

State *Of the* State Survey

*The Role of Government
and Voluntary Associations
in Social Services*

*by Diane Levande
Margaret Nielsen
Sally Rypkema
Victor Whiteman*

Briefing Paper No. 95-04

MICHIGAN STATE
UNIVERSITY

The Role of Government and Voluntary Associations in Social Services

prepared by

Margaret Nielsen, Ph.D.
Diane Levande, Ph.D.
Sally Rypkema, M.M., M.S.W.
Victor Whiteman, Ph.D.

School of Social Work
Michigan State University

Principal Investigators

Janet Bokemeier

Department of Sociology
and Institute for Public Policy and Social Research

Merry Morash

School of Criminal Justice
Michigan State University

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Briefing Paper No. 95-04
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September 1995

Please contact the following for further information:

About this report: Margaret Nielsen, Assistant Professor, School of Social Work, Michigan State University (Phone: 517-432-3727; Internet: nielsen@pilot.msu.edu). **About SOSS:** Brian Silver, Professor of Political Science and Director of SOSS (Phone: 517-355-2237; Internet: bsilver@pilot.msu.edu). **About the Institute for Public Policy and Social Research:** Philip R. Smith, Director, IPPSR (Phone: 517/353-9019; Internet: philip.smith@ssc.msu.edu). General contact for media and press: AnnMarie Schneider, Public Relations, IPPSR (Phone: 517/355-6672 x 143; Internet: wolf@pilot.msu.edu).

The analyses and interpretations in SOSS Briefing Papers are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the views of IPPSR or of Michigan State University.

THE SURVEY

- A telephone survey of 1,202 adult residents of the state of Michigan was conducted by Michigan State University's Institute for Public Policy and Social Research between May 10 and June 20, 1995. This is the third quarterly MSU State of the State Survey (SOSS). It focused on issues related to families, women and children. The overall sampling error is $\pm 2.8\%$.

The sample is designed to provide representative information for respondents from major regions of the state: Detroit City, Southeast Michigan (excluding Detroit), Southwest Michigan, Central Michigan (West and East), northern Lower Michigan, and the Upper Peninsula. (See attached information sheet for a list of the counties included in each region.) The data reported here are weighted to make the results representative of the adult population of Michigan.

KEY FINDINGS

Who Should Provide Social Services?

- **People in Michigan are divided on whether the federal government should increase or decrease social services.** As Figure 1 shows, 30% recommend an increase, 24% recommend no change, 43% recommend a decrease, and 3% don't know. A plurality would decrease the federal government's role in social service provision. (Q.1 -- *question wording is given below.*)
- **If the federal government reduces social services, 42% of adults in Michigan recommend that another level of government such as state and local provide the services.** Fifteen percent recommend that voluntary organizations or charities provide services, 17% recommend private businesses or individuals, 10% say no one should provide, 16% recommend a combination or don't know. (See Figure 2; Q.2.)

Charitable and Voluntary Organizations

- **Three-quarters of Michigan's residents have confidence in charitable and voluntary institutions.** Organizations serving children and the elderly have the strongest vote of confidence -- 87% express at least some confidence in them. More than four out of five residents express confidence in religious organizations and voluntary organizations providing social services, including 16% with a great deal of confidence in religious organizations. Charitable organizations providing health care and charitable appeals like the United Way have the confidence of 74% or more of Michigianians, while 64% have confidence in arts and cultural organizations. (Q.3)
- **A third of Michigan residents have done volunteer work for organizations in the past month.** (See Figure 3; Q.4.)
- **Seventeen of every 20 Michigianians believe the need for charitable and voluntary organizations has increased in the last five years.** Of all adult residents, 49% strongly agree that the need for charitable and voluntary organizations is greater than it was five years ago. An additional 37% somewhat agree, giving a total of 86% who believe that there is a greater need. (Q.5)

- **Seventy percent of Michigan residents agree that charitable organizations are more effective in providing services now than five years ago.** However, a solid minority (24%) disagree. (See Figure 4; Q.6.)

When asked about charitable organizations' use of donated funds, 64% agree that most are honest and ethical, while 33% disagree and 2% are neutral or say they don't know. (Q.7)

What Services Are Needed To Promote Work?

Most Michigan adults are working. Sixty-six percent of respondents are employed, 14% are homemakers, 14% are retired or disabled, and 3% are in school. Only 2% are unemployed or laid off. (Q.8)

- **People in Michigan are divided on whether it is okay for mothers of young children to work full-time and whether full-time day care in a licensed center harms young children.** Fifty-nine percent agree that it is okay for mothers of children under 5 to work full-time, but more than half (54%) disagree with the statement that children under 3 are not harmed by full-time care in a licensed center. More than half (57%) agree that there is plenty of quality day care in their community, but 14% strongly disagree. (Q.9, Q.10, Q.11)
- **Fifty percent or more of Michigan adults say that the government should be responsible for the services of child care, training or college classes, and housing for people making the transition from welfare to work.** A substantial minority say child care (18%), training (19%), and housing (28%) should be the sole responsibility of the people themselves or their families. (See Figure 5; Q. 12.)

DISCUSSION

Government Services

The people of Michigan continue to see social services as a responsibility of government; more than half of them recommend either no change or an increase in federal social services. A substantial minority, however, recommend a decrease in social services. If the federal role is reduced, four out of ten say that the state or local government should pick up the responsibility.

Voluntary Organizations

Only one out of seven Michigan respondents recommends voluntary organizations as the group to fill the gaps in service left by federal reductions. People in Michigan do, however, express confidence in voluntary organizations when asked directly. They also believe the need for services has increased over the past five years (86% agree) and they see voluntary organizations as honest and ethical in their use of funds (64% agree).

Child Care and Work

Michigan residents share American society's conflicts over children and work. A majority agree that it is okay for mothers of young children to work full-time and a majority believe that full-time day

care (even in a licensed center) harms young children. This has implications for public perceptions of low-income mothers and children receiving Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC).

AFDC began as a program to make it possible for low-income women who had lost the support of a spouse to keep their families together. At a time when mothers were not expected to leave home to work, this meant staying home to care for their young children. As going out to a job and struggling with the search for good child care has become the norm for working-class and middle-class mothers, attitudes toward work and child care for single mothers whose incomes are low enough to qualify for AFDC have shifted, and so has AFDC policy. Over the past twenty years, both federal and state policy have built a complex set of work requirements, work incentives, and training programs. The Family Support Act of 1988 at the federal level pushes states to establish work requirements. States have responded with programs like Michigan's MOST, which includes training, child care, and transportation to work, and the "Social Contract," which requires planned volunteer work without the system of support services. Some proposals currently in Congress would change the system from one of services to support and facilitate employment to one of strict time limits on assistance.

In January 1995, the State of the State Survey (SOSS) found strong support for a two-year limit on welfare benefits for people capable of working, even if they had not found jobs. The spring 1995 survey responses set the earlier findings into context. More than half of the people in Michigan believe the government should provide services (child care, health care, etc.) to facilitate the transition from welfare to work. There is substantial public support for child care assistance and other services to support the employment of mothers whose incomes have been low enough to make

them eligible for AFDC.

SURVEY QUESTIONS

NOTE: The full wording of questions and answer categories for the items discussed in this briefing paper is given here. The order in this list conforms with the order of bulleted items in the “Key Findings” section above, not with the order of questions in the survey instrument.

Q.1 Thinking about the various social services provided by the federal government, do you think the government should increase the services a lot, increase them somewhat, decrease them somewhat, decrease them a lot, or do you think there should be no change in services provided?

Q.2 If the federal government reduces the social services it provides, do you think these services should be provided, instead by another level of government, by private businesses, by voluntary organizations and charities, by private individuals, or do you think no one should provide these services?

Q.3 People have different views on the performance of charitable and voluntary institutions. For each kind of organization that I ask about, please tell me if you have a great deal of confidence, quite a lot of confidence, some confidence, or very little confidence in its performance.

- a. Charitable organizations involved in health care? (Examples: Hospitals, Clinics, etc.)
- b. Religious organizations? (Any church or church run program)
- c. Voluntary organizations involved in human and social services? (Counseling and vocational ed, job training)
- d. Organizations that help children and the elderly? (Preschool, adult day care centers)
- e. Arts and cultural organizations? (Museums, art galleries)
- f. The United Way and other charitable appeals

Q.4 During the past month, have you volunteered for any organizations excluding fundraising?

Next, I'd like to read you some statements about the role and responsibilities of charities. For each statement, please tell me if you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree with the statement. [Applies to Qs. 5, 6, 7.]

Q.5 The need for charitable and voluntary organizations is greater now than 5 years ago.

Q.6 Charitable organizations are more effective now in providing services than 5 years ago.

Q.7 Most charitable organizations are honest and ethical in their use of donated funds.

Q.8 We are interested in learning about the different ways people may earn their living. Last week were you working full-time, part-time, going to school, a home-maker or what?

Next, I would like to read you some statements about families and work and have you tell me if you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree? [Applies to Qs. 9, 10, 11.]

Q.9 It is okay for mothers to work full-time when their youngest child is under five.

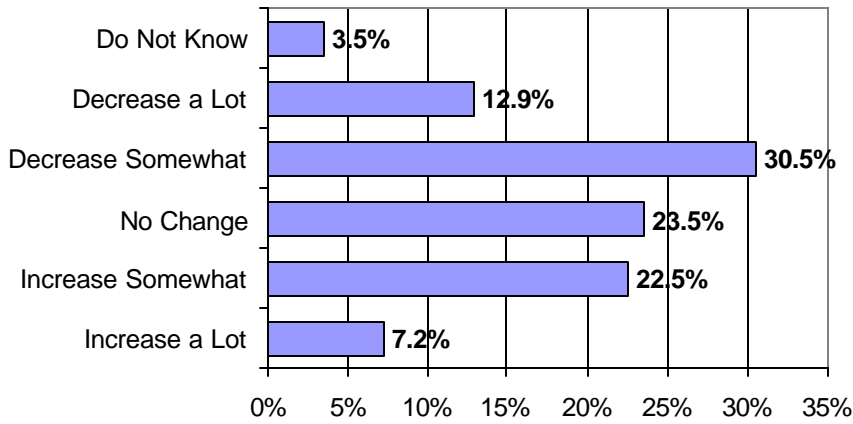
Q.10 Children under three years old are not harmed by all-day child care in a licensed center.

Q.11 There is plenty of quality day care for children in my community.

Q.12 Next, I'd like to read you a list of services and have you tell me who should be primarily responsible for paying for these services - the government, private business, voluntary organizations and charities, the people themselves or no one?

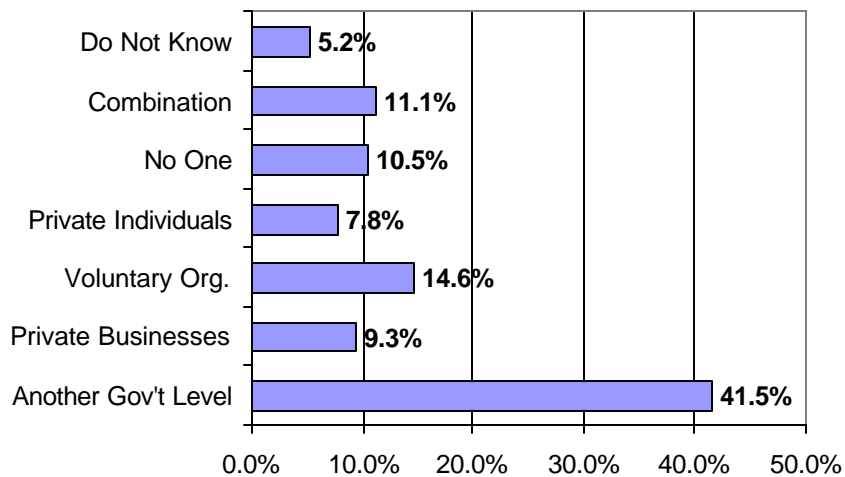
- a. Childcare (for those making the transition from welfare to work.)
- b. Housing (for people making the transition from welfare to work.)
- c. Training or college classes (for people making the transition from welfare to work.)

Figure 1. Should the Federal Government Increase or Decrease Social Services?



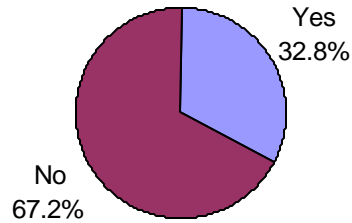
MSU State of the State Survey (SOSS) May-June 1995, N=1,202, Sampling Error=2.8%, Michigan State University, IPPSR

Figure 2. If Federal Services Are Reduced, Who Should Provide These Services?



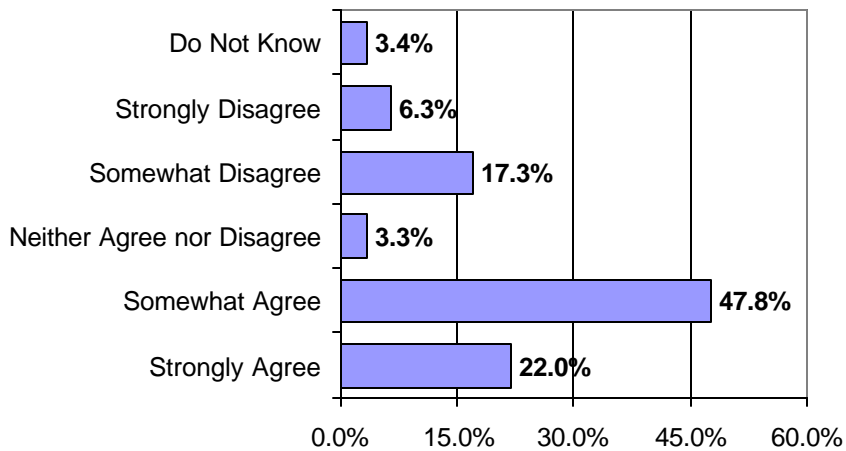
MSU State of the State Survey (SOSS) May-June 1995, N=1,202, Sampling Error=2.8%, Michigan State University, IPPSR

Figure 3. Have You Volunteered Service to an Organization During the Last Month?



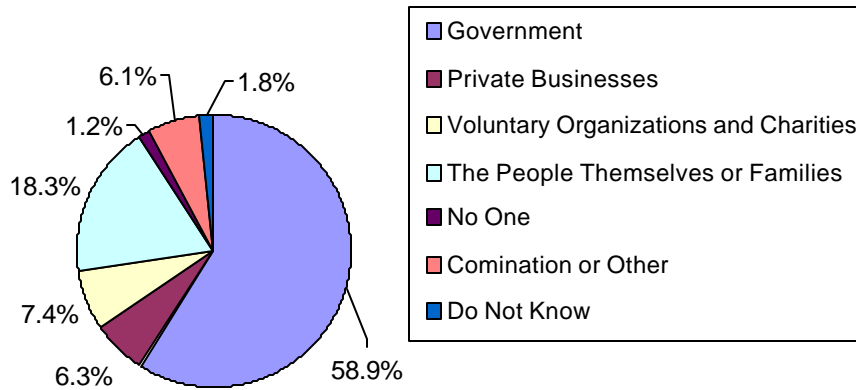
MSU State of the State Survey (SOSS) May-June 1995, N=1,202, Sampling Error=2.8%, Michigan State University, IPPSR

Figure 4. Charitable Organizations Are More Effective Than Five Years Ago: Do You Agree?



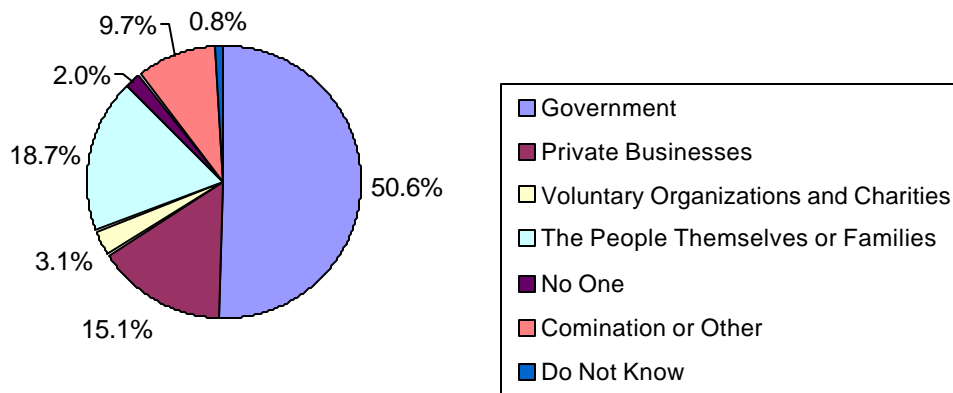
MSU State of the State Survey (SOSS) May-June 1995, N=1,202, Sampling Error=2.8%, Michigan State University, IPPSR

Figure 5. Who Should Be Primarily Responsible For Paying For Child Care Services?



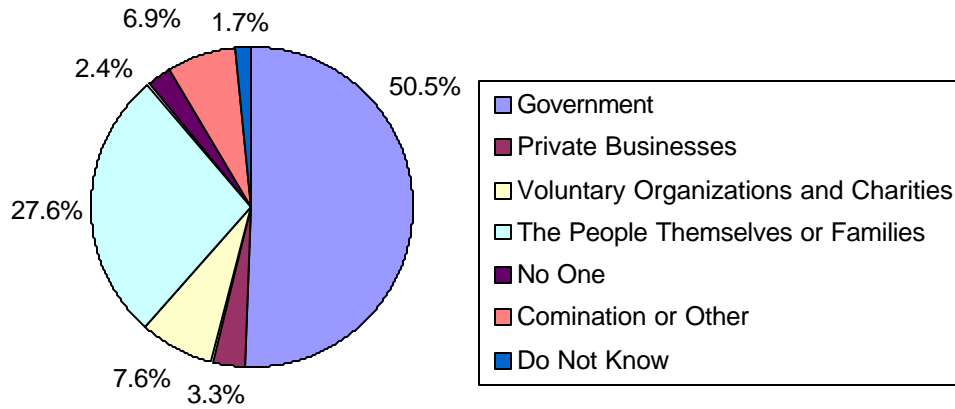
MSU State of the State Survey (SOSS) May-June 1995, N=1,202, Sampling Error=2.8%, Michigan State University, IPPSR

Figure 5. Who Should Be Primarily responsible For Paying For Training and College Classes Services?



MSU State of the State Survey (SOSS) May-June 1995, N=1,202, Sampling Error=2.8%, Michigan State University, IPPSR

Figure 5. Who Should Be Primarily Responsible For Paying For Housing Services?



MSU State of the State Survey (SOSS) May-June 1995, N=1,202, Sampling Error=2.8%, Michigan State University, IPPSR

REGIONAL CATEGORIES

NOTE: These regions are the ones used by the Michigan State University Extension Service, except that we treat Detroit City as a separate region.

Detroit: City of Detroit

Southeast: Genesee, Lapeer, Lenawee, Livingston, Macomb, Monroe, Oakland, St. Clair, Washtenaw, Wayne (excluding Detroit)

Southwest: Berrien, Branch, Calhoun, Cass, Eaton, Hillsdale, Ingham, Jackson, Kalamazoo, St. Joseph, Van Buren

West Central: Allegan, Barry, Ionia, Kent, Lake, Manistee, Mason, Mecosta, Montcalm, Muskegon, Newaygo, Oceana, Osceola, Ottawa

East Central: Arenac, Bay, Clare, Clinton, Gladwin, Gratiot, Huron, Isabella, Midland, Saginaw, Sanilac, Shiawassee, Tuscola

Northern L.P.: Alcona, Alpena, Antrim, Benzie, Charlevoix, Cheboygan, Crawford, Emmet, Grand Traverse, Iosco, Kalkaska, Leelanau, Missaukee, Montmorency, Ogemaw, Otsego, Oscoda, Presque Isle, Roscommon, Wexford

U.P.: Alger, Baraga, Chippewa, Delta, Dickinson, Gogebic, Houghton, Iron, Keweenaw, Luce, Mackinac, Marquette, Menominee, Ontonagon, Schoolcraft

Background Information

Michigan State University State of the State Survey [MSU SOSS]

What Is MSU SOSS?

The MSU State of the State Survey is a quarterly statewide survey of a random sample of the residents of Michigan. Although dozens of surveys are conducted in Michigan every year, none is designed to provide a regular systematic monitoring of the public mood in major regions of the state. Through SOSS, MSU aims to fill this information gap. SOSS has five main purposes: (1) to provide timely information about citizen opinions on critical issues; (2) to provide data for scientific and policy research by MSU faculty; (3) to provide information for programs and offices at MSU; (4) to develop survey research methodology; and (5) to provide opportunities for student training and research.

Each quarterly round or "wave" of SOSS has a different main theme: (a) January—quality of life, governmental reform, higher education; (b) April—family, women, and children; (c) July—ethnic and racial groups, Michigan communities; (d) October (even numbered years)—politics, the election, and political issues; (odd-numbered years) – health and the environment;

Who Is Conducting SOSS?

The State of the State Survey is administered by the Survey Research Division (SRD) of the Institute for Public Policy and Social Research (IPPSR), using its computer-assisted telephone interviewing (CATI) technology.

The design and overall planning of SOSS is the responsibility of a 17-person Steering Committee chaired by Dr. Brian D. Silver, Professor of Political Science. The Steering Committee consists of representatives from sponsoring units, which are primarily colleges and other administrative offices within MSU.

Subject to final approval by the Steering Committee, the questionnaire for each wave of SOSS is developed by a Working Group, most of whom also serve as analysts for that wave. The Working Group for the May 1995 wave includes Principal Investigators, a Research Team and an Advisory Council. Members are:

Principal Investigators

Dr. Janet Bokemeier, Professor, Dept. of Sociology and Director of Evaluation, IPPSR: (517) 355-6640
Dr. Merry Morash, Professor and Director, School of Criminal Justice: (517) 355-2192

Research Team

Dr. Clifford Broman, Associate Professor, Dept. of Sociology: (517) 355-6640
Dr. Diane Levande, Professor, School of Social Work: (517) 432-3724
Dr. Margaret Nielsen, Assistant Professor, School of Social Work: (517) 432-3727
Dr. Christina Polsenberg, Assistant Professor, School of Criminal Justice: (517) 432-1998
Dr. Cris Sullivan, Associate Professor, Dept. of Psychology: (517) 353-8867
Dr. Victor Whiteman, Professor, School of Social Work: (517) 432-3732
Dr. Mark Wilson, Associate Professor, James Madison College: (517) 353-2967

Advisory Council

David Berns, Michigan Department of Social Services, Children's Services
Leah Harris, Michigan Council on Crime and Delinquency
Cheryl Howell, MSU Outreach Communications
Robert Ivory, United Way of Michigan
Cynthia Wilbanks, Michigan Children