



# TANF Works!

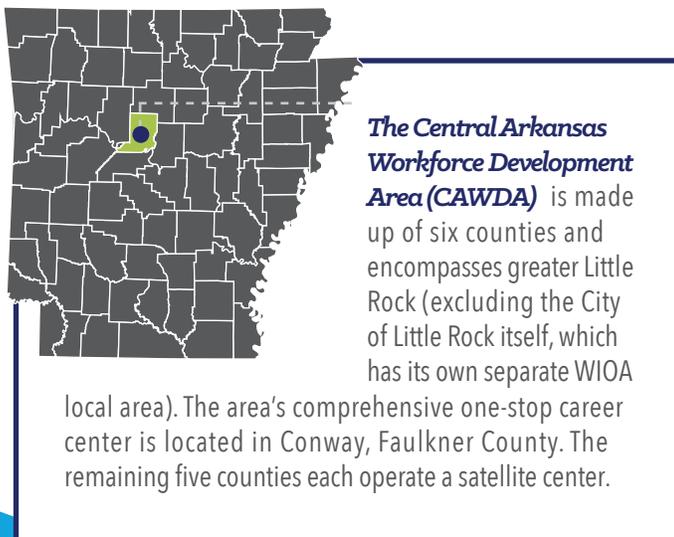
TANF/WIOA  
COLLABORATION SERIES  
2019 - 01

## Arkansas

### TANF/WIOA COLLABORATION

Since the passage of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) in 2014, many state Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) and workforce system leaders have focused efforts to coordinate client services serving low-income or vulnerable populations. WIOA makes TANF a mandatory partner unless the Governor opted out. Coordination efforts are meant to improve service delivery and reduce duplication.

FIGURE 1: The Central Arkansas Local Area



This brief highlights emerging TANF and WIOA agency collaboration practices among TANF agencies and American Job Centers (called Arkansas Workforce Centers) in Central Arkansas in the following areas:



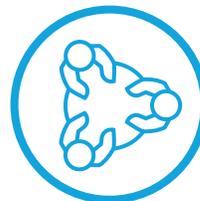
#### **Joint Service Delivery**

by conducting in-house referrals between TANF and WIOA, co-enrolling TANF recipients in WIOA services, and connecting clients to TANF resources



#### **Resource Sharing**

through co-location, integrated funding, and expanding TANF data systems



#### **Shared Learning**

by forming informal connections across programs, using performance data to encourage co-enrollment, and presenting services (not clients) to employers



#### **Managing Collaborative Activities**

with a workforce board overseeing TANF programming at the state level, and a single agency administering some WIOA and TANF services

## Local Services Overview

The Arkansas Department of Human Services (DHS) is responsible for screening applicants for TANF cash assistance (Transitional Employment Assistance, or TEA), enrolling eligible applicants, and regularly issuing cash benefits. DHS requires TEA recipients to meet with the Department of Workforce Services (DWS) for case management, which includes skills assessment, career planning, connections to employment and education services, and supportive services. After developing a career plan with a DWS case manager, TEA job seekers are connected to WIOA services at the Workforce Center. Typically, these connections are made in person, rather than by electronic referral. For example, a TEA case manager will escort the job seeker to meet the appropriate Employment Service, WIOA Adult, or WIOA Youth staff member.

Workforce Center staff who provide WIOA individual employment services may introduce job seekers to TANF staff on-site if they seem TEA-eligible, or may help the job seeker start a TEA application. WIOA staff encourage training participants who have minor children to seek TANF benefits as a source of income while they complete job training. For a WIOA participant whose training is paid for by Title I, co-enrolling in TANF may provide funds that cover child care costs. As part of its WIOA implementation, the state recently developed a Workforce Center intake form with common questions required by one-stop partners, including TANF.



### JOINT SERVICE DELIVERY

***Cross-referrals between TANF and WIOA programs connect job seekers to the resources and supports they need to move toward employment.***

***In-house referrals and co-enrollment in WIOA services.***

TEA case managers connect most TEA recipients to employment services that are available on-site at the Workforce Center. These services may involve self-guided, group, or individualized assistance from WIOA-funded staff. In most WIOA local areas, TEA staff also connect job seekers to WIOA Adult, Youth, or Dislocated Worker services such as occupational skills training. The TEA staff and WIOA staff touch base regularly about the job seeker's participation in these services. Before making referrals for co-enrollment, TEA case managers use assessment and career planning protocols to identify job seekers who are qualified – and likely to succeed – in completing these WIOA Title I services.

***Expanding work-based learning opportunities and connecting participants to TANF resources.*** In April 2018, Arkansas WIOA administrators issued new policy guidelines for WIOA-funded work-based learning. Existing and new programs include on-the-job training, paid internships, paid work experience, and incumbent worker training. These programs are led by DWS along with the local workforce development boards, local program providers, and business partners.

One of the new pilots is a transitional employment program that recruits homeless adults, with or without dependent children. In addition to offering transitional jobs, temporary housing, and other wrap-around supports, the pilot program will screen all individuals for TEA eligibility or participation in other TANF-funded programs. For example, during the term of their transitional employment, pilot participants may be eligible to receive TEA cash assistance. As participants move into unsubsidized employment, TANF resources could then provide retention supports (such as assistance with child care and transportation costs) as part of the TANF Work Pays program.



### RESOURCE SHARING

***TANF and WIOA staff at Arkansas Workforce Centers share locations, funding, and data across programs to coordinate services.***

***Partial co-location and shared funding.*** Most WIOA activities, along with TANF case management activities, are conducted at Arkansas Workforce Centers (there are 46 statewide). DWS administers Workforce Center programming at the state level and awards subgrants to 10 local workforce development boards. Each local board manages workforce activities within a designated local area, and a Workforce Center operator manages day-to-day activities and services.

DWS administrators guide local areas on how to integrate TANF and WIOA funding. Each local area contains at least one Workforce Center that is designated as a true “one-stop” center, incorporating all federally required partners. Additionally, some local areas have one or more satellite centers that offer a more limited set of programs and services. TEA case management is housed within all one-stop centers and in many of the satellite centers. TANF is considered to be a fully integrated partner within the Workforce Centers, by virtue of this co-location of case managers. TANF and WIOA both contribute to the non-staff operating costs of these centers, using integrated funding. Center staff with TEA duties are funded by TANF, and they sit alongside their WIOA-funded colleagues.

### ***Leveraging and broadening the capacity of TANF data systems.***

Arkansas has two management information systems to track TANF and WIOA participation data separately. Over the past three years the state has invested in a new data system, Arkansas Workforce Integrated Network System (ARWINS), to manage both TEA cash assistance and employment services for TEA recipients. ARWINS is now central to implementing the work requirements of Arkansas Works (which connects income-eligible individuals and families to private-market health insurance subsidized by Medicaid). Data reporting from ARWINS provides managers and administrators with previously unavailable information about the characteristics of Arkansas Works participants.

For individuals who are referred to WIOA Employment Service, case managers flag them in the Arkansas JobLink data system as a DHS referral; this allows DWS to create additional reports in JobLink to help track and share participant outcomes. This expansion is expected to lead to further data sharing across TANF and WIOA partners.



## **SHARED LEARNING**

***Cross-program information sharing is exemplified at the Workforce Center in the City of Conway, which has a notably high co-enrollment rate in TANF and WIOA Title I Adult and Youth programs.***

### ***Personal connections among program staff and managers.***

Typically, at least three-quarters of Conway's WIOA Youth enrollees,

and approximately two-thirds of its WIOA Adult enrollees, are TEA participants. To coordinate services and supports for shared clients, local managers encourage the staff to learn about the eligibility rules, enrollment rules, and resources available from other programs. For example, the Workforce manager directs newly hired staff to visit current staff of each one-stop partner to learn about their jobs and responsibilities. New staff learn about the programs and establish personal connections that may be important for informal communication and collaboration.

### ***Reinforcing expectations about cross-program knowledge.***

The onboarding process for new staff mirrors broader expectations within the Central Arkansas workforce system. Staff at every level attend quarterly partner meetings that highlight a particular program; they are also expected to use informal opportunities such as job fairs and “open house” events to learn about the other partners' programs and the types of clients they can serve.

### ***Using performance data to encourage co-enrollment.***

The Central Arkansas Workforce Development Area (CAWDA) management team provides weekly updates to each Workforce Center about its WIOA performance outcomes. This frequent feedback can reduce uncertainty and help staff to assess the risks of enrolling job seekers who face multiple barriers to employment success.

### ***Presenting employers with services, not clients.***

The CAWDA Business Services team does not approach employers separately for WIOA and TANF programs. Instead, the team presents the range of opportunities and benefits available to employers through the local workforce system as a whole. Opportunities include identifying qualified candidates for open positions; training job seekers to acquire qualifications through pre-employment education and training; providing skills-upgrade training for one or more of the employers' incumbent employees; and offering wage subsidies through Arkansas' Subsidized Employment Program (funded by TANF), On-the-Job Training (funded by WIOA), or the Work Opportunity Tax Credit.

“ Our number one client is TANF and we take that partnership very seriously.

- A WIOA team member



## MANAGING COLLABORATIVE ACTIVITIES

Collaboration is managed at the state level by a workforce board (for TANF services) and a single agency (for cross-agency services).

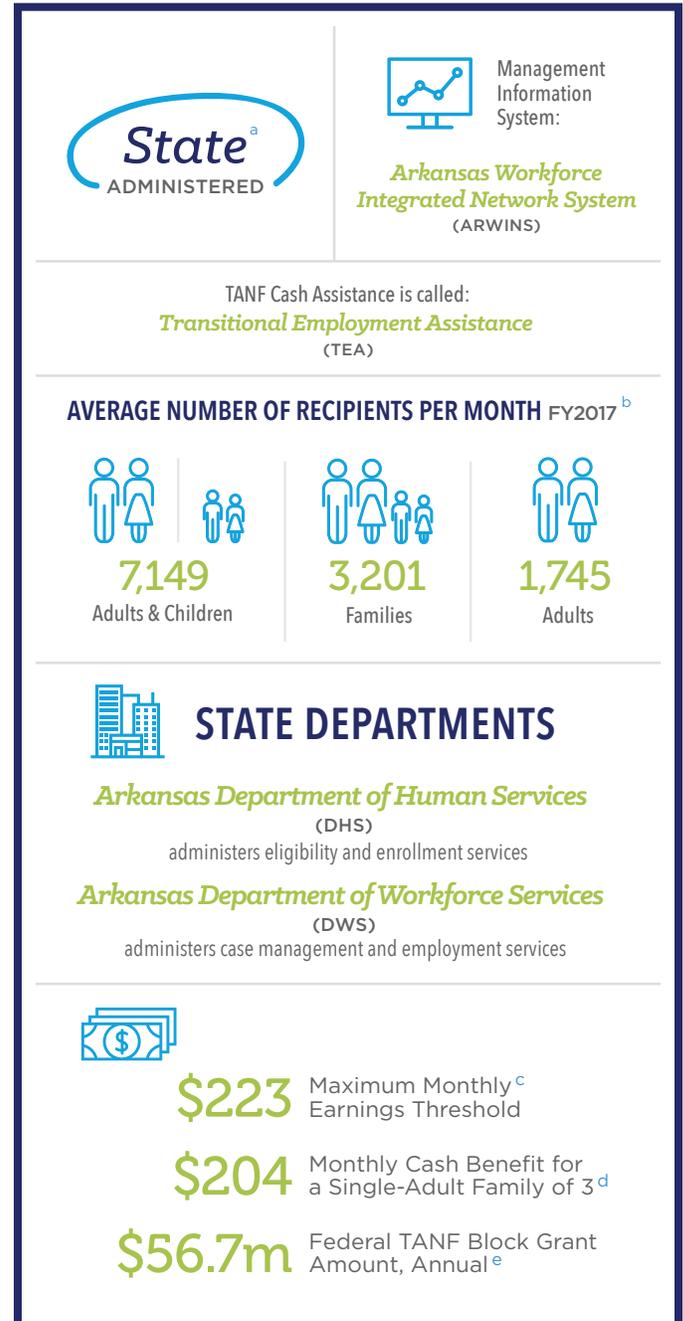
**TANF programming governed by workforce board at the state level.** The Arkansas Workforce Development Board, which governs WIOA implementation, supervises TANF and ensures that participants receive employment services that will lead to self-sufficient earnings. The board operates under a TANF Oversight Committee, which includes representatives of businesses, the director of the Department of Workforce Services (DWS), and the director of the Division of County Operations of the Department of Human Services (DHS).

**Administration of some WIOA and TANF services by a single agency.** In 2005, Arkansas moved the administration of most TANF services from DHS to the newly created DWS, which also manages the state's WIOA-funded workforce development programs. DWS leads cross-agency WIOA planning; along with DHS and other partners, DWS designs both WIOA- and TANF-funded education and training services for TANF participants. Services include short- and medium-term education and training courses, work-based learning, and wrap-around supports to help TANF participants meet work-activity requirements and transition into permanent employment.

## TANF and WIOA Eligibility and Services in Arkansas

**TANF.** Approximately 1,800 of Arkansas' low-income adults are enrolled in its TANF cash assistance program for families—Transitional Employment Assistance (TEA). Arkansas TANF administrators and providers view TANF adult clients as job seekers in addition to being benefit recipients. The maximum earnings threshold is \$223 per month, regardless of family size (SEE TABLE S.1). Arkansas state guidelines include a 24-month lifetime limit to receiving TEA cash assistance. While receiving cash assistance, TEA recipients receive individual case management, career planning, referrals to employment services, and supportive services. Former cash recipients who have secured employment can continue to access non-cash supports (such as child care) through a TANF-funded follow-on program, Work Pays. Other TANF-funded employment and training programs include the Subsidized Employment Program and the Arkansas Career Pathways Initiative, which are not limited to recipients of cash benefits.

TABLE S.1: Arkansas TANF Snapshot



SOURCES: (a) A Descriptive Study of County- versus State-Administered Temporary Assistance for Needy Families Programs ([https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/opre/county\\_tanf\\_final\\_report\\_submitted\\_to\\_acf\\_b508.pdf](https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/opre/county_tanf_final_report_submitted_to_acf_b508.pdf)); (b) TANF Caseload Data 2017 (<https://www.acf.hhs.gov/ofa/resource/tanf-caseload-data-2017>); (c) WIOA State Plan for The State of Arkansas (<https://www.arkansas.gov/esd/AWDB/pdfs/stateplan/Approved%20WIOA%20Combined%20State%20Plan%2018-2017.pdf>); (d) Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF): Eligibility and Benefit Amounts in State TANF Cash Assistance Programs (<https://fas.org/sgp/crs/misc/R43634.pdf>); (e) TANF Funding in Arkansas (<http://www.arkleg.state.ar.us/assembly/2011/Meeting%20Attachments/550/110302/TANF%20Funding.pdf>)

**WIOA.** The Arkansas state legislature enacted WIOA provisions in 2015. WIOA is now operational throughout Arkansas, although certain components are still in development (SEE TABLE S.2). Most WIOA-funded services are available to individuals regardless of income, but many programs prioritize serving low-income individuals or those having one or more barriers

to employment. The principal WIOA services offered to job seekers statewide include labor-exchange/job search assistance, individualized career services, work readiness preparation, adult basic education, and occupational skills training. Some WIOA-funded programs also offer supportive services such as child care, transportation, tools and equipment, and uniforms.

**TABLE S.2: Arkansas WIOA Snapshot**

|  |   |   |               |  |               |                                  |             |                                  |               |  |
|--|---|---|---------------|--|---------------|----------------------------------|-------------|----------------------------------|---------------|--|
|   | <p>One-Stop Job Center:<br/><b>Arkansas Workforce Centers</b></p>   |  <p>Management Information System: <b>Arkansas JobLink</b></p> |               |  |               |                                  |             |                                  |               |  |
|  <p><b>STATE DEPARTMENTS<sup>a</sup></b></p>  |  <p><b>2017 ALLOTMENTS<sup>b</sup></b></p> <table border="0"> <tr> <td data-bbox="906 688 1081 751"><b>\$5.2m</b></td> <td data-bbox="1097 688 1455 751">Employment Service (Wagner-Peyser) Federal Appropriation</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="906 772 1081 835"><b>\$6.7m</b></td> <td data-bbox="1097 772 1455 835">WIOA Adult Federal Appropriation</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="954 856 1081 919"><b>\$7m</b></td> <td data-bbox="1097 856 1455 919">WIOA Youth Federal Appropriation</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="906 940 1081 1003"><b>\$6.9m</b></td> <td data-bbox="1097 940 1455 1003">WIOA Dislocated Worker Federal Appropriation</td> </tr> </table> |   | <b>\$5.2m</b> | Employment Service (Wagner-Peyser) Federal Appropriation | <b>\$6.7m</b> | WIOA Adult Federal Appropriation | <b>\$7m</b> | WIOA Youth Federal Appropriation | <b>\$6.9m</b> | WIOA Dislocated Worker Federal Appropriation |
| <b>\$5.2m</b>  | Employment Service (Wagner-Peyser) Federal Appropriation  |   |               |  |               |                                  |             |                                  |               |  |
| <b>\$6.7m</b>  | WIOA Adult Federal Appropriation  |   |               |  |               |                                  |             |                                  |               |  |
| <b>\$7m</b>  | WIOA Youth Federal Appropriation  |   |               |  |               |                                  |             |                                  |               |  |
| <b>\$6.9m</b>  | WIOA Dislocated Worker Federal Appropriation  |   |               |  |               |                                  |             |                                  |               |  |
| <p><b>Arkansas Department of Workforce Services</b> (DWS) administers Adult, Youth, and Dislocated Worker (Title I); Wagner-Peyser (Wagner-Peyser Act, as amended by Title III); oversees One-Stop Job Centers</p> <p><b>Arkansas Department of Career Education</b> (DCE) administers Adult Education and Family Literacy (Title II); Vocational Rehabilitation (Title I Rehabilitation, as amended by Title IV)</p> <p><b>Arkansas Department of Human Services</b> (DHS) administers Vocational Rehabilitation for the Blind (Title I Rehabilitation, as amended by Title IV)</p> |   |   |               |  |               |                                  |             |                                  |               |  |

SOURCES: (a) WIOA State Plan for the State of Arkansas (<https://www.arkansas.gov/esd/AWDB/pdfs/stateplan/Approved%20WIOA%20Combined%20State%20Plan%201-18-2017.pdf>); (b) Program Year (PY) 2017 Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Allotments; PY 2017 Wagner-Peyser Act Final Allotments and PY 2017 Workforce Information Grants (<https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2017/06/15/2017-12336/program-year-py-2017-workforce-innovation-and-opportunity-act-wioa-allotments-py-2017-wagner-peyser>)

## Resources

- **Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Overview:**  
<https://www.doleta.gov/WIOA/Overview.cfm>
- **USDHHS OFA PeerTA TANF/WIOA Resource Hub:**  
<https://peerta.acf.hhs.gov/ofa-initiative/426>
- **USDOL TA Hub:**  
<https://ion.workforcegps.org/>

This brief is based primarily on conversations conducted in spring 2018 with WIOA and TANF administrators within the Arkansas Department of Workforce Services, and with leadership and staff at two one-stop career centers located in and around metropolitan Little Rock. For more information about the content in this brief, contact Phil Harris, Assistant Director, Arkansas Department of Workforce Services ([phil.harris@arkansas.gov](mailto:phil.harris@arkansas.gov)). Caroline Schultz (MDRC) and Jack Myrick (Public Strategies) were the IIEESS site visit team members.

**Suggested Citation:** MDRC and Public Strategies (2019). "Arkansas: TANF/WIOA Collaboration." In TANF Works! TANF/WIOA Collaboration. Washington, DC: Office of Family Assistance, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

*The Integrating Innovative Employment and Economic Stability Strategies (IIEESS) initiative of the Office of Family Assistance (OFA), under contract number HHSP23337005T, publishes briefs and materials that document the collaboration between Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) and public workforce systems under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). This material is intended to encourage peer learning among state and local actors so that low-income individuals can effectively access employment and family support services.*