

Duncan, Greg J., Aletha C. Huston, and Thomas S. Weisner. *Higher ground: New Hope for the working poor and their children*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 2007. 166 pp. ISBN: 978-0-87154-325-7.

*Higher Ground* reports on New Hope, a three-year demonstration project that was created in Milwaukee, Wisconsin in August, 1994 by social activists and business leaders to provide benefits for unemployed people willing to work full time (30 hrs./week). The project's goal was to address certain barriers to working, not to fix all structural and institutional causes of poverty. New Hope was evaluated by the MDRC (Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation), which monitored the program's implementation and patterns of employment, earnings, and receipt of assistance. Information about official employment and income came from the administrative records of employers' payrolls and state food stamp and cash assistance program records. Applicants were assigned to the program randomly, half receiving support, half as a control group. Tables of data show the impact of the benefits on a number of measures during the project's existence, and at two and five year intervals after eligibility ended. These results provide evidence that this type of program can reduce poverty, promote school achievement, and support child development. Components of New Hope the authors feel could be incorporated into a government earnings support program include: 1) a requirement for fulltime work, 2) automatic eligibility for subsidized health insurance and child care subsidies, and 3) the availability of well-trained, helpful project representatives.