

Privatization of Social Services

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The Benefits of Privatization of Social Services

Contracting out is the process through which public organizations contract with private sector organizations to provide services normally provided by public agencies. It is a form of privatization, which is defined as any shift of activity or functions from the state to the private sector, more specifically, the shift of production of goods or [services](#) from public to private. (Starr, 5) [Privatization](#) reduces the role of government and increases the role of private sector agencies. However, public agencies maintain ultimate control over the provision of services and they control government funding.

In an effort to reduce costs, enhance efficiency or improve services, many states have started privatizing or contracting out many of their social service programs. The Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 greatly influenced agencies to explore contracting out as a means of delivering services. Privatization is not a new concept for social services, however, the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act gives states more flexibility to administer TANF and other related services. (Yates, 1)

The County of Los Angeles, Department of Public Social Services is one such organization that is seeking to provide effective, efficient services while meeting the mandates of welfare reform regulations. CalWORKS (California Work Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids) GAIN Division (Greater Avenues for Independence) is responsible for providing Welfare-to-Work services to Temporary Aid for Needy Families (TANF) (formerly known as AFDC) recipients. Welfare reform time limits have made it necessary for the organization to becom...

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