Nirtib

“It gave me peace of mind knowing my child was going to get to school and be picked up on time and brought back to the daycare facility. I was able to keep my work schedule from being shifted around.”
Beverley

TELEWORK SURVEY AND REPORT

Based again on the feedback from the Needs Assessment Survey, the Committee supported the development and implementation of a statewide option to telecommute. During June 2003, a Telework survey was given to all Work and Family Representatives to assess their department's participation in this alternate work option. Response rate to this survey was 25%.

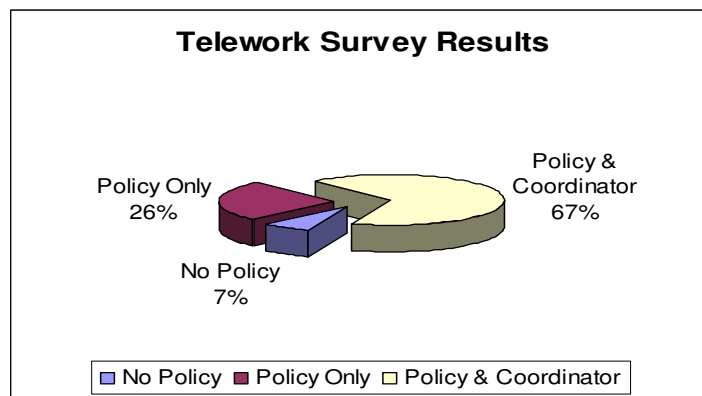
The survey responses indicated many departments have a comprehensive and successful Telework program with as many as 600 or more employees participating in the program. Several departments also have Telework coordinators who provide information to managers and staff on the departmental policy. Options available to employees range from working at home, at an office near home, or from a satellite office.

The main focus of most of the Telework policies is to provide as many options as feasible to employees. The survey results indicated that 67% of the respondents had a comprehensive Telework policy and a program coordinator to provide information to managers and staff. Only 7% of the respondents did not have a Telework policy; 26% of the departments had a policy, but did not have a coordinator.

“Flexible hours allowed me to work a 40 hour work week instead of losing time from work.”

Mary

Survey responses indicated satisfaction by employees participating in Telework programs. In many departments program participation greatly exceeded management expectations. Based on the results of the survey, the Committee continued its commitment and its advocacy to having the option of telecommuting available to all State employees.



OUTREACH TO STATE EMPLOYEES

The Committee provided outreach and education on Work and Family Program benefits to all State employees to help them effectively balance work and family demands, devote their energies to the job, and continue to provide excellent public service. There were limited resources available to help implement the full marketing plan as originally designed.

Key Committee marketing accomplishments included:

- A marketing plan for outreach to all State employees
- A Work and Family Program Web site, which was updated as new programs were launched.
- Unions representing State employees published articles in their newsletters encouraging members to participate in the initial needs assessment survey and informing them of new work and family benefits such as the Resource and Referral Service and the Dependent Care Benefit as they became available.
- A network of Work and Family Representatives from over 80 State agencies was used to reach out to each department through their department communications channels
- Outreach presentations to employees at different venues around the State were used to publicize program benefits.
- The Work and Family Coordinator attended several of the monthly Personnel Transactions Supervisors Forums to provide updates on program benefits.
- A series of communications vehicles were used to advise Department Work and Family Representatives, Personnel Officers, and Labor Relations Officers of program benefits, including Personnel Management Liaison (PML) Memos, targeted e-mails, and outreach bulletins.
- Employee satisfaction surveys on the Dependent Care Benefit (January 2003) and the Resource and Referral Service were used to market the available services.
- Monthly live “Train the Trainer” sessions were conducted on the Resource and Referral Service using online training technology.
- Various publications were provided to educate employees on program benefits (see following table).

WORK AND FAMILY PROGRAM PUBLICATIONS

Publication name	Target Audience	Release Date
Report and Recommendations - The Future of California: Work and Family Programs	Governor, Legislature, Public, State Employees	October 2000
Supporting You, Your Family, Your Work (program brochure)	State Employees	Spring 2001
Work and Family Program Strategy: Executive Briefing	Governor, Legislature, Public, State Employees	February 2002
Dependent Care Benefit (brochures and posters)	State Employees with dependent care needs	June 2002, June 2003, and May 2004
Dependent Care Grant Program Overview and Grant Applications	State Employees with dependent care needs	March 2003
Work and Family Resource and Referral Service: Making Life a Little Easier for State Employees (introductory poster)	Governor, Legislature, Public, State Employees	June 2003
California State Employees: Take Advantage of This Important Family Benefit (post card mailer)	State Employees with dependent care needs	June 2003
We're Here to Make Your Life Easier (introductory poster on the Resource and Referral Service)	State Employees with dependent care needs	June 2003
Resource and Referral Service quarterly themed posters	State Employees with dependent care needs	September 2003 through Spring 2005
Resource and Referral Service Executive Summaries and Quarterly Reports	Governor, Legislature, DPA, Committee, Public, State Employees	September 2003 through Spring 2005
Status Report 2004	Governor, Legislature, Public, State Employees	June 2004
Final Report 2005	Governor, Legislature, Public, State Employees	June 2005

Copies of these reports can be found on line at
http://www.dpa.ca.gov/WorkingFamilies/final_report/main.shtm



WORK AND FAMILY NETWORK

The Committee established a network of Work and Family Representatives from State departments during 2002. The Committee sent out a letter to all State departments inviting them to select a Work and Family Representative responsible for outreach to employees about Work and Family Program benefits. There were over 80 representatives.

A series of quarterly Work and Family Forums with the Department Work and Family Representatives were initiated in March 2003. These forums brought the representatives together to share information on work and family issues, benefits, and provided input on the development of more effective outreach tools.

Forum attendance averaged 50 Work and Family Representatives per meeting. Their feedback about the Work and Family Program was positive, and their input was vital in formulating the program policies and direction.

The Work and Family Program Coordinator, in conjunction with the Communications and Outreach Subcommittee, organized and facilitated meetings with the Work and Family Network. New networking venues were continually sought, so that State employees could stay informed of new work and family solutions offered.

This network provided a continuous channel for communications with departments and their staff on the Work and Family Program.

MANAGEMENT AND EMPLOYEE TRAINING

Management support of the State of California Work and Family Program was essential to the success of the program. The Committee included a module on the Work and Family Program in the California Leadership Institute training program, and designed an online statewide training program for all managers and supervisors launched in 2004.

Since the State has approximately 32,000 designated supervisors and managers throughout the State, online training proved to be the most cost-effective way to reach such a large and geographically-dispersed target audience.

Objectives of the training were:

- Understanding the relationship between work and family issues and employee productivity, efficiency, and morale.
- Current information on the policies, programs, benefits and resources available to employees to address their work and family issues.
- Clarify the roles and responsibilities of supervisors and managers in addressing work and family issues effectively, fairly, and consistently.

The Committee made web-based online training available on the DPA Web site at no cost. A downloadable hard copy format was made available to field employees without internet access. All supervisors and managers were informed and encouraged to complete the course.

This training will continue to be made available to assist managers and supervisors on the importance of assisting employees in balancing work and family demands.

In 2005 the Committee revised the online training module as an education tool for all employees on work and family issues. This training module is very interactive and allows the participant to choose individual sections or the entire module to complete. This training module will remain available on the DPA website even after the sunset of this program.

OTHER SIGNIFICANT ACCOMPLISHMENTS

LABOR/MANAGEMENT COOPERATION

The work of the Committee provided an opportunity for labor and management to work together toward a common goal. Members were able to share information and gain a greater understanding of differing perspectives in a positive cooperative environment.

BEST PRACTICES

Each subcommittee researched best practices for their program area, which allowed investments to be made in programs proven elsewhere. As a result, the California programs were some of the most comprehensive in the nation, focusing on both child and aging adult care issues.

EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK

A 24-page employee handbook was developed and published to inform employees about state work and family programs.

POLICY CHANGES

The needs assessment conducted in 2000 concluded that expanded family leave benefits would help State employees balance the demands of work and family. Consequently, the Committee worked closely with the unions and state agencies to pursue legislation and regulations in this area.

Although the Committee was not solely responsible for obtaining these expanded benefits, its work contributed to the outcome. DPA has adopted expanded family leave benefits and many changes in the Family Leave Program were implemented. The changes are indicated in the items listed below:

Family Leave Benefit Type	Description	Statutory, Regulatory, or Policy changes
Transfer of Leave Credits: Expand leave credit transfer policies for medical or parenting reasons	Expands leave credit policies to allow transfer of credits between family members for medical reasons, or for parental or adoption leaves	PML 2001-043 PML 2001-058 DPA Rule 599.913
Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA): Increase flexibility in use of FMLA leave	Changes the time period for calculating the FMLA eligibility. Employees may use up to 12 weeks of unpaid, job-protected leave anytime during the calendar year, regardless of how much FMLA leave has been taken during the past 12 months, for certain family or medical reasons	PML 2002-041 Federal Public Law 103-03 enacted February 5, 1993
Family Crisis Leave: Create a family crisis leave program Family Activity Leave: Increase flexibility in use of leave credits to attend family or school functions Domestic violence: Allow use of leave credits for victims of domestic violence	Allows employees to use accumulated leave credits (including sick leave credits where appropriate) to attend to family crisis situations Allows employees to use accumulated leave credits to attend family or school-related activities Allows employees to use leave credits to seek medical attention, participate in psychological counseling, and attend planning to increase safety from future domestic violence	PML 2001-043 PML 2001-058 DPA Rule 599.911 DPA Rule 599.912 Labor Code 230.8 PML - 2001-025 Labor Code Section 230 and 230.1 (AB 2357 of 2000)
California Family Rights Act (CFRA): Provide paid family leave	During 2002, legislation was passed to provide paid family leave benefits for employees covered under the SDI program.	Chapter 878, Statutes of 2002 (AB 2149)
Expanded State Disability Insurance (SDI): SDI for State employees	Expanded SDI benefits will commence in October of 2005.	Chapter 901, Statutes of 2002 (SB 1661)

“I was able to care for my father who was dying from prostate cancer over a 3 month period.”
John

“My daughter was born premature and spent the first month and a half of her life in the hospital. She was so small that she sometimes forgot to breathe. In total I took off 8 months after her birth. This allowed me to be able to nurture her and make sure she got everything she needed to catch up and be a normal healthy child.”
Vanessa

CHALLENGES

STAFFING RESOURCES

A full-time statewide Work and Family Program Coordinator was hired in December of 2002 and then left in December of 2004. The duties of supporting the Committee's work were then placed on an individual as an additional part of their already demanding job. When there was no longer a full time coordinator additional assistance and support was provided by individuals from Committee members' departments. The lack of consistent and dedicated administrative staff made the work of the Committee more difficult.

The Department Work & Family Representatives experienced the same issues of competing demands and heavy turnover of representatives which made outreach to state employees difficult. Delays in program implementation were experienced as a result.

The Dependent Care Subsidy Program relied on the FlexElect Program for application and distribution of grants. Problems surfaced due to the fact that individuals with expertise in the state's FlexElect program were not available on site to assist individuals in applying and understanding this complicated program, thus hampering employees' access to these funds (see section below on Dependent Care Subsidy).

GEOGRAPHY

Since state employees are assigned throughout the state and serving in remote as well as urban environments it made communications very difficult. The Committee utilized web based programs for outreach as an attempt to mitigate this challenge as much as possible. This proved to be a much greater challenge than even originally thought by the Committee.

VOLUNTEER COMMITTEE

The Committee had to overcome the typical problems when working together as a group of volunteers. Often they would do Committee work on their own time and had to call on their respective organizations to assist with resources to support the efforts of the Committee.

EDUCATION AND MARKETING

Though the Committee had developed a communications plan, the education and marketing effort was more complex than anticipated. The number and geographical disbursement of state employees posed extreme challenges for the Committee on how to educate them on programs and allow employees to participate and receive the benefits available.

LOGISTICAL INFRASTRUCTURE

Developing the procedures for implementing the programs took longer than anticipated, which slowed the distribution of the funds during the first year of implementation and thereby delayed subsequent phases.

DEPENDENT CARE SUBSIDY

The state utilized the already established Flex Elect program to disburse the dependent care subsidy grants to employees. This caused considerable confusion on the part of the employee applicants. Because of the perceived complexity of the process and lack of understanding on how to gain access to knowledgeable staff for assistance, some employees believed they had completed the application process when in fact they had only completed the first step. Many employees also did not understand the pre-tax benefit and how it could assist them.

PARTICIPANT FEEDBACK AND PROGRAM IMPACT

“The tangible job benefit has been an increased ability to complete difficult tasks on time despite absences. These were critical tasks affecting department funding and customer communications. The intangible benefit is even more significant. It has improved relations with coworkers and managers, making for a more productive environment for everyone.”
Anonymous

PARTICIPANT FEEDBACK

A telephone and electronic survey was conducted in May 2005 of participants who had participated in the various programs. Seventy-eight responses were evaluated. Of those who responded:

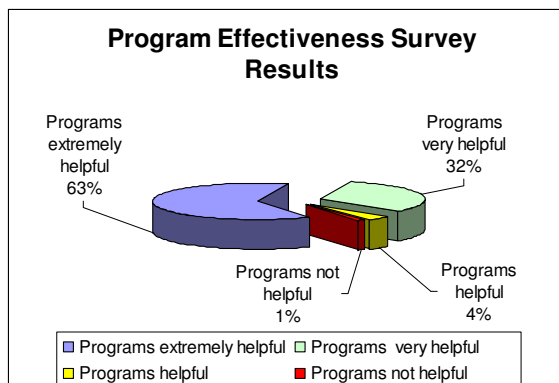
- 35% had received a dependent care subsidy
- 31% had taken advantage of the Family Medical Leave Act
- 22% had worked a flexible work schedule
- 9% had accessed the dependent care referral service
- 3% had been given a hardship transfer

When asked about the helpfulness of the programs:

- 63% indicated the program was extremely helpful
- 32% indicated the program was very helpful
- 4% indicated the program was helpful
- 1% indicated the program was not helpful

Overall, interviewees indicated the program they had participated in had allowed them to better balance work and family obligations and expressed concern about the loss of funding. Many cited circumstances where their continued employment may be in jeopardy and/or dependent care issues would seriously impact their responsibilities to the employer.

Employees cited numerous instances where the hardship of dependent care issues had not significantly impacted their work responsibilities as a result of the services received from the work and family program. A growing issue among those surveyed is the responsibility of caring for elder adults and the lack of resources available



RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE FUTURE

GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the following actions be taken to preserve the work of the Committee and to provide guidance for future work and family efforts.

- A comprehensive documentation effort for capturing each program's logistical processes should be accomplished as part of the June 2005 program sunset process. This documentation should be archived at Department of Personnel Administration and the State Library so that programs can be reinstated quickly and efficiently if future funding should become available.
- The current web site hosted on the DPA web site should be maintained with historic information and the training modules.

REINSTATEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are made should funding become available in the future:

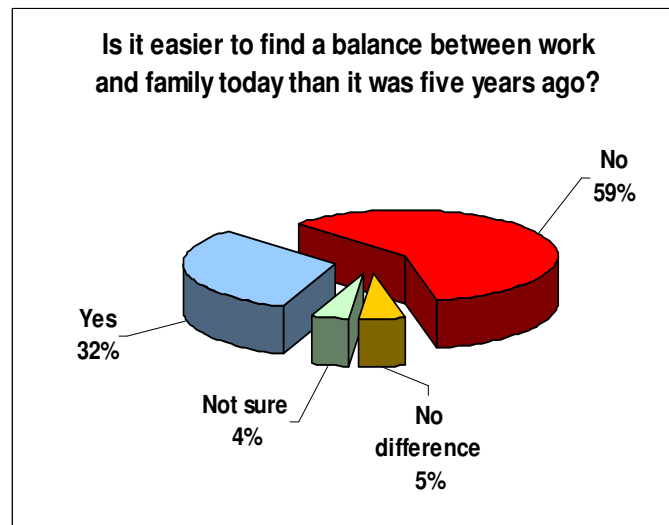
- Additional staffing resources should be provided to support the programs at both the state and individual department levels. Staff should have dedicated time to conduct and monitor the work of the programs and support the Committee projects. In other states, two resources were provided one from the agency and one from labor to implement and monitor the programs.
- Performance measures and data collection systems should be developed at the beginning to allow better reporting of program outcomes to support ongoing funding of these vital programs.
- If the Flex Elect program is used for dependent care subsidies, a comprehensive marketing and educational strategy should be developed and implemented to allow easy access to this benefit.
- When the work of the Committee commences, it would be important to reconstitute the network of department work and family representatives to assist in getting the program information out to employees throughout the state.

CONCLUSION

The State of California established a benchmark with this program and was recognized by others throughout the country as a leading employer in work and family benefits. The loss of funding for this program will impact the workers in state government who are most in need of assistance.

The progressive efforts made in this area should be applauded. It is hoped that in the future ways could be found to reinstate some of the programs implemented by this Committee.

In conclusion, it should be noted that the issue of balancing work and family is still as critical today as it was in 2000 when this program began. A recent survey reported in the June 7, 2005 issue of USA Today indicated that 59% of American workers still think that the balance between work and family is not easier today than it was five years ago.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We would like to acknowledge the work of members of the Committee for their work over the life of this project and especially their dedication to help to make a difference for employees of the State of California.

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 AFSCME
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 CA Health and Human Services Agency
 Department of Parks and Recreation
 Department of Education
 CAPS & PECG
 Department of General Services
 Department of Industrial Relations
 California Youth Authority
 Department of General Services
 Department of Health Services
 Department of Mental Health
 CSEA/SEIU Local 1000
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 Department of Corrections
 Department of Water Resources
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