

ents who need child care in order to go to school, work, or training are eligible. Since TANF recipients are required to participate in one or more of these three activities, this means that federal law qualifies all TANF recipients to obtain health care from a state provider or use a certificate that is payable for child care from the provider of their choice.

Medicaid: The Medicaid program, Title XIX of the Social Security Act, was begun in 1965 and is the nation's primary health care program for the needy. It covers low-income adults and children, but the majority of Medicaid spending covers a variety of services for the elderly and disabled that are not included in the Medicare program. Like TANF, Medicaid is administered by the states within broad federal guidelines. Funding is divided between the federal and state governments with the feds averaging 57 percent of the costs.

All major medical considerations are covered

under this program for those who qualify. All TANF recipients qualify, including Sondra. While states have the option of paying for a few additional services, such as mental health, dental care, eyeglasses, or prescription drugs, most states pay for them all.

The fact is that the welfare system is much bigger than these few programs that are part of Sondra's reality today. There are more than seventy-seven major federal welfare programs, most of which are built on other programs for which Sondra will later qualify should she continue her current path.

Star Parker is the President and Founder of the Coalition on Urban Renewal and Education. This article is excerpted from her book Uncle Sam's Plantation: How big Government Enslaves America's Poor and What We Can Do About It, published in 2003 by WND Books.

TO BLOG OR NOT TO BLOG?

BY PATRICK MCDUGAL

As the Internet matures and gains credibility as a marketplace of ideas, maintaining a presence on the World Wide Web has become mandatory for public policy organizations. However, competition is fierce and many sites draw less than a substantial number of visitors. In the past few years, a new resource known as the web log (or "blog") has exploded in use, and the unique function and style of the blogs makes for a potentially valuable tool for free market organizations to further enhance their existing site and inform their target audience.

What is a blog, anyway?

Blogs are web pages that consist of a string of chronological posts, and can be updated as often as the user wishes. Often, these posts consist of hyperlinks to recent news, selected quotes, and additional commentary added by the user. While some blogs consist of the musings and ramblings of a single teenager and are updated intermittently at best, others are group collaborations maintained by mainstream media and policy organizations and are updated several times a day.



Who blogs, and why?

Already several State Policy Network (SPN) member organizations have begun maintaining their own blogs. As Brandon Lynaugh of the Buckeye Institute explained, the main motive in starting their blog was "the need to quickly deliver what we thought was information our constituents would be looking for during a contentious budget fight...the blog was an easy way for our staff to comment on news articles and get the information out there."

"I think the benefits would tend to vary a great deal by institution, though clearly a main goal for many would be to bring in traffic to their web sites. Other uses could vary from such things as increasing name recognition of columnists, to developing a more personal connection between a president and donor," said Louis James, CEO of Free-Market.net. He added, "I think of blogs as being mostly an institution-building tool for organizations, a means for strengthening ties, fostering loyalty, and building readership."

"The goal is to create a new forum for sharing brief thoughts, links to interesting articles,

