

Call for papers from US and EU scholars

To participate in the conference

Changing Social Policies for Low-Income Families and Less Skilled Workers in the EU and the US

Jointly sponsored by the *National Poverty Center*, Gerald R. Ford School of Public Policy, University of Michigan and the *European Union Center*, University of Michigan

Paper abstract submission deadline: Monday, December 6, 2004
(Papers selected will be notified by December 20, 2004)

Conference date: April 7-8 (Thursday-Friday), 2005

Since 1990, social and labor market policies for families and workers have undergone major changes in many of the most developed nations. In many cases, the emphasis has been on reducing public expenditures while encouraging greater work effort. In the United States, major changes in the tax system and the structure of public assistance programs have greatly increased work incentives. In the UK, a variety of program changes are focusing on reducing poverty among families with children. A number of countries in continental Europe have made their unemployment payments more restrictive, taken steps to encourage greater use of part-time work, or experimented with other ways to encourage a more flexible workforce. A growing research literature is analyzing the impact of these changes on the behavior and well-being of families and of less-skilled workers in these countries.

This conference will provide a cross-Atlantic opportunity to

- Present emerging research, analyzing the effects of these changes in various countries;
- Bring together researchers on both sides of the Atlantic to help inform them about these policy changes, their impacts, and the research and policy lessons that they provide;
- Help develop and enhance the future research agenda on these issues.

This conference will take place April 7-8, 2005. We invite paper submissions from scholars in the U.S. and Europe. Papers should evaluate key policy changes in social programs affecting work structure and work incentives within EU countries or the US. While we expect most papers will analyze a particular intervention in a particular country, we welcome papers that compare multiple changes within a country or that compare similar changes across countries. Papers should focus on programs aimed at working-age populations, with particular attention to lower-skilled and less advantaged workers or low-income families. Among topics of particular interest are employment and training programs for younger or less-skilled workers, programs designed to increase

female labor supply, or social assistance and tax changes designed to increase job opportunities or labor force participation. Papers will be selected depending upon:

- (a) Their demonstrated quality of research and analysis;
- (b) Their focus on the key topic of interest to this conference, namely, their evaluation of the effects of changing social and labor market policies for the less-skilled working-age population and their families;
- (c) The importance of the policy change and level of interest in this policy in other countries and contexts;
- (d) Their contribution in addressing issues from a diverse set of countries and a diverse group of policies

We would anticipate selecting up to 8 of these submitted papers for inclusion in the conference. All travel expenses would be paid for one author of each accepted paper to travel to Ann Arbor to present these results.

In addition to these papers, there will be a keynote address by Sir Tony Atkinson (Nuffield College, Oxford) on Thursday, April 7. Dr. Atkinson will be delivering the Citigroup Lecture at the Gerald R. Ford School of Public Policy, which will also be an integral part of the conference agenda, discussing social policy changes and their impacts within the EU. A roundtable discussion in April 8 will focus on the political and economic forces that are driving these changes and how they differ across countries.

Papers presented at the conference will be placed in the Working Paper series of the National Poverty Center (with no copyright or publication claims). In addition, following the conference, the NPC will produce a short summary of some of the key policy issues, research issues, and long-term research agenda that the conference highlights. This summary will be broadly distributed among interested scholars and organizations.

The conference will be organized by the National Poverty Center (NPC) at the University of Michigan. See www.npc.umich.edu for more information about this organization. The conference is jointly sponsored by the NPC and the European Union Center (<http://www.umich.edu/~iinet/euc/home.html>) at the University of Michigan. Rebecca Blank, co-director of the NPC and dean of the Gerald R. Ford School of Public Policy, will be in charge of conference organization and paper selection.

Submission instructions

Applicants should provide an electronic copy of the following by Monday, December 6, 2004. This material should be sent to:

Laura Lee, Program Manager
National Poverty Center
lllee@umich.edu
734-615-5312 (phone)
734-615-8047 (FAX)

1. A cover sheet with the title of the paper, the investigator's name and institutional affiliation, including mailing address, e-mail address, phone, and FAX numbers. If the paper involves more than one author, a principal author should be identified.
2. A one-to-two page abstract describing the specific aims, data, methods, and academic and policy significance of the research. If a draft of the paper is available, we are happy to receive it. (This need not be the final version of the paper that will be presented in April, but if more work is anticipated before the April conference, the nature of that work should be clearly indicated in the paper.)
3. A proposed budget that would allow the principal author to travel to Ann Arbor, MI, for a two-day conference in April. (Ann Arbor, MI, is within 30 minutes of the Detroit Metropolitan Airport. Ground transportation from the airport to Ann Arbor will cost \$50 each way. Overnight lodging in Ann Arbor will cost \$125/night. The conference itself will include two lunches and a dinner.)

Please address any questions to Laura Lee, NPC Program Manager, at the address noted above.