



2014 Region VI TANF Technical Assistance Meeting September 23-25, 2014

Summary Report



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Overview

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families (ACF), Office of Family Assistance (OFA), Region VI hosted representatives from Arkansas, Louisiana, New Mexico, Oklahoma, and Texas at the 2014 Region VI TANF Technical Assistance Workshop “*Building a Path to Family Stability*” in Dallas, Texas on September 23-25, 2014. State TANF leadership and staff shared strategies they are employing to improve program performance and outcomes for Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) participants. Meeting topics covered homelessness, domestic violence, TANF redesign, noncustodial parents, and evidence-based practices.

This report summarizes highlights from this 2014 ACF Region VI TANF Technical Assistance Meeting.

Day One – September 23, 2014

Welcome and Introductions

- **Carolyn Meier**, Deputy Regional Administrator, Administration for Children and Families, Region VI
- **Marjorie Petty**, Regional Director, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Region VI
- **Susan Golonka**, Acting Director, Administration for Children and Families, Office of Family Assistance
- **Larry Brendel**, TANF Regional Program Manager, Administration for Children and Families, Office of Family Assistance, Region VI

During the Welcome and Introductions, speakers provided an overview of key themes and topics that would be the focus of the three-day meeting. Carolyn Meier, Deputy Regional Administrator, discussed how TANF is a mandatory partner for the new Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), which offers TANF programs new chances to build partnerships that increase family stability. She encouraged attendees to think about asset development, human trafficking, refugee resettlement, fatherhood, and family strengthening.

Marjorie Petty, Regional Director, Region VI, described how ACF is providing support and stability across the Region to break down silos among departments. Sharing the challenges associated with TANF is critical, she said. The passage of WIOA offers a new opportunity to do so and bring inter-system players together. A healthy workforce, said Petty, will make a stronger nation and stronger families. This is not just about programs, she said, it is about improving self-confidence and hope among our families.

State of the State Dialogue with ACF/OFA Leadership

- **Susan Golonka**, *Acting Director, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Office of Family Assistance*
- **Dr. Chirstopher King**, *Senior Research Scientist, Ray Marshall Center for the Study of Human Resources, University of Texas at Austin*

Susan Golonka highlighted the innovative strategies she had heard from all the Regional Roundtables this year. She also discussed WIOA and the implications this law would have on TANF and the families that TANF agencies serve. States were then asked to provide updates on their TANF programs.

State Updates

- **Oklahoma** – In the coming year, Oklahoma representatives are planning to provide incentives to TANF participants based on their level of achievement. With an influx of new parents, and a large proportion of these parents without high school diplomas, the state plans to use incentives as a means to promote high school completion, obtain a General Equivalency Degree (GED), and as rewards for those who show achievements in the WorkKeys program.
- **Arkansas** – Representatives from Arkansas identified several programs that are currently in the pipeline. This includes the transition and building of a new system that will allow programs to reassess service models for participants. In coordination with rebuilding the system, there is work being conducted on how TANF participants are assessed. Arkansas officials understand that it is important to address that assessment and use this in their career pathways program in order to better serve their client base. Additionally, the state will be using an assessment tool called TORQUE to engage TANF participants in the employment process. The new approach is further evidence of the state's emphasis on a system of evaluation and placement redesign. A key component to their marketing program involves fostering connections with established community programs and groups. Outreach efforts are currently yielding 10-15 sign-ups per week.
- **Texas** – Texas representatives discussed steps to simplify the case management process. For a period of time, case managers spent a majority of their time documenting client participation hours rather than working directly with participants. The goal was to reverse this trend in an effort to become more client focused. The state is witnessing this transformation in the second year of the initiated change. Additionally, the state is working to revamp their information technology systems to provide services to participants in remote locations, specifically looking to use internet connectivity to enhance and provide direct interaction. The state plans to use this enhanced interaction approach to consolidate workforce centers. There are now less than 200 workforce center locations and future reductions will allow wider access to clients while maintaining a smaller footprint. Additionally, officials are creating Accel classes at Goodwill

Industries of Central Texas that provide parenting classes focused on child development strategies and how parents can interact better with their children.

- **Louisiana** – Louisiana representatives provided an update on their efforts to provide meaningful and sustainable work placements for TANF participants. The Louisiana program is rather small, with some 5,500 cases statewide, but slightly over 1,000 TANF participants are work-eligible. The state is in the process of drafting a Request for Proposal (RFP) seeking assistance in the area of employment placement and anticipate that by July 2015 all of their Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) functions will be handled through the Louisiana Department of Education.
- **New Mexico** – New Mexico officials discussed two pilot programs being conducted in the state, the ICARE substance abuse program and the Careerlinks program. With regards to program outcomes, the ICARE program has not been as successful as officials anticipated and is currently being reviewed for funding in the coming year. In contrast, Careerlinks has seen great gains in participation and outcomes and is currently in the coming year's budget request.

Dr. Christopher King, Senior Research Scientist, Ray Marshall Center for the Study of Human Resources, University of Texas at Austin

Dr. Christopher King, Senior Research Scientist for the Ray Marshall Center for the Study of Human Resources, presented an overview of toxic stress and dual-generation poverty, specifically providing an overview of the Generation Strategy initiative, which currently is being implemented in Austin, Texas. The Generation Strategy builds on, and improves, previous training and postsecondary approaches for the adult workforce, specifically investing in human capital – both adults and children – and providing intensive postsecondary education and training in business sectors displaying growth. A conceptual framework was developed to engage children in early literacy and numeracy, and help adults better understand their education and training options and how it connects with their children. Moving from this conceptual framework idea, Dr. King briefly discussed the Spring 2014 publication of the *Future of Children*, which describes six pathways by which parents and home setting affect child development. The pathways include stress, parental education, health, income, employment, and asset development. Dr. King proceeded to provide an overview of research related to these six pathways. Relevant research has found a strong link between parents' education and its long-term effects on their children. Research also shows that healthy parents have healthier children as a result of genetics, as well as environment and behavior. Finally, Dr. King said, when examining family income, poverty harms child development through family and environmental stress.

Dr. King also described continuity and change theories, which state that early learning begets later learning; that there is an ecological effect on children in their early years. Dr. King also discussed

theories relating to risk and resilience, which state that children can “bounce back” from adversity if given the proper support. Finally, he also discussed the human capital theory, which states that investments in education and skills lead to greater productivity, jobs, and earnings over time. Dr. King then briefly discussed several programs and their programmatic outcomes when considering the aforementioned theories.

Examples of these programs include Tulsa’s CareerAdvance Initiative, which provides sectoral job training, career coaches, and other supports to help parents find stability and sufficiency, with hopes that the target population of single mothers will gain the necessary skills that will ultimately affect their children in a positive manner. Lessons learned over the course of many programs discussed include the need to incorporate career coaches and peer support in cohort models, which are key components for parents. The majority of programs are woefully underfunded, he said, and in return, it takes longer than program officials are comfortable with to achieve success.

Participant Comments, Questions and Answers

- There is a need for TANF participants to get job references and TANF programs need to keep people in longer-term jobs.
- The effects of labor market attachment do not seem to persist after four years. Portland, Oregon did a lot of the sectoral career pathways programs - not just looking at policy but looking at program implementation.
- There is a need to make links more explicit between adult training and education and early childhood education literacy.
- Oklahoma said they struggle with substance abuse issues among TANF participants. They did not include that in the program. There are family support service programs and the mission is to connect them to services.
- There are nuances associated with being a career coach/navigator, the professional must ensure they don’t enable participants, but ensure they get connected to needed resources.
- What would be a true 2-generation poverty model? Is it a concept, strategy framework, how does one use this idea in thinking about how to implement it? There is a continuum – we have to work harder to build in components of this 2-generation strategy. There is a word deficit when kids enter kindergarten in terms of understanding and engaging language that involves the child.
- In the Getting Started guide, when young mothers come in - we need to determine if they have children, and see what programs could be of assistance. When you are doing a 2-generation strategy - you need to do work intensively - you will probably be serving fewer families. You

should invest upfront in these families as part of this intensive work. Do not let the work participation rate requirements hold you back.

Forging a Path to Family Stability in a Changing Job Market

- **Richard Froeschle**, *Director of Labor Market and Career Information, Texas Workforce Commission*

Richard Froeschle, Director of Labor Market and Career Information at the Texas Workforce Commission, provided an overview of the current economic climate in the United States and discussed best practices in connecting TANF participants to job opportunities.

The U.S. is still recovering from the recession in 2008. The number of new hires is increasing though still lower than pre-recession levels; the number of layoffs has decreased; and the “quit rate”—when employees are willingly leave their jobs—is increasing, though still lower than pre-recession levels. This could be a result of people quitting additional jobs taken up during the recession. The U.S. unemployment rate, he said, is decreasing, though it is still at much higher levels than before the recession, and the duration of unemployment is decreasing, but at a very slow rate. He attributed the slow labor market recovery to cyclical, stagnation, and technology advances enabling more goods and services to be created with fewer workers.

Texas has weathered the slowing labor market and has added the most number of jobs. It also has had the highest job growth rate for 2013-2014, mostly due to the oil and gas industry. The Texas metropolitan areas have shown higher job recovery rates than the national average, and include five of the top fifteen largest job growth cities in the U.S. in 2011-2012. Current demographics of Texas employment levels show baby-boomers and generation-X workers holding a steady number of jobs over the last 12 years, with the number of millennials increasing rapidly over this period and projected to overtake the number of baby boomers in the workforce by 2015.

Mr. Froeschle discussed the challenges and strategies to connecting TANF participants to job openings. A majority of the most projected job openings were for low-skill, low-wage jobs, and as an obvious fact, higher educational attainments led to higher wages. From a survey among regional employers, it was found that employers identified soft skills to be the most important. The most critical soft skills include communication skills, a pleasant attitude, and the ability to work with people different than yourself. Mr. Froeschle concluded that connecting to employment is a balance between will and skill. A job seeker needs the will to enter the workforce at a lower level and wages, possibly in different localities and show flexibility and initiative. Skills allow the job seeker to grow and advance in jobs through stackable credentials, informal education, experience, and by building a strong supportive structure—primarily through the programs and offices participating at the Region VI meeting.

Program Flexibility, Career Pathways, and Improving Employment Outcomes for TANF Participants

Part 1

- **Liz Schott**, Senior Fellow, Center on Budget and Policy Priorities
- **Sandy Elledge**, TANF Programs Field Representative, Oklahoma Department of Human Services

John Disque, a TANF Program Specialist from the Region VI office, introduced the speakers for the session.

Liz Schott, Senior Fellow, Center on Budget and Policy Priorities

Liz Schott, a senior fellow at the Center of Budget and Policy Priorities, discussed employment opportunities and program flexibility for TANF participants. In today's climate, education matters in determining employment and earnings. Currently employers are looking for workers with more skills and education. Education and training program reforms have adapted program designs to fit the current economy; however, TANF participants are often left out of these changes.

Additionally, work participation rates (WPR) limit TANF participants' ability to partake in basic and vocational education programs; and as a result, states turn away or restrict participants from certain activities. It is important to understand TANF work policies in each state and realize the underlying reason for such policies. Many states allow flexibility with regard to education and training programs, even though it may not count toward the WPR. All Region VI States met WPR in 2011, allowing for them to set their own schedule and processes. States can use program flexibility to allow for stand-alone vocational education to count for 12 months; allow basic education and internships to count towards WPR for younger participants; and stack core and non-core activities so that it counts toward WPR. When WPRs are low, programs could also use subsidized and unsubsidized employment to keep their rates on target.

Sandy Elledge, TANF Programs Field Representative, Oklahoma Department of Human Services

Sandy Elledge, from the Oklahoma Department of Human Services, discussed the state's TANF program and specifically its work around career pathways. The Department included TANF program flexibility in flex funds, transportation contracts, job readiness and vocational training programs, career development specialists, and special projects. Every non-exempt client, once approved for TANF benefits, must complete upfront assessments, joint staffing assignments, and an employability plan. The Department also offers referrals to community colleges, if additional training is a viable option. The special projects undertaken by the Department primarily relate to vocational training opportunities. A minimum of 30 hours per week of work activities must be scheduled during training,

but supervised homework and study time could also be counted towards these hours. The program uses supportive services funds for uniforms and work clothing, child care enrollment fees, gas vouchers, tools, etc. In addition, these funds are also used to assist TANF participants with car repairs, driving lessons, and driving license reinstatement fees. These expenditures are approved on a case-by-case basis by partners. The time constraints on assisting participants, participants prioritizing work over training, and the decreasing caseload leading to higher average costs are some of the key challenges faced by the Department. To create an efficient workforce system, the Department partners with other regional organizations pooling resources and collaborating to create an efficient and holistic workforce development system.

Part 2

- **Nicholas Lalpuis**, *Regional Administrator, U.S. Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration, Region IV*
- **Frank Stluka**, *Regional Director, Office of State Systems, U.S. Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration, Region IV*

Nicholas Lalpuis and Frank Stluka, administrators from the Employment and Training Administration, discussed WIOA, which was signed into law in July 2014 by President Obama. WIOA passed with large bipartisan support and replaces the Workforce Investment Act (WIA), which expired in 2003. While maintaining the same structure at first glance, WIOA incorporates many changes that bring stakeholders together to encourage partnerships and help clients. The Act builds on proven practices such as career pathways, sector strategies, work-based training, and regional economic approaches. WIOA aims to break down silos and enhance coordination among core programs: adults, dislocated workers, and youth formula programs and Wagner-Peyser employment services; and adult education and literacy programs and vocational rehabilitation programs that assist individuals with disabilities in obtaining employment. Every state is required to develop a four-year single unified strategic plan for core programs, and a combined state plan that discusses state partners such as TANF, unemployment insurance, and the trade adjustment act. WIOA also aims to reaffirm the American Jobs program by making TANF a required partner, and also requires a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). WIOA also promotes evidence-based and data-driven programs, in part, to improve accountability to stakeholders and taxpayers. In general, the Act takes effect on July 1, 2015, the first full program year after enactment, unless noted otherwise. Stakeholders' input is critical to the success of WIOA and opportunities to provide input are available on the Department of Labor website. The Department is providing in-person and virtual technical assistance throughout the implementation period.

Improving Child and Family Outcomes by Improving Noncustodial Parent Employment

- **Mervil Johnson**, *Workforce Collaboration Manager, FACT Project, Workforce Solutions for Tarrant County*
- **Maurice Stevens**, *President, Career Development and Placement Strategies, Inc., Cuyahoga County, Ohio*
- **Alyssa Puckett**, *Fatherhood Placement Specialist, Fatherhood Works Grant, Goodwill Central Texas, Austin, Texas*

Introduction

Reagan Miller, Division Director at the Workforce Development Division of the Texas Workforce Commission, provided introductions and an overview of TANF NCP Choices. TANF NCP Choices is a noncustodial parent program that works with child support, the Texas Office of Attorney General, courts, and the Texas Workforce Commission Board. The program works with fathers who are behind in child support payments and encourages them to participate in services. Key program elements include: co-location, job referrals, support services, subsidized employment, case management, and communication. Ms. Miller also highlighted lessons learned from the program including increased participation by noncustodial dads who are collectively over 140 million dollars in arrears.

Mervil Johnson, Workforce Collaboration Manager, FACT Project, Workforce Solutions for Tarrant County

Mr. Mervil Johnson of the FACT Project, a program funded by an OFA Responsible Fatherhood Grant and conducted through the Workforce Solutions for Tarrant County, provided an overview of the program and its effect on employment for noncustodial parents. Providing a brief introduction to the county and project's target population, Mr. Johnson detailed how their work with eight partner agencies aims to assist a target population that is 70% noncustodial parents, 70% ex-offenders, and 90% unemployed. With the majority of its target population consisting of men, the FACT project offers fatherhood and parenting classes, mentoring and peer meeting groups, and life skills and counseling options for all participants. To bolster services, there is a Fathers Advisory Council, which consists of program graduates who share insights into the program and approaches that can be implemented to help incoming fathers and program participants. Mr. Johnson also provided insight into the FACT Project's focus on economic stability as a means to help participants reach economic independence. The project provides budgeting and financial training opportunities. Participants undergo a comprehensive assessment prior to participating in the FACT Project. The assessment includes a personality assessment through Strengthsfinder, followed by two intensive boot camps based on the assessment. The camps help clients identify strengths and build on weaker areas. Mr. Johnson shared a

story of a former program participant and his exponential growth through the program. This same former participant is now a facilitator with the FACT Project.

Maurice Stevens, President, Career Development and Placement Strategies, Inc., Cuyahoga County, Ohio

Maurice Stevens of Career Development and Placement Strategies, Inc., discussed improving child and family outcomes through improved employment options for noncustodial parents. Mr. Stevens described his program's 11 fatherhood projects funded by Cuyahoga County Fatherhood Initiative. The program's mission is to provide workforce and personal development training to enhance participants' personal management skills while promoting economic stability and self-sufficiency. This mission is achieved through a public awareness program, the Passages and Rising Above program – which consists of 1,500 program graduates and over 500 graduates placed in active employment positions. Assistance is provided to new fathers through bootcamp activities. Participants learn about child safety, the responsibility associated with fatherhood, and methods to assist mothers as both individuals make the transition to parenthood. Additional services include child support, parenting, asset development, and other wraparound services.

Mr. Stevens also provided an overview of the Expert Reclaim program, which provides on-the-job training to participants in construction and home renovation, and mentorship towards entrepreneurial endeavors. The program consists of a three-phase approach that includes in-class workshops and certification training, on-the-job training, and job placement or entrepreneurial assistance. Through the entrepreneurship program, seven new area businesses have been created by program participants. Overall, the program provides new jobs for participants; reduces recidivism; and increases payroll taxes. Mr. Stevens concluded by providing a brief overview of the overall Career Development and Placement Strategies, Inc. sustainability plan and future plans regarding new revenue, funding opportunities, and programmatic updates.

Alyssa Puckett, Fatherhood Placement Specialist, Fatherhood Works Grant, Goodwill Central Texas, Austin, Texas

Ms. Alyssa Puckett of Goodwill Central Texas provided an overview of the Goodwill Central Texas-Fatherhood Works Grant program, which is also funded by an OFA Responsible Fatherhood Grant. Ms. Puckett shared that Goodwill Industries, a nonprofit social service agency, is employer-driven and aimed at generating lifelong connections to work and helping individuals find sustainable employment. The Fatherhood Works Grant specifically aims to provide job readiness trainings, job search assistance, and case management for a target population that consists of individuals with criminal backgrounds, housing stability issues, limited education, and disabilities. The program identified the target population's basic problems to be the inability to pay bills as well as difficulty envisioning long-term goals and planning for advancement. In order to combat these problems, Ms. Puckett discussed how the Fatherhood Works Grant assists fathers towards self-sufficiency and family stability. One of these

activities includes one-on-one case management with a Placement Specialist who assists the participant in setting goals, placement into job readiness programs, and job searches. The job readiness training consists of a readiness bootcamp, and a class specifically geared towards how participants can discuss their criminal backgrounds and how to represent the positive experiences gained.

Finally, through occupational training and its careers academy, the Fatherhood Works Grant coordinates with local community colleges and vocational skills training vendors to provide training in various business areas, ultimately providing a pool of qualified applicants for area businesses to hire. All referrals are prescreened for appropriate experience and qualifications, and participants and their employers receive retention and supportive services for the first 90 days of employment.

Day Two - September 24, 2014

Strengthening TANF Programs: A Panel Dialogue

- **Dr. Michelle Derr**, Senior Researcher, Mathematica Policy Research
- **Dr. Jeanette Hercik**, Senior Vice President, Family Self-Sufficiency, ICF International
- **Liz Schott**, Senior Fellow, Center on Budget and Policy Priorities

Dr. Yvette Lamb, a Principal at ICF International, Inc., facilitated the session. Dr. Michelle Derr, Senior Researcher at Mathematica Policy Research, discussed a recent State of the States study; Dr. Jeanette Hercik, Senior Vice President for Family Self-Sufficiency at ICF International, discussed TANF redesign efforts; and Liz Schott, Senior Fellow at the Center for Budget and Policy Priorities (CBPP), discussed safety-net issues for unemployment and how to make policy work for TANF programs.

Dr. Michelle Derr, Senior Researcher, Mathematica Policy Research

Dr. Derr shared background on a recent State of the States research report, part of a broader study on work participation rates (WPR). The study found that there has been an overall decrease of Federal funding support for TANF programs. During the recession, TANF funds were used for other purposes such as for child support and other services that were useful, but did not help families in a way that TANF envisioned. States were able to work through funding squeezes while American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) funding was made available, but struggled once these ran out. States responded by reducing state and program staffing and cutting budgets even though there was an increase in caseloads. States also cut case supports such as child care programs and had to modify contracts with local employment services. These changes also led to a rethinking of TANF practices and performance measures. Staff who had been in the field for a long time moved on; and younger staff took their place, leading to some new concepts and out-of-the-box thinking. Programs were able to

redefine the vision and mission of state and local TANF programs, improve business processes, and use data to increase program awareness and performance.

Dr. Jeanette Hercik, Senior Vice President, Family Self-Sufficiency, ICF International

Dr. Jeanette Hercik discussed the review conducted by OFA and ICF as part of the OFA PeerTA Network on TANF redesign by eight States. State responses to redesign ranged from requiring program enhancements to complete overhauls. States needed different drivers: motivators, flexibility, and clearer views on what TANF participants needed. Motivation for redesign included: internal motivators such as a change in leadership and/or vision (Wisconsin); hard economic times; staff retention since retirement was high at state and local levels, which reduced the number of field staff with program knowledge (South Carolina); and court injunctions and state legislation.

- Changes in State TANF structures included:
 - Intake: Eligibility changes, staffing and technology that created new tools to assist with intake;
 - Case management: Referrals, staffing, and collaboration;
 - Employment: Subsidized employment, education and training;
 - Post-employment supports: Subsidies and ongoing supports; and
 - Supportive services: Performance-based contracts, staffing, and collaboration.

Dr. Hercik reviewed some examples of changes states have made:

- Intake and Assessment:
 - Washington started using motivational interviewing. Wisconsin started conducting one-on-one interviews instead of group orientation. Colorado changed their intake forms to be more participant focused. California developed OCAT (the Online Work Readiness Assessment (OWRA) Tool specifically designed for California). Washington, DC made TANF assessment a compulsory condition for eligibility.
- Case Management:
 - California implemented early engagement strategies through OCAT to triage services for participants. Hawaii moved to task-based, triaged approach for case management. South Carolina started using performance-based vendor contracts.

Multiple states (Washington DC, Hawaii, North Carolina and South Carolina) coordinated with other support services such as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and TANF for participant assessments. California expanded work activities to include vocational education, job

readiness activities, and job skills. North Carolina increased its focus on subsidized employment initiatives.

Dr. Hercik discussed how Washington, DC had an entire system change. This was a long process that started in 2009. The program is just starting to see outcomes. Early outcomes from this change include gains in business process efficiencies, and clients retaining employment for six months or more.

Lessons learned and advice from the states included:

- Seek staff and client buy-ins;
- Test changes before redesigning entire programs; and
- Avoid over-reliance on technology as some states were still waiting for technology to catch up with their changes.

Liz Schott, Senior Fellow, Center on Budget and Policy Priorities

Liz Schott, a senior fellow from the CBPP, discussed strengthening TANF programs. Ms. Schott provided information about how to build a work-focused safety-net program and some of the key aspects to consider. Chief among these is making sure that work programs relate to the needs of the local labor market and that programs do not use a one size fits all approach. Individuals within programs, while part of a target population, have various levels of experience, education, and interest, so there needs to be some ability to customize for the participant. Additionally, programs should recognize the diversity of their caseload, specifically setting expectations that participants can meet, while also ensuring that policies are vigilant about how programming may affect participants' children. Ms. Schott shared that it was important to recognize that the TANF to poverty ratio—the ratio of the number of families receiving TANF for every 100 families with children in poverty—has dropped over the years.

She also discussed declining caseloads and the lack of investment in increasing cash assistance. The value of benefits, she said, have decreased and are at the same rate as they were in 1996. This is a 30% decrease in real terms; and child care and work collectively amount to 16% of the TANF funding allocation. Following this conversation, Ms. Schott posed several questions to the audience and opened the floor for a Question and Answer Session.

Panel Question and Answer Session

Question: Does Jeanette have more information on the duration of time for some of the early engagement and job readiness activities?

- In California the family stabilization duration is six months. Some early job readiness pieces developed in Hawaii and South Carolina had up-front job readiness activities that needed documentation of 30 hours within a three week period. However, from a researcher's

perspective, there is no concrete number on what works best in the field; and because of funding cuts, some localities are having to scale back on some other services.

Comment:

Susan Golonka noted that it is important to look at different state measures taken regarding activities. South Carolina wanted zero people on cash assistance but everyone on employment, which was very different from the District of Columbia program that acts as an employment-focused safety net.

Question: What are a State's barriers to change?

- Having their own visions, State legislators set much of the policy for the states. It is up to the programs to implement their States' vision and align with their States' legislatures. Texas and Oklahoma commented that this has been a significant barrier and has been discouraging. It is important to try and educate the legislators, making them understand the program.

Question: What are models that can keep bringing back clients once they have a job? What are good post-employment models

- Georgia built good relationships with clients before employment that led to them coming back.
- At Goodwill they follow clients for 90 days and some participants for one to two years beyond the program.
- Arkansas offers incentives, such as work tools and professional clothing and uniforms, to encourage participants to come back. The state is currently looking to develop a post-employment participant engagement program.
- Exit interviews help participants make connections with community and the local workforce officers while providing information on career ladders-bridge programs. This gives participants connections to take them to next steps, and not as an end to their program.

Moving Programs towards Evidence-Based Practice, Session I

- **Dr. Yvette Lamb**, Principal, Family Self-Sufficiency, ICF International
- **Dr. Karon Rosa**, Program Director, Career Pathways Initiative, Arkansas Department of Higher Education
- **Franklin Holbrook**, TANF Division Chief, Arkansas Department of Workforce Services

Dr. Yvette Lamb of ICF International began the session by posing a question to the participants. When looking to develop the capacity for evidence-informed practice, she said, "how do programs develop the ability to become capacity based?" With evidence-informed practices, Dr. Lamb said, no study is being conducted, but rather you are using your own practice-based data to inform your program. The

ultimate goal should be to move to evidence-based practice using quasi-experimental evidence or replicating your program or practice.

Dr. Lamb provided participants with an overview of OFA's Promising Pathways Initiative, which consisted of 10 sites in the 10 ACF Regions aimed to develop capacity building within programs. Sites were chosen based on their geographic location (urban, rural, tribal), if the program used internal analysis and external evaluation, or was cited as "promising." Each site received support in defining their practice, data support, and technical assistance including an Innovation Institute, and a Leadership Roundtable among other activities and support. Many of the participating programs in the Promising Pathways Initiative mentioned that they did want a logic model and that they knew their program strengths, but rather needed to be able to mention this to potential funders. Dr. Lamb shared that the Promising Pathways Initiative emphasized that if programs do not know their theory of change, then there may be knowledge lacking with regards to the program. Additionally, while many programs perceived inputs, activities, and outputs as the best way to demonstrate the program's effectiveness; it is outcomes that display program effectiveness. Examining and documenting fidelity to practice, she said, includes mapping to practice definitions, collecting implementation data (evidence), analyzing implementation evidence, and sharing results. Doing this, she said, will assist in presenting a program's effectiveness.

By mapping a program's effectiveness in this way, the program has achieved a basic level of evidence-informed practice and can use home grown data and discuss more than just the program's success story. The program will be able to discuss why some people succeeded and others do not and how they plan to make adjustments through the program. From this point a program will have sufficient knowledge to move towards quasi-experimental evidence design.

Dr. Karon Rosa, Program Director, Career Pathways Initiative, Arkansas Department of Higher Education and Franklin Holbrook, TANF Division Chief, Arkansas Department of Workforce Services

Dr. Karon Rosa and Mr. Franklin Holbrook gave participants some insight into the Career Pathways Initiative being conducted by the Arkansas Department of Higher Education. The infographics used to present were developed during/after the Initiative to help policymakers understand program data and to share success stories.

Arkansas has the highest percentage of adults who have high school diplomas but are unable to earn a living wage. Additionally, the state ranks 46th in the percentage of adults with an associate's degree and 49th for its percentage of adults with a bachelor's degree. It is because of these statistics that a career pathways program was launched in 2003 and eventually expanded statewide to all 22 two-year colleges and three technical college campuses. Understanding these educational deficiencies, they described the target population, which included adult parents or caretakers under 21, individuals earning 250% below the federal poverty level, individuals currently receiving Food Stamps, ARKids

First, or Medicaid, and current or former recipients of Transitional Employment Assistance (TEA). They described the target career fields including Allied Health, Education, Business Administration, and Manufacturing; the program goals of increasing postsecondary enrollment; job attainment and retention; and increased degree and certification attainment.

Dr. Rosa continued her description through the infographics, providing insight into student demographics, enrollment growth, funding, and other programmatic information. The program highlights included 29,000 participants who received 30,000 degrees or certificates, a 55% employment rate, and an 80% employment retention rate. Dr. Rosa closed her presentation with a depiction of a flow chart of the program's inputs, outputs, and goals to provide participants a clearer picture of the steps taken to achieve statistical outcomes regarding career pathways. Ninety percent of participants are female, the average age is 31, and while a large majority are Caucasian, 30% are African American. The average age demographic data gathered through this exercise really surprised the state as they had assumed that their enrollment was closer to the 20 to 26 age group, which require different services and have different backgrounds.

Additional success measures shared included that Arkansas has received over 90 million dollars in grants and subgrants to community colleges. The Rockefeller and Ford Foundations are also starting to look at the work of the Arkansas Career Pathways Initiative. Arkansas Career Pathways Initiative was recently identified as one of 30 models of Ready to Work by Vice President Biden.

Moving Programs towards Evidence-Based Practice, Session II

- **Dr. Michelle Derr**, Senior Researcher, Mathematica Policy Research

Dr. Michelle Derr asked participants to analogize their role in TANF programs to a familiar object. Participants provided answers that ranged from hubs of wheels (tying all parts together) to whack-a-mole (arising problems). Dr. Derr discussed some of the changing demands on TANF programs, including a decrease in Federal funding, increased demand for public assistance, and high unemployment, and how states and localities have responded to those changes. For example, responding to decreased TANF funding, states and localities have been limiting their TANF caseloads, reducing program costs by reducing staff and cash assistance, and rethinking TANF practices and performance measures. Ultimately, programs are being asked to do more with less. Dr. Derr divided the room of participants into groups and asked participants to list innovative service activities. They were asked to describe if their services were work-ready, work-progressing, or not taking action. For each area, participants discussed questions posed to the group and shared strategies that peer programs could use. These included:

Assessments

- Include soft skills and barrier assessments.

- Remove duplicative assessments.
 - Be more intentional about assessments and figure out how to map services to assessment findings.
- Consider contracting out specialized assessments.
- Conduct upfront appraisals that put tools in the hands of caseworkers.
- Conduct ongoing assessments.

Individualized Case Management

- Case managers need to hold themselves and TANF participants accountable.
- Case managers need to have a good understanding of their programs.

Employment Focused Services: Work Ready

- Programs should match participants to jobs based on labor market information.
- Programs should provide models for participants to understand the work environment and work expectations.

Employment Focused Services: Work Progressing

- Understand the educational background of participants.
- Improve access to mental health/substance abuse referrals.
- Ensure participants have access to basic needs, such as housing, food, etc.

Personal Work Supports

- Consider providing transportation services.

Performance Outcomes and Impacts

- Programs and clients should take ownership of their goals.
- Programs should have individual case plans for clients.
- Programs should conduct more extensive exit interviews.
- Programs should implement customer surveys.

Monitoring and Performance Evaluations

Performance Management:

- Programs should collect data that share outcomes and information on what they have achieved.
- Programs should be invested in obtaining good data.
- Programs should generate regular reports to track progress over time; this can be used to raise awareness at all levels, particularly among staff and to evaluate client progress.
- Programs should use data to highlight program achievements.

Creating Strong Partnerships and Implementing Effective Programming/Services for Families Experiencing or at Risk of Homelessness

- **Lindsay Knotts**, Management and Program Analyst, U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH)
- **Dr. Sharon McDonald**, Director for Families and Youth, National Alliance to End Homelessness
- **Winona Connor**, Emergency Solutions Grant Program Manager, Louisiana Housing Corporation
- **Angela Walker**, Vice President of Residential Services, The Family Place, Dallas, Texas

Nora Gilligan, Special Assistant to the Director of OFA facilitated the session and introduced the topic by discussing the Family Connections memorandum created between the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and ACF. It discusses key areas of action and crisis response system needs to help keep families safe. The U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH) was aware that not all client housing needs were the same and had prepared tailored interventions and assistance to suit most scenarios. TANF ACF-IM-2013-01 "[Use of TANF \(Temporary Assistance for Needy Families\) Funds to Serve Homeless Families and Families at Risk of Experiencing Homelessness](#)," which was published in 2013, discusses allowable uses of TANF funds relating to homeless families and provides examples.

Dr. Sharon McDonald, Director for Families and Youth, National Alliance to End Homelessness

Dr. McDonald from the National Alliance to End Homelessness (NAEH) shared that homeless and sheltered people are mostly single parents from poor families with little social support and that half of the children in shelters are five years old or younger. These families face other issues such as employment barriers, nutrition, and educational attainment. Over 175,000 families stay in homeless services every year, and the number of families is increasing. Rapid re-housing is being used to help families move back into housing in the community through:

- Housing identification assistance;
- Rent and move-in assistance; and

- Housing case management and services.

Dr. McDonald then discussed various rapid re-housing (RRH) models from Idaho, Utah, Mercer County in New Jersey, Washington, and California. The CATCH Program in Idaho used funding from TANF, HUD, private charitable giving, and community banks to fund RRH services. Services included employment assistance, intensive case management, six months of rental assistance, landlord negotiation assistance, and financial mentoring. As a result, 86% of families were able to pay their own rent after six months, and approximately 87% of families had housing stability one year after leaving the program. Utah provided similar case management services. With rental assistance they used a progressive rental model with an average RRH cost close to \$5,000 per family. The RRH program in Mercer County, New Jersey saw an average cost of approximately \$7,000 per family, and the county experienced a decrease in homelessness by two-thirds while the state as a whole saw an increase in homelessness.

Dr. McDonald also highlighted various ways agencies can collaborate to improve service delivery to homeless populations:

- TANF can change work requirements for families facing homelessness, provide easy access to cash assistance, and support RRH interventions;
- Child Welfare can coordinate with homelessness services to address housing needs of families; and
- Workforce development boards and early childhood development programs can also work to provide wraparound services to homeless families.

Winona Connor, Emergency Solutions Grant Program Manager, Louisiana Housing Corporation

Winona Connor from the Louisiana Housing Corporation (LHC) discussed LHC's RRH program. Ms. Connor is the Emergency Solutions grant manager for the LHC and works with clients to develop long term solutions to homelessness. Ms. Connor discussed LHC's initiative, War to End Veterans Homelessness by 2016, and the broad support it has garnered statewide. She also highlighted the costs of homelessness solutions in Louisiana: Rehousing costs about \$4,000 per exit; whereas, shelter housing averages \$10,000 per exit, and transitional housing costs approximately \$22,000 per exit. Ms. Connor discussed the example of "Million Dollar Murray", a homeless veteran who died on the streets, and had about \$100,000 per year spent on him for medical bills, police calls, etc. In Louisiana, RRH serves the same clients as TANF. HUD has been encouraging the use of RRH, and in Louisiana Emergency Solutions grant recipients must allocate at least 40% of funds towards RRH.

Angela Walker, Vice President of Residential Services, The Family Place, Dallas, Texas

Angela Walker, Vice President of Residential Services, from the Family Place discussed the organization's role in assisting domestic violence (DV) victims. The Family Place has been working with

DV victims for 35 years. She shared that there are over 13,000 DV cases reported each year in Dallas, with 80% of the population being women, and most being between the ages of 20 and 26. In 2013, there were over 7,500 calls from victims seeking help, and almost 3,000 of them came from police. This represented a 119% increase from 2012. The Dallas Police force partnered with an agency in Maryland to develop an 11 question lethality assessment. If the first four questions answered were affirmative, the victim faced a high risk of being murdered. The police then work with the Family Place in case the victim does not want to leave the house even after being informed they are high risk.

According to Ms. Walker, many women stay with their abusers because they are trapped financially. The Family Place assists with getting them skills, and invests in their lives so they can seek work opportunities. The Family Place's Job Readiness Program helps increase the number of individuals completing work training programs. Housing specialists help victims access subsidized housing options, and job specialists help victims with resumes, interviews, attire, etc. The Family Place Job Readiness Program Model following this trajectory: Emergency Shelter → Support Living Program → Job Readiness Training → Job Skills Training.

The Family Place has apartments on site for participants, and they are allowed to stay there until they are ready to move on. The Family Place also provides access to other support services (child care, TANF, food stamps, transportation, etc.) while clients move through the job skills training process.

TANF Listening Session on Homelessness

Nora Gilligan, Special Assistant to the Director, Office of Family Assistance, Administration for Children and Families and Larry McDowell, TANF Program Specialist, Administration for Children and Families, Office of Family Assistance, Region VI, facilitated a listening session on homelessness. They provided an overview of the homeless questionnaire that was piloted with Region VI states. The questionnaire was sent to TANF leadership in every state and was used to inform the region of state-level coordination between TANF and services designated for homeless populations.

Themes from survey answers include:

- Rapid-Rehousing Initiatives - A couple of the Region VI states, like Louisiana, are very involved in the nationwide rapid rehousing framework.
- Common Entry Assessment - Some states are focusing on a single coordinated entry system for families experiencing homelessness. TANF is being encouraged to be aware of and a participant in those systems.



Question: The OFA Region VI Office sent out a questionnaire addressing homelessness issues to TANF leadership in the States, and requested the surveys be completed and sent back to the Regional Office. Did the Office take any steps to address the concerns highlighted by the responses ?

OFA Region VI was testing the questions to see about the wording since this may be possibly used elsewhere or nationally.

Question: If there is abuse to children—do we have to report it?

We may not know if the children are in danger. If they are self-reporting, we may not have enough information to know. But if we do know (in Texas), then agencies have to report it.

- Sharon McDonald- Having a system that allows women to disclose things safely (such as child abuse) because they do not want the homelessness system to know they are homeless is important. We need to figure out how to address potentially punitive issues.
- Angela Walker- If you suspect abuse of some sorts, there will be an investigation. Several cities across the country have adopted a lethality assessment program. The Lethality assessment tool was started by the Maryland Domestic Violence Network.

Questions about employment and housing

- When Utah first started doing rapid re-housing, they realized they needed employment support, so they out-stationed a TANF/employment person to work with housing agencies. This individual signs clients up for benefits quickly, and also assists with usual support services that shelters offer. He or she also monitors the family as they move into stable housing. Los Angeles just out-stationed two welfare workers who conduct eligibility assessments and offer employment supports. Additionally, they have a mental health/substance abuse person and an early child development person on-site. A Dallas Workforce Solutions staff person is located at the BRIDGE (homeless shelter and service center), but they do not have a staff person from the TANF program (i.e., Choices).
- Some of the domestic violence victims and their families do not deal well with housing issues.
- Another population with homelessness troubles are single dads. It is harder for them to maintain employment largely because of child support arrears.
- Washington's Domestic Violence Network has a strong program helping women become economically and housing secure. Some single young mothers may need some home visiting, as well.

Day Three - September 25, 2014

Working with Victims of Family Violence to Address Financial Literacy

- **Jan Langbein**, CEO, Shelter Ministries of Dallas
- **Kim Pentico**, Economic Justice Specialist, Allstate Foundation Economic Empowerment for Domestic Violence Survivors Program and the National Network to End Domestic Violence

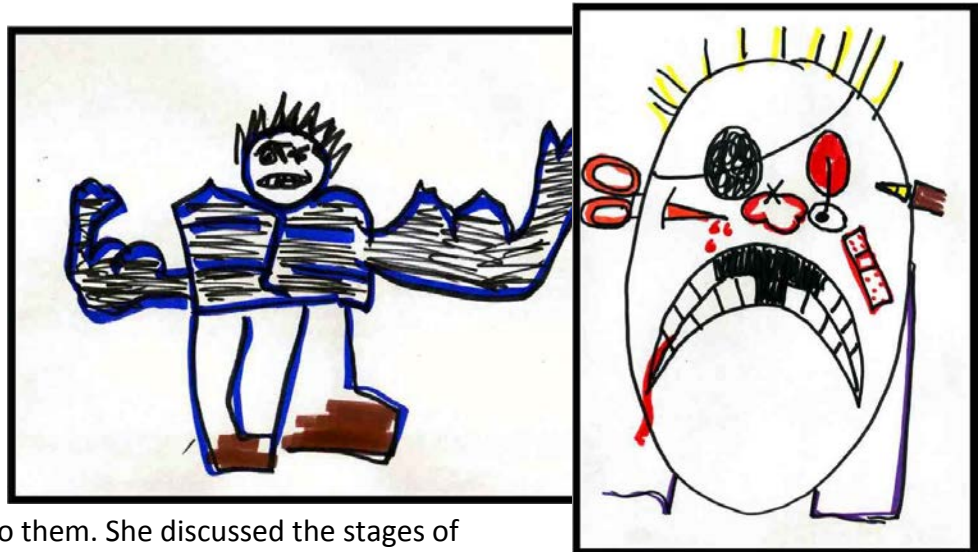
Carol Sedanko, TANF Program Specialist, ACF, OFA, Region VI facilitated the session and encouraged states to work with their state domestic violence networks.

Jan Langbein, CEO, Shelter Ministries of Dallas

Jan Langbein, the CEO at Shelter Ministries of Dallas, highlighted how recent events in the media have raised awareness about domestic violence. Ms. Langbein discussed statistics relating to domestic violence, including that in 95% of cases women are the victims. Ms. Langbein encouraged attendees to see [Crazy Love](#), a TED Talk on domestic violence. She discussed the research that boys raised in violent homes are 1,500 times more likely to become violent abusers themselves, and that 85% of all men in Texas prisons grew up in violent homes. There is a pattern to violence; a cycle of behavior where

everything is fine, then picking at each other, and then fights. The majority of victims who come into DV centers are victims of rape. Where there is sexual assault and domestic violence, it increases the the potential for human trafficking.

Ms. Langbein discussed the difficulties victims have in navigating the system and the lack of options available to them. She discussed the stages of change for a victim: Pre-contemplation, Contemplation, Preparation, Action, and Maintenance. She stressed that as service providers it is important to remember that you do not know all of the factors affecting a victim's decision to stay or leave, that there is more under the "tip of the iceberg." Ms. Langbein ended her discussion by showing the audience examples of how family violence affects children.



Kim Pentico, Economic Justice Specialist, Allstate Foundation Economic Empowerment for Domestic Violence Survivors Program and the National Network to End Domestic Violence

Kim Pentico, Senior Economic Justice Specialist also discussed some DV statistics. One-third of all women, she said, have experienced domestic violence in their lives. Having limited financial resources is a big risk factor for domestic violence. She also stated, however, that being poor does not make a person violent nor does it mean someone with plenty of resources is not at risk of experiencing abuse.

Ms. Pentico said that TANF workers should know that abusers often use economics and finances as ways to control their partners. Some tactics include: harassing at the workplace, ID theft/ruining credit, and causing eviction, especially in cases where the family is receiving public housing benefits. Lethality increases when women leave. Domestic abuse survivors usually leave from their homes in poverty, and if not, may soon find themselves in poverty.

The Family Violence Option requires TANF programs to take DV into account when dealing with clients. This includes individualized assessments with trained staff members, referrals to appropriate counseling and supportive services, waivers of requirements that may be difficult for victims of family violence to meet, and extended time limits and family cap provisions. These types of programs give survivors the chance to recover and establish plans to move forward.

Ms. Pentico then discussed the Allstate Foundation to End Violence Against Women Through Financial Empowerment program, which, since 2005, has trained over 5,000 advocates and reached over 3,000 survivors, while investing over \$35 million. The program model includes: Individual Development Accounts and non-traditional match savings programs; credit repair and microloans, and working on transportation/cars, education and training, and a financial literacy training, *Moving Ahead Through Financial Management*. The literacy training program is a five part curriculum: Safety Planning, Budgeting, Credit, Loans, and Long-term Planning. Lessons learned from implementing it include that:

- Everybody has a learning curve.
- We are not born knowing how to manage money
- Talking about money is difficult.
- Budgeting lessons should not be done during the first class.

To address poor credit issues, some states like Kentucky and Texas, are doing \$100 no-interest loans—paid back over 10 months. The States then report that back to credit bureaus allowing client scores to go up.

Ms. Sedanko ended the session by reminding the audience that many women do not see themselves as victims, and that this can be a key challenge faced when trying to protect them. The Family Violence Option (FVO), or parts of it, can be used to assist victims in these instances.

Addressing the Needs of Rural TANF Participants: Challenges and Solutions

- **Loretta Robertson**, Policy Supervisor, Workforce Program Policy and Services to Dislocated Workers, Texas Workforce Commission
- **Linda Hughes**, Program Director, Adult and Family Services, Oklahoma Department of Human Services
- **Marilyn Martinez**, Director, Income Support Division, New Mexico Human Services Department
- **Kim Matherne**, Program Director, Economic Stability Programs, Louisiana Department of Children & Family Services
- **Carla Morris**, TANF Field Operations Program Manager, Arkansas Department of Workforce Services

Louisa Jones, Principal at ICF International, opened the session by discussing OFA's work on the Rural Communities Initiative that included 16 sites across the U.S. from 2008-2011. Poverty, she said, is often perceived as occurring in urban settings, yet approximately 14-16% of TANF participants nationwide live in non-metropolitan/rural communities. She also shared resources available on the [OFA PeerTA website](#),¹ such as webinars, articles, and studies stemming from the Rural Initiative. Some of the common barriers addressed during the Initiative included transportation, housing, domestic violence, child care, and employment.

Carla Morris, TANF Program Manager, Arkansas Department of Workforce Services

Carla Morris, the TANF Program Manager from Arkansas, started the state dialogue by discussing rural needs in Arkansas, emphasizing that all of Arkansas' counties are rural to a certain degree. The lack of employment opportunities, child care services, and mental health and substance abuse providers are serious challenges in the state. To address transportation challenges, the Arkansas Department of Workforce Services (ADWS) now partners with Medicaid services to assist with transportation and outreach. It also encourages case managers to discuss carpooling options with participants and coordinate with faith-based organizations to provide transportation. Child care provides another significant challenge and getting providers to cover the second and third shifts (late night shifts) is proving difficult. However, Arkansas is informing providers of their needs and looking to increase work with child care services. The Department also has a computer lab provided by Microsoft that is open to all participants to gain and/or improve their computer skills.

Linda Hughes, Program Director, Adult and Family Services, Oklahoma Department of Human Services

Linda Hughes, the Program Director for Adult and Family Services from the Oklahoma Department of Health and Human Services, discussed how many of Oklahoma's problems are similar to Arkansas. The lack of job opportunities, mental health and substance abuse providers, and transportation are key issues facing the state. By contracting with transportation contractors, the state has been able to solve some transportation issues. However, contractors usually do not cross county borders, and this has been an additional challenge. Oklahoma is also experiencing decreases in TANF applications and is worried that average costs will increase. The decrease in participants is thought to be due to a lack of connection between caseworkers and participants. SNAP and other welfare services and assessments are now conducted off-site; hence, face-to-face meetings take place less often. As a solution, Oklahoma is starting empathy training for staff to help case managers become more aware of participants' feelings and circumstances.. To combat the lack of housing in rural areas, the Department is encouraging participants to be involved with their communities and connect with other organizations that can help. Sharon McDonald from NAEH mentioned that no clear solutions exist for the lack of rural housing options, and that NAEH was currently working on this issue.

Marilyn Martinez, Director, Income Support Division, New Mexico Human Services Department
Marilyn Martinez discussed rural issues in New Mexico. Transportation partners and consultants in New Mexico are currently working together on building a system that will help people more easily move around the state. The Department is also sharing information and resources online so that TANF participants can access them remotely, even though not all rural areas have internet access. The Department offers referrals to substance abuse providers, and encourages participants to enroll, where appropriate. This has resulted in higher retention rates, even though TANF enrollment numbers remain low. The Department has incorporated a new eligibility system (ASPEN) that allows participants to enroll in multiple programs, as opposed to the previous system which counted eligibility towards each program individually. New Mexico does not allow TANF funds to be used to pay for child care if the parents are not employed, and currently finds that child care providers do not like to have participants who only use their services for a few hours. Solutions from Texas and Arkansas were shared: in Texas the Commission uses CCDF funds for child care; in Arkansas child care services are shared between approximately 10 participants.

Kim Matherne, Executive Director, Economic Stability, Louisiana Department of Children and Family Services

Kim Matherne, from the Louisiana Department of Children and Family Services, discussed rural challenges faced by Louisiana. Sixty-four percent of the state is considered rural, and as a result all programs aim to go to their clients, as opposed to clients approaching the program. The state also uses an online café, which allows clients to apply for programs online and has a system that allows them to contact their case managers through the café. The Department also holds a round robin application system that allows staff to be mobile around the state and work out of smaller office spaces, if needed, in rural areas. In terms of transportation, audits indicate that the state was spending more than it gained in transportation assistance, and was not cost effective. As a result, the Department started providing transportation stipends that had clients finding their own transportation. There have been no objections thus far. New Mexico shared that they use CCDF funds to provide child care assistance, however, participants are responsible for finding their own child care providers, and the department has “in-house providers” who are more flexible with child care services.

Loretta Robertson, Policy Supervisor, Workforce Program Policy and Services to Dislocated Workers, Texas Workforce Commission

Loretta Robertson, from the Texas Workforce Commission, shared that the Commission has a partner network, which sends caseworkers out to locations, where there are no offices. Caseloads in rural Texas are low, and the Commission offers motivational interviewing for clients to promote engagement and participation. To help with transportation issues, caseworkers provide TANF participants with gas cards and cash assistance. Texas also tends to see higher employment rates in rural areas.

State Team Time and Discussion

State team time was then held for state participants to reflect and discuss what they had learned over the 2 ½ day meeting. Questions from participants for peers in other states were collected to share on the OFA PeerTA Network.

Closing Remarks and Adjourn

- **Larry Brendel**, TANF Regional Program Manager, Administration for Children and Families, Office of Family Assistance, Region VI

Following the state dialogue on addressing rural TANF issues, Mr. Larry Brendel, TANF Region VI Program Manager, shared closing remarks for the OFA Region VI: Building a Path Towards Family Stability Meeting. Mr. Brendel briefly highlighted themes from the two and a half day session and



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thanked TANF representatives and other key stakeholders for attending. Mr. Brendel encouraged participants to stay connected with the Regional office and colleagues.