

# JACKIE GOLDBERG

## NEWS

### Welfare to work that works

On August 22, 1996, the "Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act" was signed into law, ending, as President Clinton promised, "welfare as we know it." As of April 1, the first wave of California welfare recipients will hit the "two year mark" and be required by law to have some kind of employment to continue to receive benefits.

Tragically, very little of substance has been created by the government to fill the void, and help poor people in this country to transition out of poverty and into the American Dream – the kind of economic stability that is engendered by work.

Right here in our city, for example, many welfare recipients will fulfill the work requirement by scrubbing graffiti from walls, or picking up litter – dead-end, poorly-paid positions from which there can be no hope of advancement.

But for the 66 Angelinos involved in the City Jobs Program, the future looks much brighter. All 66 have participated in vocational training programs, and all 66 have been placed in jobs – real jobs – with the Department of Public Works – jobs that pay living wages in the present, and hold out the promise of a future.

Welfare-to-work programs should offer not just work, but meaningful jobs. If we want to help people change their lives, we have to provide a means for them to do so – training, support, living wages and placement in jobs that lead to careers. Anything short of that dooms to failure the very people we want to help.

The City Jobs Program, a one-of-a-kind pilot program, is a collaboration between Los Angeles Metropolitan Alliance, SEIU Local 347 and the City Community Development Department. Originally funded by City Council in November of 1998 through a motion introduced by Goldberg (then a member of the City's Committee for Community and Economic Development), the program has blossomed from a vocational training effort to today's model welfare-to-work program that exists today.

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