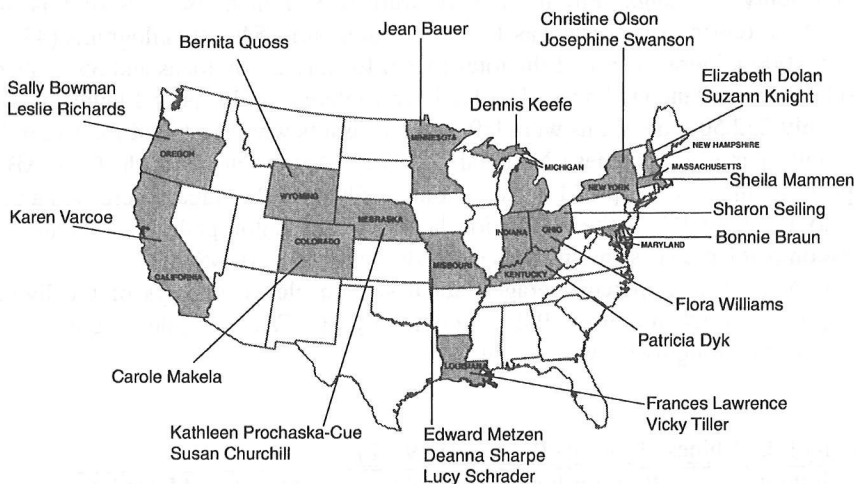


Rural Low-Income Families: Tracking Their Well-Being

The purpose of the NC-223 multi-state research project is to assess changes in the well-being of rural people and counties, in the context of the new national welfare policy. The pilot study has been completed and the first of three rounds of data collection is now occurring.

- Frances C. Lawrence, Louisiana State University Agricultural Center¹
- Elizabeth Dolan, University of New Hampshire²
- Carole J. Makela, Colorado State University³
- Karen P. Varcoe, University of California-Riverside⁴
- Edward Metzen, University of Missouri⁵
- Jean W. Bauer, University of Minnesota⁶

The NC-223 multi-state research project began October 1, 1998 and is scheduled to be completed by September 30, 2003. Twenty-three researchers representing 16 states are involved.



In each state, researchers are currently interviewing 30 low-income rural families (N=480). Primary emphasis is on families receiving Food Stamps and having at least one child under 12 years of age.

Data are being collected by audio taped personal interviews and written surveys. The mother is the primary respondent. Qualitative and quantitative questions are asked about household composition, living in the community, employment and work history, transportation, childcare, family of origin characteristics, family well-being, education, income, parent social support, and an assessment of important things in the past, present, and future. Instruments include: Knowledge of Community Resources, Feelings About How Things Are Going, Life Skills Assessment, Adult Health Survey, Child Health Survey, Food Security Module, and Parenting Ladder.

Data will be transcribed and coded for thematic content using the principles of grounded theory and analyzed by qualitative and quantitative techniques. WinMax™, a computer-assisted analysis program, will be used to analyze interview data.

Endnotes

- 1 Professor, Family, Child, and Consumer Sciences
- 2 Associate Professor, Family Studies
- 3 Professor, Design and Merchandising
- 4 Human Resources Program Leader
- 5 Professor, Consumer and Family Economics
- 6 Professor, Family Social Science