



ADMINISTRATION FOR
CHILDREN & FAMILIES
Office of Family Assistance

Technology Initiatives That Support Employment Outcomes

**COLORADO: WEB-BASED TECHNOLOGY
FOR COACHING TANF PARTICIPANTS**



The Larimer County Works Program has transformed the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) staff-participant relationship by implementing a goal achievement coaching model (Goal4 It!) hand-in-glove with a technology-based coaching platform, TuaPath. The combined approach, referred to as My Journey to Success, has redirected time and energy toward employment outcomes. It also helps build accountability and a trusting relationship between TANF participants and case managers. The platform incorporates a goal-oriented coaching methodology and an understanding of the role of executive function in achieving employment goals.

TANF *Works!*

Integrating Innovative Employment & Economic
Stability Strategies into TANF Programs

EMERGING PRACTICE SERIES | 2018 - 02

THE TANF CHALLENGE:

What Issues Do TANF Programs Face?

Most TANF participants want to work in jobs that will allow their families to thrive. However, they often face multiple barriers in achieving the goals included in their employment plans.

Participants' high levels of stress due to poverty take an extreme toll on their **executive functioning** (EF) capacity. In fact, research shows that living in poverty is comparable to living without having slept the night before.¹

Executive function and self-regulation skills are the mental processes that enable us to plan, focus attention, remember instructions, and juggle multiple tasks successfully – all attributes necessary for successful participant employment...



THE INNOVATIVE SOLUTION:

What Solution Is Proposed to Address These Challenges?

In Colorado, the Larimer County Works Program teamed up with a software provider to address these barriers using their web-based coaching platform, TuaPath, in tandem with a goal achievement coaching model. Built specifically for and informed by the needs of TANF coaches and participants, the platform creates an optimal environment for practicing the goal-oriented learning process on a regular basis. Leveraging research and input on executive function skills provided by Richard Guare, the platform incorporates a range of cognitive behavioral strategies for participants and coaches to use in addressing the most critical EF challenges (such as organizing goals into smaller achievable steps) to employment success. The online platform also makes it easy to report work participation and track progress anytime and anywhere.

Stress leads to diminished EF capacity to organize, plan, prioritize, and sustain focus to follow through on long-term employment goals. Participants' EF capacity may be further affected by the stress of meeting and tracking required work requirements to qualify for continued benefits, coupled with the awareness that the failure to meet these requirements could result in severe financial penalties for their families.

Overburdened staff are also less effective. Coaching provides a crucial role in helping families navigate the path to self-sufficiency. However, finding the time to build a trusting, mentoring relationship with program participants is nearly impossible if coaches spend 50-70% of their time collecting, verifying, and tracking compliance. In addition, participants may experience challenges in making it to appointments and submitting required paperwork, both of which create inefficiencies and increase stress for participants and coaches.

The platform serves three important and interconnected purposes: (1) enhances the capacity of customers and staff to meet their programmatic compliance and accountability requirements without further exhausting their EF skills; (2) facilitates personal and professional skill-building in the realm of goal achievement; and (3) provides a place where customers and staff can celebrate victories and achievement together. These purposes provide a framework for increased family stability, program compliance, hope for the future, the acquisition of goal achievement skills, and progress toward employment and self-sufficiency.

These environmental modifications through a technology platform have created the bandwidth for the Larimer County Economic & Workforce Development Department to allow its goal-oriented coaching approach, My Journey to Success, to take root and grow. New processes provide a way for customers to break the cycle of failing to meet administrative burdens, thereby ensuring more stability for their families. Staff burden from managing volumes of compliance-driven paperwork is reduced, freeing up more time for employment coaching and goal achievement skill-building.

The platform is completely transparent to participants and staff, thus providing the capacity to build trust.

ALIGNING INNOVATION WITH RESEARCH:

What Is Known That Provides Confidence This Idea Can Work/Will Matter?

EXECUTIVE FUNCTION

Just as an air traffic control system at a busy airport safely manages the arrivals and departures of many aircraft on multiple runways, a person needs EF skills to set and achieve goals, prioritize tasks, filter distractions, and control impulses. This set of underlying core capabilities includes, for example: ²

Managing time
Organizing thoughts and materials
Paying attention
Planning and prioritizing
Getting started on tasks
Staying on track
Remembering what to do / when to do it
Problem solving
Reflecting on past behaviors and outcomes
Managing feelings and emotions

These capabilities help an individual to get and keep a job, provide responsive care for children, manage a household, and contribute productively to the community. When these skills have not developed as they should, or are compromised by sources of ongoing stress and adversity, a person often pays the price in reduced quality of health, education, and economic vitality.

Chaotic, stressful, and/or threatening situations can derail anyone, yet individuals who experience a pile-up of adversity are often even less able to deploy all of the skills they need to cope with challenging circumstances. Early in life, the experience of severe, frequent stress directs the focus of brain development toward building the capacity for rapid response to threats and away from planning and impulse control. In adulthood, significant and continuous adversity can overload the ability to use existing capacities that are needed the most to overcome challenges. The good news is that adults of all ages can continue to learn these skills through coaching and practice, although it is easier and more effective when a strong foundation is built earlier. ³

GOAL SETTING AND ATTAINMENT

Russell A. Barkley's research notes that EF skills play an essential role in goal setting and goal attainment. Collectively, these skills enable individuals to regulate their behavior and to maintain the effort necessary to overcome challenges and obstacles as they pursue the goals they have set. ⁴ In a 2011 study, Laura A. Rabin and her colleagues identified weaknesses in executive skills as a key element in the breakdown of self-regulation, leading to failure to complete tasks, and suggested a number of cognitive and behavioral interventions to overcome these problems. ⁵ Mary V. Solanto later demonstrated the effectiveness of cognitive-behavioral interventions for adults in overcoming significant executive skills challenges. ⁶

PARTICIPANT DRIVEN PROCESS

The attainment of goals in life and employment, particularly in the face of challenges in executive skills and self-regulation of behavior, requires sustained motivation by TANF participants. In their work on self-determination, Richard M. Ryan and Edward L. Deci ⁷ have identified three needs in individuals that are the source of motivation:

Autonomy

People need to feel in control of their own behaviors and goals.

Competence

People need to gain mastery of tasks and learn different skills.

Connection and Relatedness

People need to experience a sense of belonging and attachment.



My Journey to Success incorporates strategies to address these needs by tightly integrating the goal-oriented coaching process and the technology platform:

Autonomy

Participants have control over planning, goal setting, and goal attainment, and can self-manage information.

Competence

The platform provides online intervention tools and strategies that participants can choose to practice and master.

Connection and Relatedness

Emails, texts, and phone meetings increase opportunities for real-time interaction between participants and coaches. They can track action steps, discuss challenges and supports, and record goal completion, leading to shared celebration of victories and progress on the road to employment and self-sufficiency.

PROGRAM MODEL:

What Is Being Done?

A unique partnership has been forged to implement this online coaching solution for TANF participants at the Larimer County Works Program in Fort Collins, CO. The key collaboration partners include:



Larimer County Economic & Workforce Development Department: a workforce center in northern Colorado serving approximately 600 cash assistance participants at any point in time

+



TuaPath LLC: the software developers of the goal-oriented platform, TuaPath

+



Mathematica Policy Research: a social policy research organization that provides guidance and training in the Goal4 It! coaching model

+



Richard Guare, PhD, Executive Skills LLC: a consultant on the role that EF skills play in job search and retention strategies for adults affected by conditions of poverty and stress, and a trainer of coaches for social policy research organizations.⁸

In addition to Larimer County, TANF staff in four additional Colorado Counties (Otero, Prowers, Crowley, and Kiowa) are using My Journey to Success created by the collaboration.

The solution is thus research, methodologies, practice, and process combined with technology to achieve optimal program and participant success. This cognitive behavioral intervention is designed to help participants build EF skills toward achieving their employment goals by outlining a path from A-Z. Key components of the program model include:

1

Web-Based TANF Work Participation (WP) Reporting and Verification

Participants access the platform's online Monthly Time Sheet functionality using their phone, tablet, or any desktop device. It is an easy-to-use calendar interface where work participation hours and activities, as well as supporting documentation (photographs of pay stubs and receipts), can be entered, uploaded, tracked, and processed. The barriers of transportation and time-consuming trips to the TANF office during work hours are eliminated, along with paper-based

WP records that are subject to loss. Further, the platform is available 24/7 so participants can enter hours and submit their WP monthly report entirely online, in real time and at their convenience. The information is captured consistently and in a format that is easy to review with results automatically tallied.

The platform also relieves the TANF staff's administrative burden of chasing paper-based work participation requirements and entering information manually into a system. Coaches can easily monitor TANF participants' progress and intervene with personalized messages or pre-programmed behavioral nudges to remind them of upcoming compliance deadlines. Sharing WP results automatically with state offices is feasible and forthcoming, pending completion of a data-sharing agreement.

2

Goal-Oriented Coaching Model

With more time to focus on coaching, the program staff can support participants in setting goals that define their pathway to employment and self-sufficiency. Along with the platform, the staff use a set of tools to help participants define specific goals and action steps. The Snapshot of My Journey, a form filled out by participants either online or on paper, is intended to raise their self-awareness in relation to their goals. Participants also use the Goal Plan handout to self-identify obstacles (called "potholes") and how they will manage the challenges ("detours") in relation to a specific goal plan.

3

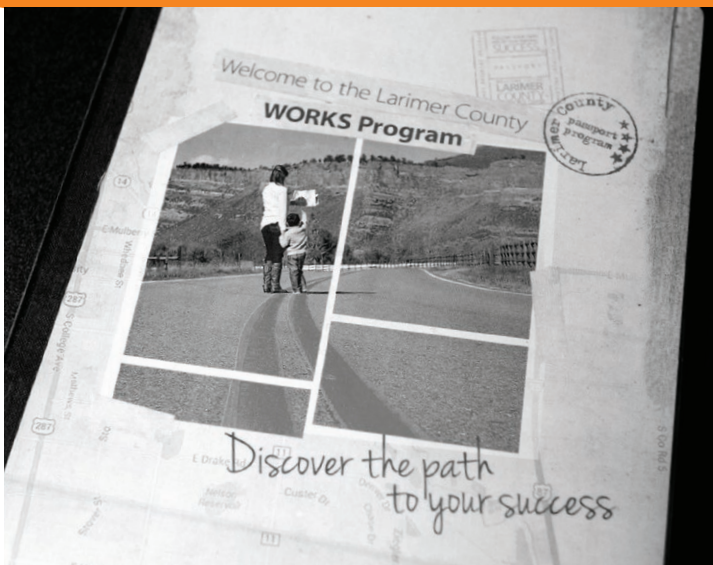
Automated Participant Assessments

A series of online and integrated assessments, developed from the work of premier authorities in executive skills coaching,⁹ assist coaches in getting to know participants, assessing executive skills strengths and weakness, and identifying obstacles that could hinder goal attainment. Information gained from assessments helps coaches determine if participant-chosen goals on the path to employment are realistic and attainable, and to focus meeting agendas on appropriate action steps.

4

Practical Simulation to Build Executive Function

Participant-directed goal setting¹⁰ is at the core of the coaching practice at the Larimer County Works Program, as described above. Participants create goals themselves using their own words, both for self-actualization and for the application of EF skills. Each step of the My Journey to Success online process is grounded in the practice of EF skills and development of problem-solving strategies. Coaches can monitor progress and proactively address issues as needed.



5

Accessible Resource Library

As with most workforce centers, the Larimer County Works Program has a wealth of information on resources and services available to participants in an assortment of handouts, brochures, and websites (their own and from other entities). However, asking participants under the toxic stress of poverty to prioritize and keep track of all this information only adds to their stress and diminishes their ability to draw upon existing organizational skills. The platform makes this content accessible in an online central repository and organizes assets into familiar life areas and pathways. Resources are broken down into step-by-step tasks to avoid overwhelming participants, while still providing clear guidance on how to achieve the goal.

6

Maximization of Data

Data can be leveraged to measure metrics and trend analysis on every data point, so that coaches can quickly get a 360-degree view of their participants, their activities, and their progress towards goals, while identifying any gaps where intervention, assistance, or encouragement is needed. By tracking completion of action steps, the platform encourages the documentation and recognition of progress as an important part of successful goal achievement. Data and resources are also presented in a variety of formats, including pre/post-assessment tests, printable handouts, and videos.

RESULTS:

What Has Been Learned/Achieved?

Created a positive working environment based on a goal achievement coaching model. The My Journey to Success program is experiencing an adoption rate by coaches and participants of more than 95 percent. Both groups agree that the intervention has helped create a beneficial and trustworthy environment for working towards employment goals. As the data

accumulates, compliance is increasing, paperwork is decreasing, mentoring and coaching are taking place, goals are being accomplished, and participants are becoming employed.

Expanded TANF staff's coaching capacity. The online platform saves coaches hours of time processing paperwork, thus reducing administrative stress. One coach reported that his paperwork burden has dropped from 40 hours to 8 hours per week. TANF staff can now focus less on program administration and more on intentional case management. Mentoring helps to engender hope and strengthen the coach-participant relationship as clients reach and celebrate small victories towards their larger goals of employment and self-sufficiency.

Increased on-time WP submissions rates. Participants report a decrease in stress because they can easily enter work participation hours and activities into a user-friendly, online calendar. Submission rates have increased 35 percent since the platform was instituted, with the rate of non-compliance decreasing by as much as 50 percent in some situations.

Empowered participants take ownership of setting and completing goals. In addition to documenting participants' progress and sending automated reminders to keep them on track, the platform provides a safe space for participants to repeatedly practice setting goals and taking action steps, building lifelong EF skills as they move toward employment.

Improved performance not only for TANF participants, but also for coaches. A framework of predictability in case management equips coaches with data to identify trends and monitor participants' progress. They can intervene with personalized reminders, encouragement, and resources to bridge the gap between what participants have and what they need to reach their goals. Coaches both follow their participants lead and prompt them to proactively address barriers.

Improved and increased communication between coaches and participants. TANF staff have seen an increase of 300-500 percent in touch points per month (many self-initiated by the participant), a 50 percent decrease in meeting no-shows, and a noticeable drop in negative interactions between staff and participants. Ongoing communication is easier for both parties through the platform, and participants have been more motivated to contact their coaches to discuss their progress on milestones and challenges, along with planned next steps.



A FIELD VIEW OF THE EMERGING PRACTICE: *Voices from the TANF Agency*



Low-income participants increasingly prefer mobile technology.

Challenge your assumptions about participants. The Colorado team surveyed participants and found they had much more access to—and comfort with—technology than conventional wisdom held.

“What we found from [surveying] our customers blew our mind. They have [technology]. They use it. They would welcome interventions and connections from us through that technology.

- **DENA JARDINE**
Associate Director at Larimer County Workforce Center



An online, goal-oriented case management tool can result in a relationship of trust that is motivational to meeting participants' employment goals.

Caseworkers, now called coaches, previously spent most of their time on eligibility requirements and compliance enforcement. Their interactions with participants were not structured to be empowering. However, the My Journey to Success approach has helped shift that dynamic towards a strengths-based collaboration that celebrates victories and provides support for addressing barriers.

“The old plans we used were designed more like a contract and had a lot of language that was very punitive-sounding. Now the ‘Road Map’ is really all about them. It looks at what they want to do, and what will work for them.

- **JULIE**
Case Manager at Larimer County Workforce Center



Prepare for smaller but more frequent participant interactions.

Using the MJTS platform allows participants to document their progress online between meetings with their coach. They can also communicate by sending texts or email messages. This means more frequent updates (and questions) throughout the month that require responses. Increased communication is a positive outcome, but staff must also prepare for a shift in contact rates.



When you look at the notes, you can see the detail that participants are writing about their activities. It's insightful. Maybe they put things in that they didn't mention to you on the phone or in person. You feel more connected being able to have immediate access to each other. The platform has a space for coaches to write tips and little messages as well.

- **SANDY ANDERSON**
Case Manager at Larimer County Workforce Center



An online solution has improved participant driven plans towards employment and self-sufficiency.

Participants bought into using an online resource once they realized they could write their own goals and action steps, rather than having them assigned. One participant's solution to a particular barrier may look very different from another's, and that is much more evident when the participants themselves are more engaged in developing their plans.



Folks really appreciate that this model is listening to what they want. We (coaches) used to feel like we had to solve participants' problems. But they can figure out how to do this, which is really amazing. They can come up with solutions and we're just helping guide them, providing resources.

- **ANITA MILLER**
Case Manager at Larimer County Workforce Center



Technology can be an asset to human service agencies, but success depends largely on the personnel using that tool to coach participants towards goal attainment.

Colorado has used staff training and phased implementation of its goal-based model to ensure that coaches are prepared to utilize the structure and information that result from this innovative coaching technology.



You have to have a model that really allows coaches to coach and allows participants to formulate plans for themselves and their families that are meaningful to them.

- **ELLA GIFFORD-HAWKINS**
Program Manager of Larimer County Works Program



Rapid-cycle evaluation allows initiatives to quickly refine solutions and protocols.

Larimer County adopted a "fail fast" mindset to test early versions of the online coaching platform with small groups of participants to gather feedback. This helped the team to quickly discover which features worked well and what needed improvement.

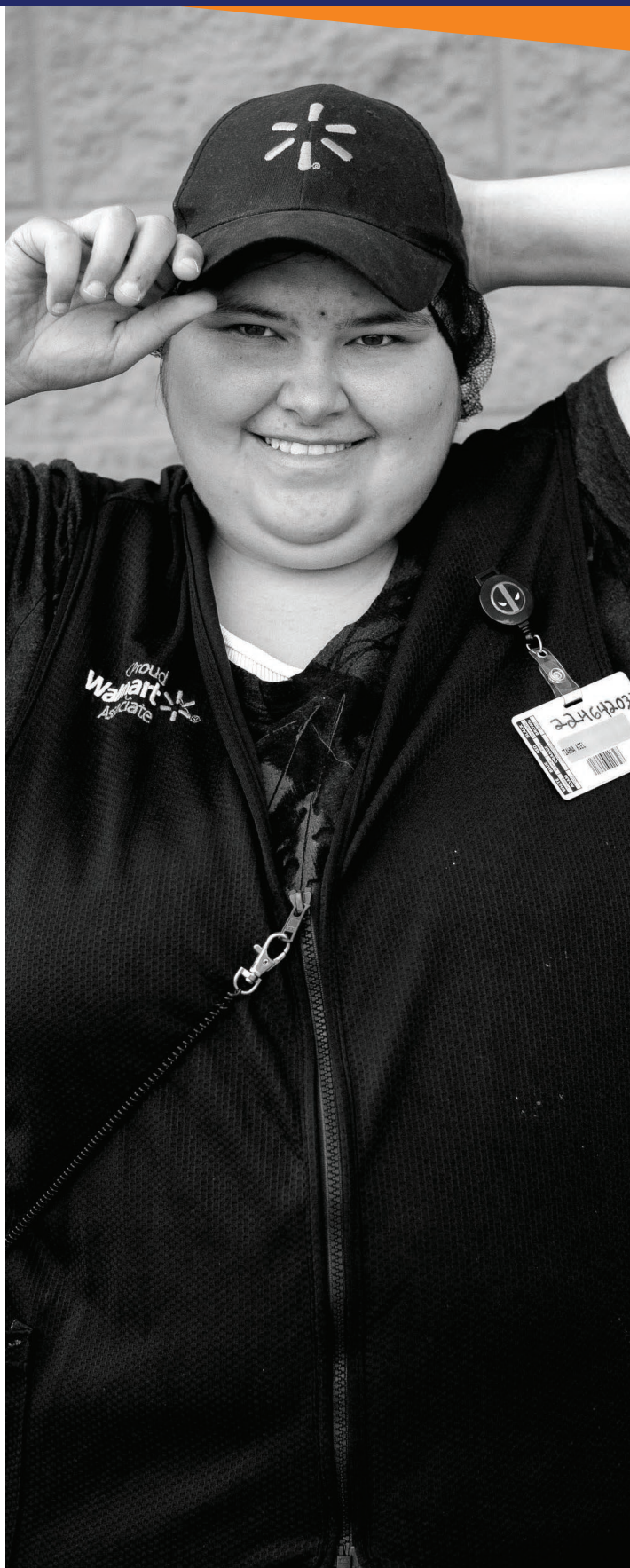


Part of what happened in the process of discovery is we needed to have an early 'win' on the platform. We knew that one of the biggest headaches for coaches and customers alike was the Monthly Time Sheet [functionality]. So we worked with TuaPath, based on coach and participant feedback, to make it look like a calendar instead of a form. And our customers love the new format.

- **ELLA GIFFORD-HAWKINS**
Program Manager of Larimer County Works Program

TANF SUCCESS IN ACTION:

Tiahna's Story



Until this year, 23-year-old Tiahna has never had a job in her life. Now she's on the path to stability, thanks to TANF and her job at the deli counter of the local Walmart. It's the first paycheck she has ever received! But she wouldn't have this job, she says, without the help of her case manager, Kirsten, and the online platform that enabled easy communication between them.

Tiahna has not had an easy life. She grew up in an unhealthy family situation, had a life-threatening health crisis at age 16 that spanned two years of surgeries and hospital visits, and her family always struggled financially. When Tiahna had her son at age 19, she and her husband weren't prepared to support him without help. They started cash assistance.

"It was really hard," Tiahna says. "We weren't able to get jobs at that time. The house we were living in was run down. The heater wasn't working. But with Kirsten's help we got into [another apartment]. Without her we'd probably either be on the streets or finding a way to live with family."

My Journey to Success helped Tiahna stay connected to Kirsten, kept track of her hours towards eligibility, and moved her towards the goal of being employed and self-sufficient. She doesn't consider herself especially tech-savvy, but she feels completely comfortable using the online platform. "After you do it a couple days and you know what you're doing, it's pretty easy," she says.

With coaching and a boost of confidence from her case manager, she's able to set goals for the next phase of her journey. She plans to advance in her position at Walmart and eventually go back to school. Her advice for others in her situation is to not be afraid to look for help from programs like TANF:

“ [TANF staff] are not going to look down on you for your situation. In one way or another they will help you do something with your life.

TANF SUCCESS IN ACTION:

Joslynn's Story



Joslynn lives in a very rural area of Colorado and is a TANF participant. After combatting a life-threatening illness she was finally well enough to look for a job, although she knew ongoing physical challenges coupled with few office jobs available nearby would limit her work options. Accessing the My Journey to Success platform on her mobile phone has connected her to more options. Now she can cut down on trips to the TANF office and save precious financial resources. She stays in contact with her coach with the click of a button. Also, using the Resource Tab she was able to contact the college where she obtained her GED to request a copy, which she needs for job applications. She now has easy access to the documentation, resources, and coaching support to be successful in her employment search.

TANF SUCCESS IN ACTION:

Beth's Story

When Beth fled from an abusive husband five years ago with her five kids, she could never have imagined her life as it is today: an occupational therapy graduate who passed her state boards. She faced a mountain of obstacles upon arriving in Colorado then with no place to live, few belongings or resources, no decent credit history or vehicle, and a great deal of trauma to work through.

She took advantage of resources in domestic violence and homeless shelters, found shelter in a friend's basement, and enrolled in school. But with no child support forthcoming from her ex-husband, she desperately needed financial help as she needed to file for bankruptcy and was facing a tough stretch in school.

"Everything felt impossible" and she dreaded applying for TANF because she heard that it was an impersonal and degrading experience. Much to her relief, that wasn't true. Her caseworker and coach took time to get to know her and showed her My Journey to Success to help her reach her goals. The online platform gave Beth a place to organize and deal with the challenging aspects of her life

in a manageable way, breaking down intimidating and unpleasant challenges into small steps.

"It's kind of like dumping a huge box of puzzle pieces. First you get them out, and then you can flip them over. And then you find the edge pieces, and then you find all the blue ones. And eventually you can see the picture." A snapshot of her status in various areas of her life – housing, work, and physical and emotional health – provided a visual reminder of her progress toward her goal of employment and stability.

“ My Journey to Success is [a] very realistic and intuitive [process and online tool that] provides me what it takes to put my life back together.

"It has a personal touch as well as being very practical: 'Okay, today your goal is breathing and getting the stress under control so that you can call the lawyer about your bankruptcy.' Because if you're an anxious mess you can't do those things. And to have that recognized as a valid goal, and to have it supported – even those little tiny victories are huge!" With her degree and state license she is excited to help and support others to "not just survive, but thrive."

TANF SUCCESS IN ACTION:

Lauren's Story



Lauren didn't want to apply for TANF. She came from a hardworking family, raised by a single mom, and had worked for a paycheck since age 14. She was desperately trying to advance her education while working multiple low-wage jobs in Prowers County, Colorado while raising her child without his father's help. Both her GPA and her child were suffering. Her five-year-old son was bouncing between different babysitters and was having behavioral problems as a result. Lauren knew she needed a different plan.

"It was really, really hard for me to go to the TANF office and ask for cash assistance because I had always worked," says Lauren. "But I realized that if we could get some assistance and I could focus on my school, then I could get better grades leading to scholarships rather than loans and complete college faster. And I know once I finish school, we won't need to be on these programs anymore."

Going on TANF has changed things for Lauren as she now has the time to study resulting in higher grades and scholarships. My Journey to Success has helped her by providing an online approach that allows her to enter her work participation hours on her schedule.

"Anybody with kids knows that you can't really be entirely 100 percent organized. If I forget to turn my timesheet in, I get an email, which is amazing because I can open it right there and fill it out real quick. Or in the middle of the night, if I'm working on homework and I decide I need a break from that screen, then I can open up the platform and type in my hours real quick and be done with it."

Lauren can also stay in closer contact with her case manager, sending messages via email instead of playing phone tag. That regular contact has helped her form a cooperative relationship with her coach.

Lauren is on track to graduate early with her bachelor's degree in human services. She wants to work to help other families struggling with generational poverty. "I don't want anything crazy," she says.

“ I just hope I can get a steady job and be able to find affordable child care and eventually get my own house. I just really want to be able to pay all my bills by myself.

Endnotes

- ¹ Mani, A., Mullainathan, S., Shafir, E., Zhao, J. (2013). [Poverty impedes cognitive function](#). *Science* 341 (6149), 976-980.
- ² University of California San Francisco Memory and Aging Center, Weill Institute for Neurosciences. "Executive Functions." <https://memory.ucsf.edu/executive-functions>
- ³ Center on the Developing Child at Harvard University (2011). [Building the brain's "air traffic control" system: How early experiences shape the development of executive function: Working Paper No. 11.](#)
- ⁴ Barkley, R. A. (2012). *Executive functions: What they are, how they work, and why they evolved*. Guilford Press.
- ⁵ Rabin, L. A., Fogel, J., & Nutter-Upham, K.E. (2011). Academic procrastination in college students: The role of self-reported executive function. *Journal of Clinical and Experimental Neuropsychology*, 33, 344-357.
- ⁶ Solanto, M. V. (2013). *Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy for Adult ADHD: Targeting Executive Dysfunction*. New York: Guilford.
- ⁷ Ryan, R. M. & Deci, E. L. (2018). *Self-determination theory: Basic psychological needs in motivation, development, and wellness*. New York: Guilford.
- ⁸ Dr. Guare has developed a coaching protocol with Dr. Peg Dawson and Colin Guare, MS, co-authors of the *Smart but Scattered Guide to Success* book series. See: Dawson, P., and R. Guare. (2009). *Smart but scattered: The revolutionary "executive skills" approach to helping kids reach their potential*. New York: Guilford Press.
- ⁹ These assessments were developed from the work of Dick Guare, Peg Dawson, and Colin Guare.
- ¹⁰ Larimer County Works Program has integrated the Goal4 It! coaching model into their MJTS platform. However, the platform is adaptable to use any goal-oriented, executive skills coaching methodology.

Contact & Partner Principals

Larimer County Economic & Workforce Development Department

Dena Jardine, Associate Director,
Larimer County Workforce Center
jardindr@co.larimer.co.us

Ella Gifford-Hawkins, Larimer County Works Manager
gifforer@co.larimer.co.us

Otero County

Donna Rohde, DHS Director, Otero County
donna.rohde@state.co.us

Prowers County

Lanie Meyer-Mirales, DHS Director, Prowers County
lanie.meyer-mirales@state.co.us

TuaPath LLC

Mark Fauth, Founder
mfauth@tuapath.com

Michael Suchowski
mikes@tuapath.com

Mindy Daigle, Director of Business Development
mdaigle@tuapath.com



The United States Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Office of Family Assistance funded this technical assistance activity, managed by Public Strategies, under contract number HHSP23337005T, Integrating Innovative Employment & Economic Stability Strategies into TANF Programs (IIESS).

Further Resources

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE SUPPORT

- [TuaPath and Workforce Centers](#)
- [Using Executive Skills Concepts and Principles To Help TANF Recipients Achieve Their Goals](#) (Building Better Programs)

OTHER PROGRAMS OF INTEREST

- [TANFTrac™](#) – WPR Tracking Solution (Public Consulting Group)
- [DadTime App](#) (Building Bridges and Bonds)
- [MoMba®](#) (New Haven MOMS Partnership)
- [Bridge to Self-Sufficiency®](#) and [Mobility Mentoring®](#) (EMPath)

FURTHER RESEARCH

- [Using technology in social work practice: The mDad \(Mobile Device Assisted Dad\) case study](#)
- [Self-Regulation and Goal Attainment: A New Perspective for Employment Programs](#) (Office of Planning, Research & Evaluation)
- [Using Brain Science to Design New Pathways Out of Poverty](#) (EMPath)

TANF EMERGING PRACTICE SERIES

The Emerging Practice Series highlights strategies being deployed by TANF Agencies and their partners to address the needs of TANF participants seeking to gain and sustain meaningful employment. These ideas are often in the innovation stage, yet show promise for consideration by other TANF programs based on implementation success and evidence from related research. This innovation by TANF Agencies is critical to an on-going learning agenda and to the ultimate development of Promising Practices, which are ultimately documented through a more rigorous process.

Each publication is structured with a similar format:

- **The TANF Challenge:** What Issue(s) Do TANF Programs Face?
- **The Innovative Idea:** What Solution Is Proposed to Address These Challenges?
- **Align Innovation with Research:** What Is Known That Provides Confidence This Idea Can Work/Will Matter?
- **Program Model:** What Is Being Done?
- **Results:** What Has Been Learned/Achieved?
- **A Field View of the Emerging Practice:** Perspectives from the TANF Agency
- **TANF Success in Action:** TANF Participants' Perspectives

The following individuals at Public Strategies contributed to this report: Jerry Regier, Kelly MacNeil, Jack Myrick, Michelle Watson, Sharon Park, and Adrienne Samuel, along with additions from Rebecca Behrmann at MDRC, TuaPath (R. Mark Fauth, Mindy Daigle, Michael Suchowski), and Dr. Dick Guare. Photography by Nicol Ragland. A special thanks to Ella Gifford-Hawkins and the Larimer County Economic & Workforce Development Department staff for their contributions and to its TANF participants who so willingly shared their personal stories.

Submitted to Damon L. Waters, Contract Officer Representative, OFA