

W 2200.6  
F21  
8:4



# Texas Work & Family

JAN 07 1998

# CLEARINGHOUSE NEWS

Depository  
Dallas Public Library

*A program of the Texas Workforce Commission*

VOLUME 8, NUMBER 4 WINTER 1997

## Employers: #1 for Help with Work/Life Problems

A whopping 96 percent of the more than 50,000 women participating in an AFL-CIO survey say they look to employers and businesses for help in solving work/family problems. Working women's organizations were the second top choice, with 92 percent of respondents. At third place was government (79 percent), followed by community and civic groups (76 percent) and labor unions (75 percent).

The survey asked respondents about the work issues that most affect their lives on and off the job. Equal pay was the top concern, according to the September 4 survey report. However, "time matters, too," the report stressed. "Among the most important employer policies are those that help working women gain greater control of their time so that they can better juggle work and family." (The *Ask a Working Woman* survey report is available from the AFL-CIO Working Women's Department, 202-371-1999.) ★



*The Work & Family Clearinghouse hosted a summer work session on building employer coalitions in Austin. Participants included work/family strategist Phyllis Jack-Moore, Dr. Tom Slatton, president, Children's Learning Centers, Amarillo, and Clearinghouse director Carol McDaniel. The Clearinghouse News discusses coalition building with Phyllis Jack-Moore on page 3.* ★

★ ★ ★ IN BRIEF ★ ★ ★ IN BRIEF ★ ★ ★ IN BRIEF ★ ★ ★ IN BRIEF ★ ★ ★

★ ★ ★

*"Corporate culture dictates work-family balance," says Business Week. The magazine's second survey of family-friendly corporate policies concludes that "treating employees with respect goes further than giving them day care or nursing rooms." Companies that are tops in family friendliness may not offer great benefits but typically have cultures "that accept employees' lives outside work and encourage job flexibility." The survey not only rated the types of programs provided — dependent care services, flexible working arrangements, health and wellness facilities, and other benefits — but also employee assessments of how such programs translated into practice at the 55 participating companies.*

Businesses in the Top 30 list with a Texas connection include Motorola ("continuous communication via dedicated intranet site and electronic kiosks); DuPont ("top-notch programs include 'just-in-time' dependent care, adoption help"); Texas Instruments ("fledgling strategy still weakened by workers' fear of career risk); and SAS Institute ("strong campus-based culture overshadows some inflexibility"). (*Business Week*, Sept. 15, 1997) ★

★ ★ ★

*Work-family trends* among companies making the *Working Mother* "100 Best Companies" list for 1997 include more program use, especially of alternative work arrangements; advancement of women; more child care centers; and redesign of how work gets done. Studies suggest that even companies with good programs are hampered, the magazine notes, "by the way they rigidly separate work and family life," and forward-looking employers are looking for ways to redesign work to reflect personal concerns.

The 12th annual survey of the best companies for working mothers considered pay, advancement opportunities, child care, flexibility, and other family-friendly benefits in ranking participants. Texas employers among the 100 Best include Allstate, Amoco, Chase Manhattan, Citicorp, Computer Associates International, Coopers & Lybrand, Dayton Hudson, DuPont, Eastman Kodak, Gannett, IBM, 3M, Motorola, NationsBank, SAS Institute, Texas Instruments, USAA, and Xerox Corp. Bank of America made the "companies to watch" list. (*Working Mother*, Oct. 1997) ★

★ ★ ★

★ ★ ★ IN BRIEF ★ ★ ★ IN BRIEF ★ ★ ★ IN BRIEF ★ ★ ★ IN BRIEF ★ ★ ★

## Employer Coalitions Pool Talent, Resources To Better Community Work/Life Programs

*Phyllis Jack-Moore has helped organize and motivate employer coalitions to address work/family issues in communities all across Texas. Most recently, she assisted the Texas Work & Family Clearinghouse in its series of regional conferences on employer coalitions.*

**W&F:** Recent surveys show employees under stress as they try to balance competing demands of work versus family. What about the stress on employers to help employees manage these conflicts?

**PJM:** Employers *are* under the gun. On the one hand, there is the economic pressure to streamline companies; on the other hand, there's a growing awareness of family needs from child care to elder care. Surveys of the prevalence of work/life programs show that employers obviously have begun to hear this message and consciously trying to figure out how to balance the economic pressures and competition they face with the needs of their employees. Some of the companies that have been at this a while look at work/family programs from the standpoint of "this is going to pay off in the long run, there is an investment here we're making but there's also a payoff for us." They see that they're going to get skilled workers, the people who are the top notch in their field. They also recognize that programs that succeed in retaining good workers will pay off in the long run.

**W&F:** Employers polled in recent surveys are saying "yes, we see work/family programs as a tool to attract and retain employees."

**PJM:** Right. And I think that the companies who have become enlightened as such recognize that it is their good fortune to be on one of the lists of top employers in this area.

**W&F:** Of course a lot of the employers that are on those lists are big corporations. What about small employers?

**PJM:** I think small, very small, companies have been doing family-friendly things all along. For example, if you have a very small company with five or six employees, you alternate: somebody has to be off for their child's school play, so the other employees pick up the slack, or you hire two part-time employees. It's more of a family atmosphere. The companies with 50 to 100 employees, on the other hand, typically have found it harder to institute work/family programs than either smaller or larger organizations.

**W&F:** Where can they turn for help?

**PJM:** They could certainly call the Texas Work and Family Clearinghouse for a start. Next, they can look to join or organize an employer coalition in their community. A number of coalitions have formed around the state; some have concentrated on the small to medium-sized business.

**W&F:** So the coalitions can serve as a forum for smaller employers to get together, learn things, share ideas, and maybe develop strategies. Why and how do coalitions work?

**PJM:** Why they work is the whole idea behind coalition-building:

get people together with like minds who are willing to come and learn more. Together, they feed off one another's energy and enthusiasm. The employer coalition in Houston, for example, says they can do things together that they never could have done as one company.

**W&F:** Is that because they're pooling resources or pooling talent?

**PJM:** All of the above. They're pooling their money so their dollars go further. For example, a middle sized company can't afford to build a child-care center, it's not practical to do that kind of thing. But if several companies working together can upgrade the quality of the child care in the community, then all their employees benefit.

While there is no one cookie-cutter approach to coalition building, there are some definites you have to have. You have at least one employer to begin with who says "I know this will work; this is how we're going to make it work."

**W&F:** What are some other key elements?

**PJM:** All employer representatives on the coalition must have influence and decision-making power in their companies in order to take action. But, obviously, if they're at that level, they've got a lot of other business responsibilities. That means they're probably too busy doing what they do best for their companies to actively manage the day-to-day operations of the coalition. So you also need support staff. Support staff usually are paid in some way or are in-kind staff from a coalition member.

**W&F:** What are some pitfalls that can turn into major hazards along the way to building this coalition?

**PJM:** I think it's imperative that early on members understand the issues. Employers new to the work/family arena are unlikely to be familiar with dependent care issues or the child care or elder care industries. A coalition must be able to tap into someone who has front-line knowledge of these issues and how they affect the local community. And that information must be relayed in a very succinct and understandable manner.

Of course, the issues are enormous and defy a quick fix. For example, it's going to take the Legislature years to figure out some way to increase child care salaries in order to bring up the quality of care. Well, we can't do that overnight. So what is it we can do? Public/private partnerships can work together to identify local needs and zero in on several things its members know that they can do with their money in a short term. From there, we begin to build momentum around the state. I think a statewide network of coalitions could impact legislation, but that's a long term goal. We must first look at the short term local issues.



## Texans Report Major Needs for Work-Family Programs

*A flurry of national polls (see page 1) have highlighted the need for and prevalence of employer-sponsored work/family programs. The Work & Family Clearinghouse recently commissioned two survey efforts to pinpoint trends in Texas workplaces.*

### Dependent Care Rare Benefit, According to Texas Poll

Large majorities of Texans see a high or modest need for flexible working arrangements and employer-sponsored child care services and elder care information and referral (I&R) services, according to a *Texas Poll* of 1,005 Texans conducted in August. Many of the workers surveyed said their employers do offer flexible working arrangements, such as flextime or job sharing. Few, however, are provided any type of employer-sponsored dependent care program.

The respondents to the poll indicated broad needs for a variety of work-family programs:

- ★ 81 percent said the need for flexible working arrangements was high (42 percent) or moderate (39 percent);
- ★ 77 percent said the need for employer-sponsored child care services was high (49 percent) or moderate (28 percent); and
- ★ 72 percent said the need for employer-sponsored eldercare I&R was high (38 percent) or moderate (34 percent).

More than 55 percent of the 659 employed respondents to the survey said their employers offer some kind of flexible work arrangements; more than 29 percent said their employers allow workers to telecommute from off-site locations. But fewer than 19 percent said their employers provide elder care I&R, while only 13 percent said their employers offer any kind of child care benefits, such as on-site day care or discounted fees at local centers.

### State Agency Survey Mirrors Private-Sector Findings

Preliminary results of a new survey of work/family policies among 191 Texas state agencies conducted for the Work &

Family Clearinghouse track a similar pattern of programs for government employees. Only 14 percent of the responding organizations offer on-site or off-site child care services; more than half of those organizations that do provide such services are institutions of higher education. The most common forms of dependent care assistance are resource and referral services, offered by 16 percent of organizations responding.

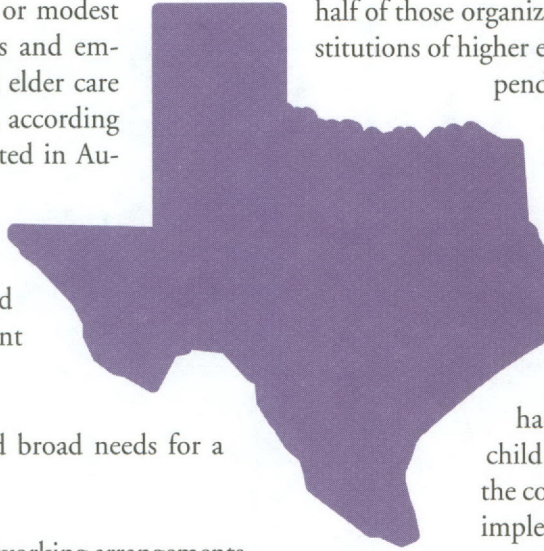
Most of the respondents (82 percent) said that their organization lacked adequate information for developing or providing dependent care programs; 82 percent also said that their organization had not conducted a needs assessment for child or elder care services. Respondents cited the cost of setting of services as a major barrier to implementation; 60 percent, however, said the costs of setting up employer-sponsored dependent care services are outweighed by such benefits as decreased employee turnover and absenteeism and higher productivity and morale.

State agencies are much more likely to offer flexible work arrangements as a means of balancing work and family demands. Fully 67 percent of the responding organizations make such arrangements available to employees, with the most prevalent being flextime and compressed

work weeks. Voluntarily reduced workweeks and telecommuting are infrequent arrangements, the survey found, while job-sharing is virtually nonexistent.

Commonly identified barriers to flexible work arrangements in state agencies include, supervisors' attitudes and cultural biases toward nontraditional approaches to work hours, political issues, agency size, and the nature of the job.

*A full report on the survey findings is scheduled to be released by the Work & Family Clearinghouse in November.* ★



**Fewer than 19 percent of respondents to the *Texas Poll* said their employers provide elder care I&R, while only 13 percent said their employers offer any kind of child care benefits, such as on-site day care or discounted fees at local centers.**

## General Information

The Texas Work and Family Clearinghouse was created by the Texas legislature to supply information to employers about workplace policies and dependent care benefits. For more information about articles in this newsletter or other work/family issues, contact us at:

101 E. 15th St., Room 416T, Austin, Texas 78778-0001  
 Telephone: 512/936-3228 • FAX: 512/936-3255  
 email: wkfamily@mail.capnet.state.tx.us.  
 Web site: www.twc.state.tx.us/wrkfrdev/wfchp.html

## Clearinghouse Newsletter

The *Clearinghouse News* is a quarterly newsletter produced by the Work and Family Clearinghouse with information and news about work/family programs including flextime, resource and referral services, child care and eldercare. Subscriptions are available free of charge by contacting the Clearinghouse at (512) 936-3228.

## Internet Homepage

The Clearinghouse maintains a homepage on the Internet with up-to-the-minute information on Clearinghouse activities and work/family resources and projects in Texas. The homepage also features fact sheets on areas of interest, the *Clearinghouse News*, background on the Clearinghouse advisory committee, free resources order form, and much more. Access via www.twc.state.tx.us/wrkfrdev/wfchp.html.

## Work & Family Clipping Service

The Work and Family Clipping Service is a quarterly compendium of the most recent news articles covering the work and family field. If you would like to receive the clipping service free of charge, call (512) 936-3221.

## Resource Library

The Clearinghouse maintains a library of resources including books, newsletters, magazines, videos, brochures and articles. The library is continually updated and expanded to include current information on work and family topics. The library materials are catalogued in a computer database for easy search and retrieval. The Clearinghouse staff welcomes library users during regular business hours. For further information, call (512) 936-3228.

## Research

The Clearinghouse staff will research and collect information on requested work-family related topics and compile customized information packets. The Clearinghouse works with state agencies, colleges and universities to conduct original research and to compile existing statistics and reports relating to work-family issues in Texas. Call (512) 936-3228 for a research report bibliography.

## Networking Opportunities for Employers

The Clearinghouse acts as an information broker about work and family issues among employers and between employers and professional consultants working in the field. Through conferences, workshops and quarterly meetings, the private sector advisory committee to the Clearinghouse sponsors networking activities among employers to highlight best practices and encourage new initiatives. The Clearinghouse also maintains a database of Texas consultants, along with advice about working with consultants. Call (512) 936-3228 to request this listing.

## TW&F Clearinghouse Advisory Committee 1997

- ★ **Bruce Aumack**, IBM Corporation
- ★ **Michael Catalani**, VIA Metropolitan Transit
- ★ **Ramiro Cavazos**, Levi Strauss Foundation
- ★ **Glenna Pierpont**, Transco/One of the Williams Companies
- ★ **Tom Pope**, Marriott "Brighton Gardens"
- ★ **Gloria Villarreal**, Dow Chemical Company
- ★ **Jeannette Watson**, Texas Child Care Working Group
- ★ **Mike Wells**, ROFDW Architects
- ★ **Peggy Wilks**, Wilks & Associates
- ★ **Tracy Wolff**, San Antonio Smart Start
- ★ **Charlotte Yeathermon**, General Motors

## Texas Work & Family Clearinghouse



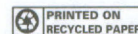
**Bill Hammond**, Chairman  
*Commissioner*  
*Representing Employers*

**Diane D. Rath**  
*Commissioner*  
*Representing the Public*

**T. P. O'Mahoney**  
*Commissioner*  
*Representing Labor*

**Mike Sheridan**  
*Executive Director*

The state of Texas complies with all state and federal laws relating to the Americans with Disabilities Act. Call (512) 463-8199 to obtain this publication in an alternative format.



**TEXAS WORK & FAMILY  
 CLEARINGHOUSE**  
*A program of the  
 Texas Workforce Commission*  
 101 E. 15th St., Room 416T  
 Austin, Texas 78778-0001

BULK RATE  
 U.S. POSTAGE  
 PAID  
 Austin, Texas  
 Permit No. 1717