

# The Administration For Children and Families

Department of Health and Human Services

## Region VII Narrative Description

**EVENT:** Rapid Response Workshop  
TANF Round Table

### PROVIDING RURAL SERVICES – TANF ROUND TABLE

**DATE:** February 28 – March 1, 2002

**LOCATION:** Quarterage Hotel, Kansas City, Missouri

**ATTENDEES:** See Attached

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#### 1. BACKGROUND:

Region VII took HHS Secretary Tommy Thompson's push on Rural Initiatives to heart when deciding on what to pursue for our Rapid Response effort. The importance of this topic is underscored by the fact that the TANF Directors themselves discussed holding a workshop on this issue well before Secretary Thompson announced his Rural Initiative. The subject is very topical for this Federal region, as all four of our States are considered rural States.

#### 2. OVERVIEW:

##### **PROVIDING RURAL SERVICES WORKSHOP>**

This Region VII Rural Services workshop, funded by the Administration for Children and Families (ACF), Office of Family Assistance (OFA), Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) was conducted as part of OFA's Rapid Response project. This workshop, *Providing Rural Services* and the *TANF Round Table* involved select TANF Staff and or TANF Directors from three of the four States within this region, ACF TANF staff, ACF administrative staff, and OFA Central Office Staff. Materials for the Rural Services portion of this meeting were gathered together under contract by Welfare Peer TA Network partner, *AFYA, Inc.* of Takoma Park, Maryland. Materials were then reviewed for relevancy and then assembled by regional staff. (A copy of the final workshop notebook accompanies this report.)

The purpose of this one-day workshop was to identify existing barriers to providing social services to individuals and families in rural areas within the four State region . . . To promote the sharing of ideas, existing State programming efforts, innovative promising practices, and ways to further collaboration efforts to enhance services in these areas. Throughout this workshop, collaboration of effort and services between, State, County, local, community and faith-based entities was emphasized as necessary in order to achieve the desired level of service to rural areas.

Many of the issues or barriers regarding providing services to individuals and families in rural areas are similar in nature to those impediments facing welfare recipients in urban and other areas. These include: issues of meeting work requirements, finding a family sustaining and steady job, securing adequate support services such as day care and or elder care, transportation, affordable housing, and quality health care. These issues are then compounded by the fact that they are happening to people in rural settings.

Key areas of discussion included the following topics:

- Transportation
- Welfare Reform / Time Limits
- Domestic Violence
- Economic Development
- Needs Identification
- Service delivery issues
- Staffing
- Funding (State Budget Crises)

**TANF ROUND TABLE**> The TANF Round Table portion of the meeting was conducted by OFA Central Office staffer Grant Collins, Consultant to the Director of OFA. The Administration's recommendations for TANF reauthorization were presented and discussed.

### **3. WORKSHOP SUMMARY:** (Thursday, February 28)

Deputy Regional Administrator, Harry Mc Daniel, gave the Welcome and Introduction. The Agenda was reviewed and objectives for the workshop were presented. (An agenda is attached)

Patricia Brown, Director of the Office of State and Tribal Operations (OSTO), then made presentation on the eight (8) Priority areas of ACF: Fatherhood / Healthy Marriage, Faith-based / Community Initiatives, Positive Youth Development, the Next Phase of Welfare Reform, Enhancing Early Literacy of Children, Rural Initiatives, Prevention, and One (DHHS) Department.

TANF Teams Administrator, Gary Allen then presented the workshop notebook and gave explanation as to the development of materials and how the meeting came about. Mr. Allen then opened discussion and made presentation on providing TANF related services to individuals and families residing in rural areas.

TANF Consultant, Dan Houlahan then facilitated discussion and identification of Barriers that preclude the providing of comprehensive, affordable, and accessible services to the rural community.

Many of the general issues faced by service providing agencies and barriers for individuals gaining self-sufficiency in rural areas are the same impediments faced in urban and suburban areas. Issues of meeting work requirements, finding and retaining a family sustainable job, finding quality supportive services such as child and or elder care, transportation, affordable housing, and the importance of good health care are all issues common to TANF Service providing agencies no matter what the location or geographic region. These are compounded exponentially by the mere fact that the client or TANF recipient family resides in a rural area.

The Issues and Barriers identified were categorized into three areas: **General Barriers**, **Issues related to Funding**, and **Organizational Accountability and Staffing**.

#### **General Barriers:**

- **Distance**
- **The Brain Drain**
- **TRANSPORTATION**
- **Support Services** (The lack thereof)
- **The lack of Training and Educational opportunities**
- **Isolation** (The remoteness of some areas)
- **Lack of Trust in Government** and others
- **Lack in the number Service Providers**
- **The aging rural population**
- **Racial Issues** are still a problem in some areas
- **Language barriers**
- **Limited Economic Growth / Limited Job Opportunities**
- **Limited technology**
- **Limited Skills (Hard and Soft)**
- **Low wages**
- **Unwillingness to move to more urban / suburban areas to secure work**
- **High Unemployment**
- **High level of Independence**
- **Psychological barriers**
- **Lack of Drivers License**
- **Lack of economy to support a social services infrastructure**
- **Lack of awareness of Rural issues by those outside of area**
- **State-wide initiatives do not recognize differences between rural and more populated areas**
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#### **Funding Issues:**

- **State Budget Crises**
- **Competition with areas of greater population for grant and other monies**

### Funding Issues: Continued

- **The Informal Economy** common to some rural communities
- **Legislative restrictions on some money**
- **The Economy of Scale**
- **Rural dependence on Subsidies**
- **Inability to fund staffing**
- **The unwillingness to start new programs due to the tentative nature of continued funding**
- **Some faith and community based organizations lack TA to apply for funding**
- **Need greater flexibility to meet needs of rural population**
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### Organizational Accountability and Staffing:

- **The need for capacity building on rural issues**
- **Lack of identity with State issues / Initiatives by State agencies**
- **Inability to apply for funding given limited staff resources**
- **Organizations want to deal with local issues, not State-wide causes**
- **The lack of attention toward the recruiting of rural staff**
- **The inability to hire and or replace staff being lost to retirement and or attrition** (usually the Brain Drain – Leaving for more money)
- **Geographic coverage areas**
- **In some cases, “One-stops”** have been identified as a barrier because they are centrally located based upon population and away from rural communities
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Each item or barrier identified was discussed in some detail with each State being afforded the opportunity to speak to each specific topic.

There was a good deal of discussion regarding the financial crises within each of our four States. The current fiscal and impending fiscal year's budgets are calling for staff reductions, the elimination of programs and services offered, and the consolidation of departments and operating divisions. Some of these have already taken place.

TANF Staff then offered best practices and models on providing effective services to remote and rural communities. Best practices were presented from across rural America. Examples of which are contained in the workshop notebook

Gary Allen then walked the group through the very recently released (two days prior) President's recommendations relating to TANF and Welfare Reform reauthorization.

Naturally, there was a good bit of discussion on the newly released proposals. Pat Brown, TANF Consultant – Tom McMorris and Dan Houlahan assisted with facilitation of discussion. It was assumed that a good deal of the TANF Round Table to follow the workshop would be dedicated to these new proposals, so a list of group identified questions was developed to present at that time.

The workshop concluded after a review of the material covered and a wrap up presented by TANF staff. This portion of the meeting was adjourned after supper.

#### **4. TANF ROUND TABLE SUMMARY: (Friday, March 1)**

Mr. Grant Collins, Consultant to the Director, Office of Family Assistance, was introduced to lead this portion of the meeting.

Also introduced and afforded the opportunity to speak was Linda Lewis, ACF Regional Administrator for Region VII.

Mr. Collins presented a very concise and well-defined presentation of the Administration's proposal for reauthorization. He also presented examples of program practices from the State of New York that illustrated and aided in understanding the intent behind some of the proposals.

**The noon-to-noon conference was concluded with remarks from Gary Allen and Pat Brown**

**Providing Rural Services Workshop & TANF Round Table with Andrew Bush**

**Attendees**

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<p><u>Office of Family Assistance -ACF</u></p> <p><b>Andrew Bush,</b> Director - OFA 370 L'Enfant Promenade, SW Washington, DC 20447 202.401.9275 (T) <a href="mailto:abush@acf.dhhs.gov">abush@acf.dhhs.gov</a> (E)</p>	<p><u>Office of Family Assistance -ACF</u></p> <p><b>Grant Collins,</b> Consultant to the Director -OFA 370 L'Enfant Promenade, SW Washington, DC 20447 202.401.6953 (T) 202.205.5887 (F) <a href="mailto:gcollins@acf.dhhs.gov">gcollins@acf.dhhs.gov</a> (E)</p>	<p>ACF Region VII</p> <p><b>Linda Lewis,</b> ACF Regional Administrator 601 East 12<sup>th</sup> Street Room 276 Kansas City, MO 64106 -2808 64106-2808 816.426.3981.172 (T) 816.426.2888 (F) <a href="mailto:llewis@acf.dhhs.gov">llewis@acf.dhhs.gov</a> (E)</p>	<p>ACF Region VII</p> <p><b>Harry McDaniel,</b> ACF Deputy R.A. 601 East 12<sup>th</sup> Street Room 276 Kansas City, MO 64106-2808 816.426.3981.113 (T) 816.426.2888 (F) <a href="mailto:hmcdaniel@acf.dhhs.gov">hmcdaniel@acf.dhhs.gov</a> (E)</p>
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With Andrew Bush, Director – Office of Family Assistance

February 28, 2002 – March 1, 2002

## Agenda

**THURSDAY**

February 28, 2002

### Providing Rural Services

**Opening / Welcome** Harry McDaniel,  
Deputy Regional Administrator – ACF Region VII

**Introductions** Pat Brown, Director – OSTO – ACF Region VII

**Providing Rural Services** Gary Allen,  
Teams Administrator – OSTO / ACF

**Tom McMorris**, TANF Consultant  
(IA, KS, MO, NE)

**Raymond Hicks**, TANF Program Assistant

**Dan Houlahan**, TANF Consultant

**State Rural Activities** TANF Directors

**FRIDAY**

**March 1, 2002**

**TANF Round Table**

With Andrew Bush, Director – Office of Family Assistance

**Introductions**

**Linda Lewis,**  
Regional Administrator – ACF Region VII

**Round Table Discussions**

**Andrew Bush,** Director – OFA / ACF  
**Grant Collins** – OFA / ACF