



ADMINISTRATION FOR  
**CHILDREN & FAMILIES**  
Office of Family Assistance

POLICY ACADEMY FOR  
**INNOVATIVE  
EMPLOYMENT  
STRATEGIES**

# TANF Coaching to Scale



**Lessons Learned from the Policy Academy  
for Innovative Employment Strategies**





## Acknowledgment

This publication was made possible through support from Prime Contract No. HHSP23320150006I, Task Order No. HHSP23337001T through funds from the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families Training (TANF) and Technical Assistance contract with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Office of Family Assistance (OFA) and presented to James Butler, Federal Contracting Officer's Representative.

Special acknowledgement to the Policy Academy for Innovative Employment Strategies team members who shared their experiences to inform the development of this brief. Team members include: Gerrie Cotter and Theresa Groth-Joynt, Ohio Department of Job and Family Services; Daijuan Wade, D.C. Department of Human Services; and Erin Quinn, Tyreese Thomas, Elyse Tibbets, and Megan Nicholls, Massachusetts Department of Transition Assistance. Thank you also to OFA's Self-Sufficiency Branch for direction and guidance, and Stephanie Brueck-Cassoli, EMPATH; Michelle Derr, Mathematica Policy Research; and Deborah Joffe, PCG for their insights. Thank you to ICF and BLH Technologies, Inc. staff who helped research, write, edit, and design this brief: Jessica R. Kendall and Emily Ramirez, ICF and Steve McLaine, William Weger, and Janet Kreitman, BLH Technologies, Inc.

Suggested citation: Kendall, Jessica R. and Ramirez, Emily N. (2021). "TANF coaching to scale." Washington, DC: Office of Family Assistance, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

# TANF Coaching to Scale

## Lessons Learned from the Policy Academy for Innovative Employment Strategies

### Contents

Introduction .....	2
Strategies to Scale Coaching in TANF Programs .....	3
Start Small and Prepare to Adjust .....	3
Embed Coaching into Existing Processes.....	5
Seek Buy-In and Build Capacity Across the Organization .....	7
Review and Update Policies.....	9
Conclusion .....	10
Appendix A: Overview of the Policy Academy for Innovative Employment Strategies .....	11
References.....	11

## Introduction

The use of coaching case management strategies is a growing trend in employment and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) programs. Emerging research links positive employment-related outcomes with the strengthening of self-regulatory skills such as impulse control, planning, and organization.

Coaching case management strategies strengthen these skills by pairing program participants with trained coaches who provide motivation, support, and feedback as participants pursue their goals.<sup>1</sup> TANF programs have piloted various coaching strategies<sup>2</sup> and some have started to explore how and whether these strategies are scalable across entire TANF agencies. This brief shares key insights from three Office of Family Assistance (OFA) Policy Academy for Innovative Employment Strategies (PAIES)<sup>3</sup> TANF programs that piloted, refined, and prepared to scale coaching case management strategies. A companion PAIES brief highlighting staff engagement strategies to support systems change is available at <https://peerta.acf.hhs.gov/content/ofa-paies-brief-series-building-systems-change-through-staff-engagement>.



### Policy Academy for Innovative Employment Strategies

The Policy Academy for Innovative Employment Strategies (PAIES) was an intensive technical assistance experience sponsored by the Office of Family Assistance designed to help participating sites improve coaching and career pathways approaches (see Appendix A for more information).

**Figure 1: Common Elements of Coaching Case Management Strategies<sup>4</sup>**



TANF programs have adopted or adapted numerous coaching models. They share common elements (Figure 1):

Below is an overview of the Ohio, Massachusetts, and Washington, D.C. TANF programs' PAIES work related to coaching case management strategies.<sup>5</sup> It is followed by each jurisdiction's takeaways and experiences preparing to scale these efforts across their TANF agencies:

### Common Approaches across Programs

- ✓ Start small and prepare to adjust
- ✓ Embed coaching into existing practices
- ✓ Seek buy-in and build capacity across the organization
- ✓ Review and update policies



**District of Columbia Department of Human Services (DHS)** (*district-administered*): Assessed outcomes from its coaching case management pilot, which began in 2016; refined its coaching model; and began to build the infrastructure and staff training needed to scale the approach across DHS.



**Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (DJFS)** (*state-supervised, county-administered*): Developed customized coaching case management training and piloted a coaching strategy in five Ohio counties; refined the coaching strategy and developed an implementation plan for additional pilots, county leadership training, and business process planning.



**Massachusetts Department of Transitional Assistance (DTA)** (*state-administered*): Supported four local DTA sites in piloting new coaching strategies that cultivate responsive relationships, reduce stress, and strengthen skills for participants and staff; updated state policies; explored separating eligibility and case management job functions.

# TANF Coaching to Scale

## Lessons Learned from the Policy Academy for Innovative Employment Strategies

### Takeaway Tips #1: Start Small and Prepare to Adjust

- Engage an interested local office in piloting or start with a subset of the TANF population.
- Gather quantitative and qualitative data from initial pilot efforts.
- Adjust before scaling and consider needed tools, training, and policies.

### Strategies to Scale Coaching in TANF Programs

Adopting and scaling a coaching strategy requires a shift in how TANF programs approach their work. In scaling their coaching approaches, Ohio, Massachusetts, and D.C. each viewed their efforts as moving away from transactional staff-participant interactions to transformational ones. Engagements between participants and staff were no longer driven by meeting agency goals, but by participants' motivations. None fundamentally changed or reorganized their processes. Each sought to redefine **how** their programs engaged with families. To scale these new approaches, Ohio, Massachusetts, and D.C. started small, embedded coaching into existing practices, built the capacity of their teams, and reviewed how their policies can better support this new way of doing work.

### Start Small and Prepare to Adjust

Each PAIES team researched coaching models to identify and adapt one that fit their program's needs. They started small by piloting the new approach with a county, district office, or a subset of its TANF population. Pilot testing allowed each team to reflect on initial pilot results and challenges and successes and adjust before further scaling.

### District of Columbia

Before PAIES, D.C. DHS began an agency-wide effort to shift focus from traditional employment outcomes to a service delivery approach that serves the whole family. As part of this initiative, DHS piloted a coaching strategy based on EMPATH's Mobility Mentoring® model in 2016.<sup>6</sup> DHS started small with participants who had a history of low involvement with TANF and slowly expanded to serve new participants entering the TANF program. Starting small helped DHS define what case coaching meant in the District. It also helped DHS to closely review case coach roles, tasks, and outcomes. During PAIES, DHS conducted a descriptive study of its initial pilot to assess early indicators of success and plan for its next phase of piloting and scaling. It found that while adherence to the coaching model varied in day-to-day implementation, the model reconfirmed the importance of trusting participant-staff partnerships. It also found that only some of its tools and systems were participant centered.

These findings, along with the desire to more closely align the Department's career pathways, whole family, and coaching efforts, prompted DHS to redesign its coaching model. To do this, DHS merged its coaching and career pathway strategies so that every staff-participant interaction focused on increasing workforce development outcomes and more intentionally incorporated whole family supports. With coaching strategies as a foundation, DHS designed a career pathways tool that allows TANF participants to identify careers that fit their skills, interests, and family situations. It also adapted its coaching model to:

- Assist individuals and families in defining and achieving a specific personal or professional goal or a whole family outcome.
- Allow more individualized service delivery based on participant and family needs.
- Afford more time for participants to self-explore and discover their goals.
- Assess career resources needs at various service level entry points.

---

***“Coaching is not simply a tool to implement. It relates to how staff define their role... and it takes time to make that shift.”***

—Stephanie Brueck-Cassoli,  
Director of Curriculum &  
Instruction, EMPATH

---



## Ohio

Ohio DJFS began its Comprehensive Case Management and Employment Program (CCMEP) in 2016.<sup>7</sup> Drawing from Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act youth program and TANF funds, CCMEP offered coordinated and individualized supports for low-income young adults to build career paths. It gave caseworkers leeway to offer flexible work activities and included a range of services, such as counseling, leadership development, tutoring, and career training. In practice, CCMEP case management quality and approaches varied across local programs. This variability prompted DJFS to explore coaching models to offer consistent strategies that build on participants' strengths, increase their skills, and meet their unique needs. Adopting Mathematica's Goal4It! coaching strategy in two counties, DJFS started small to learn from the new approach before further piloting and scaling.<sup>8</sup> At the outset of PAIES, DJFS increased alignment between its new coaching strategy and career pathway plans. These plans included the development of career-oriented tools and training that could be implemented using the coaching approach.

---

***“We had to start small because we needed to define for ourselves what a case coach was versus a case manager...we needed a strategy unique to D.C. that would grow and change with us.”***

—Daijuan Wade,  
Supervisor of Special  
Projects, Operations &  
Training, D.C. Department  
of Human Services

---

To assess initial efforts, DJFS surveyed staff and participants in its two pilot sites. A significant majority of participants found the coaching tools easy to use. They also found breaking their goals into small steps motivating. Most also felt confident in their ability to reach the goals they set through the new coaching approach. Staff felt positively about new coaching tools and processes, which helped them change the tone of staff-participant conversations. It also helped participants and staff focus conversations and think critically about participant goals.

These early indicators of success prompted DJFS to seek other interested counties to pilot its coaching strategy. It also prompted DJFS to assess its original staff training strategy, which consisted of only training frontline staff. Realizing the level of buy-in and staff capacity building required to continue to implement and scale coaching across Ohio's 88 counties, the state adjusted its training plans to include staff at all levels (see also Page 6).

## Massachusetts

Massachusetts DTA's case management approach had not changed since the Great Recession, which was marked by overburdened staff and high caseloads. Strategies focused primarily on work participation activities with less attention on individualized employment, education, and training goals. Hoping to create better connections with participants and support employment and training opportunities leading to career pathways, DTA explored coaching strategies. Like D.C., EMPATH's Mobility Mentoring became the basis for DTA's coaching approach.<sup>9</sup> DTA piloted its strategy—the Employment Services Practice Model—in four local offices across the state.

While DTA provided a framework and training, local offices were empowered to devise their own unique approaches. A DTA staff person acted as a coach to local offices—meeting one to two times a month to offer technical assistance and training. One of the primary strategies several local offices tested was to split job functions so that case managers focused primarily on benefit processing or staff acted in eligibility or case management tasks. The goal was to increase time available for engagement and coaching. In its pilots, DTA learned that to get buy-in from staff and local offices, staff needed an opportunity to choose which role they preferred. Local offices needed to explore how the Employment Services Practice Model would best be implemented in their office. While encouraging local decision-making, DTA also realized that to scale, a core but flexible practice model and tools would be essential to ensure consistent implementation.

# TANF Coaching to Scale

## Lessons Learned from the Policy Academy for Innovative Employment Strategies

### Embed Coaching into Existing Processes

Adopting and scaling a coaching case management approach requires intentionality and flexibility within a program. It is not simply an additional tool or assessment or even process, but a new approach to **how** a program's current tools, assessments, and services are offered.

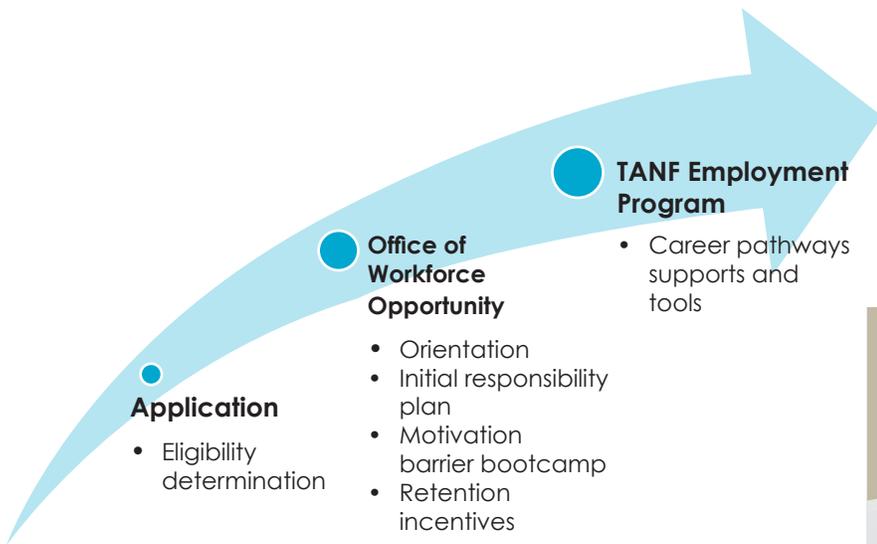
#### District of Columbia

As part of D.C.'s redesigned coaching model, DHS intentionally tied coaching strategies to existing practices, including those being designed in support of its career pathways goals (see Figures 2 and 3). The coaching approach would be the cornerstone of each engagement with TANF participants. DHS's redesigned approach provided new resources for case coaches to connect families with whole family services relating to employment pathways, health and well-being, economic assets, and early childhood supports. While it did not change information case coaches shared with participants, it changed when and how the information was shared. For instance, instead of providing participants with a lot of information upfront and conducting extensive assessments early, D.C. spread information gathering and dissemination over time so participants would receive what they needed, when they needed it.

### Takeaway Tips #2: Embed Coaching into Existing Processes

- Map current processes before scaling to assess where coaching fits.
- Identify opportunities to streamline or simplify practices.
- Train staff on how to use coaching techniques with existing tools and forms.

Figure 2: D.C.'s Key Coaching Opportunities and Participant Service Flow



Retention, service, and whole family outcomes

Figure 3: D.C.'s Learn and Earn Flyer

**LEARN & EARN**  
WHAT'S NEW WITH THE TANF EMPLOYMENT & EDUCATION PROGRAM (TEP)

The Department of Human Services (DHS) is focusing on the needs of the whole family.

**BENEFITS OF PARTICIPATING IN TEP:**

- ✓ Earn more money for completing education programs
- ✓ Receive incentives for starting a career & earning off TANF

EDUCATION INCENTIVES:	INCENTIVE AMOUNT
1 7+ months	\$1,000
2 4-6 months	\$600
3 1-3 months	\$400
4 30 days	\$200
5 1 day	\$50

EMPLOYMENT INCENTIVES:	INCENTIVE/ AWARD REQUIREMENT
1 \$150	Meet participation requirements for 2 weeks
2 \$150 per month (11 months) \$500 for months 12	Maintain employment up to 12 months
3 \$400	Provide proof of promotion
4 \$500 for 4 months of earnings	TANF Non-reapplication proof required

DHS.DC.GOV

For more information on what's new with the TANF Employment & Education Program (TEP), contact the Office of Work Opportunity (OWO) at 202.807.0405

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA  
MURIEL BOWSER, MAYOR

**Takeaway Tips #3:  
Seek Buy-In and Build  
Capacity Across the  
Organization**

- Provide a research-informed foundation of learning on poverty and stress before offering coaching training.
- Train staff at all levels, beginning with leadership and supervisors.
- Identify champions to help co-train and support peers.
- Create training protocols and tools for supervisors and frontline staff who are accessible across the organization.

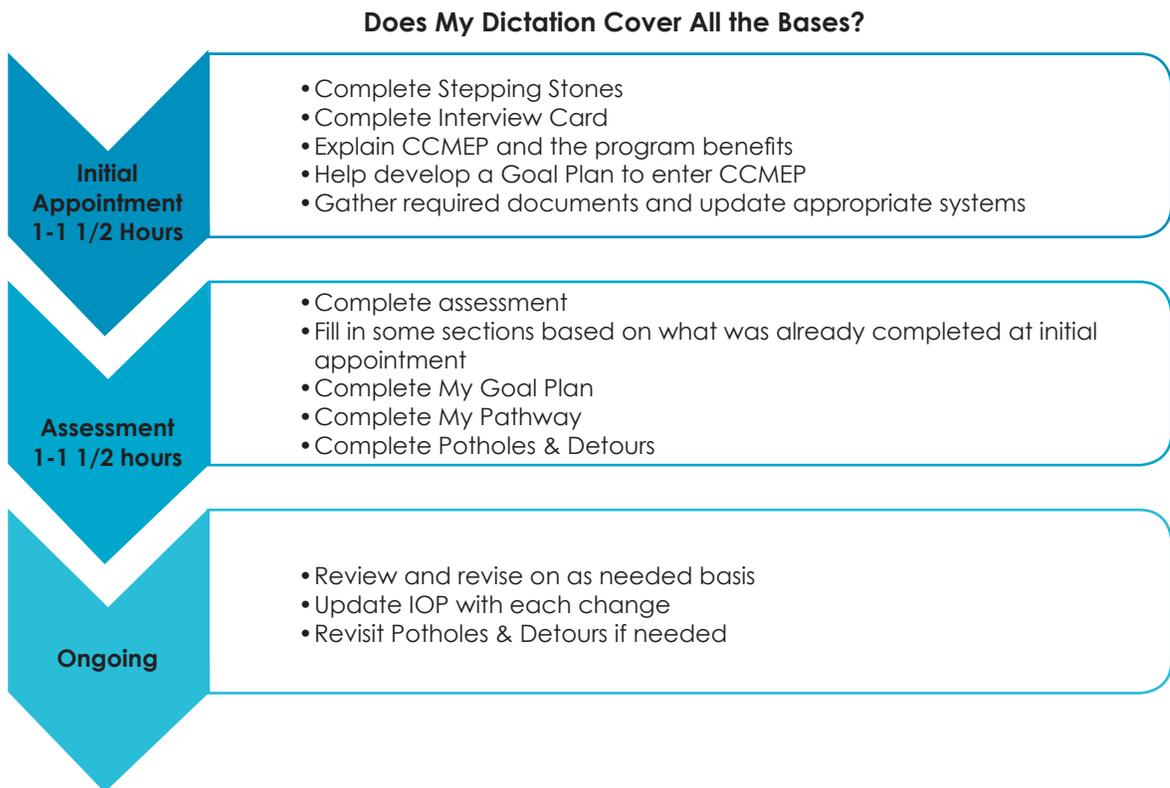
**Ohio**

Before implementing its original pilots and scaling to new counties, Ohio DJFS prioritized the development of process maps to record its current efforts with TANF participants (see Figure 4). By documenting current processes, DJFS identified service touchpoints where coaching strategies could be embedded into existing practices. Combined with short and easy-to-use coaching tools and coaching discussion guides, the maps allowed supervisory and frontline staff to see how and when they could infuse coaching techniques into their current work. The process maps also helped DJFS identify ways to streamline its participant assessments to focus less on barriers and more on participants' views of their own experiences. DJFS plans to further shorten its assessments to reduce duplication and administrative burden so staff have more time to implement coaching strategies.

**Massachusetts**

Like D.C. and Ohio, Massachusetts' DTA realized early in its piloting design that effectively embedding coaching was not about adopting new tools, but about the people (staff and participants) using them. DTA started with staff skill building and training on how to have conversations with participants to optimize their use of coaching resources and techniques. Central to DTA's approach were the relationships forged between staff and participants and amongst staff, while lessening the administrative burden and adjusting processes based on staff feedback. As noted on Page 9 and above, DTA shifted job functions among staff and adopted new policies to support its pilots and later scaling. However, the reasons for staff-participant interactions did not change—only how staff approached those engagements.

**Figure 4: One of Ohio's Pilot Process Maps**



# TANF Coaching to Scale

## Lessons Learned from the Policy Academy for Innovative Employment Strategies

### Seek Buy-In and Build Capacity Across the Organization

Critical components to scaling a coaching approach are support from all organizational levels and a comprehensive protocol to build the capacity of all staff to implement the approach. D.C., Massachusetts, and Ohio found offering research-informed training on the impacts of stress and poverty before training on coaching strategies increased staff buy-in at all levels. In turn, offering coaching training for frontline staff tailored to day-to-day tasks increased retention. Also, coaching training for organizational leaders helped them promote collaboration and identify implementation needs. Training for supervisors helped them model and use coaching strategies with case managers.

#### District of Columbia

A key component to D.C. DHS's redesigned coaching strategy was its Training and Staff Capacity Building Learning Institute. To inform its training design, DHS held SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats) analysis meetings to hear where staff felt they needed support and where morale was low. Based on these discussions, the Institute offered training for all staff and covered:

- Motivational interviewing
- Mindfulness
- Whole family engagement
- Customer care
- Case note documentation
- Cultural competency
- Introduction to trauma-informed practice
- Conflict resolution
- Emotional intelligence
- Leadership development

For leadership and supervisors, training focused on gaining support for coaching strategies, helping implement coaching in day-to-day operations, and implementing applied appreciation models. For case coaches, training focused on implementing coaching consistently at each service touch point and using coaching and career pathways tools.

#### Ohio

During PAIES, Ohio DJFS expanded piloting from two to five counties. It also incorporated a career pathways component to increase employment and training supports. By the end of PAIES, DJFS invited all interested counties to pilot its coaching strategy with 21 signing up. Scaling at this level was possible because of the support and buy-in the strategy had garnered across the state, as well as DJFS' comprehensive training protocol to build capacity at each local pilot. As Ohio began to expand its pilots, state DJFS staff traveled across the state to meet with local TANF offices. They shared information about PAIES and the objectives of their coaching and career pathway approaches. They also discussed piloting opportunities and created a learning foundation for county leaders to prepare for these initiatives.

To ensure pilot success and scalability options, DJFS created a more thorough staff training and capacity building protocol. During the original pilots, training focused primarily on case managers. However, this did not ensure leadership buy-in or give program administrators or supervisors the tools they needed to support new approaches. In subsequent pilots and as DJFS scaled coaching across the state, its new training protocol required local leadership receive training first with a focus on implementation and infrastructure to support coaching. Supervisors then received training on how to model coaching and support staff implementing coaching strategies. Only after leadership were empowered as local champions and supervisors understood how to support staff in coaching did case managers receive training. In the future, DJFS hopes to develop training videos to increase accessibility to its coaching training protocol.

---

***“Coaching is a shift in how we engage participants...if case managers have low expectations, participants may only try to reach those expectations. But, if case managers show faith and a hope for something more, participants may too.”***

—Gerrie Cotter, CCMEP  
Project Manager, Office of  
Workforce Development,  
Ohio Department of Job  
and Family Services

---

### Takeaway Tips #4: Review and Update Policies

- Implement staff performance metrics that tie to coaching goals.
- Consider separating eligibility determination and case management roles to afford more time for coaching.
- Review policies to increase access to basic and whole family supports.
- Streamline policies to decrease staff administrative burdens and duplicative information gathering.

### Massachusetts

Before piloting began in Massachusetts, each pilot site received training from EMPATH on its coaching approach and Bridge to Self-Sufficiency Model.<sup>10</sup> Training also provided a foundation of learning on the neuroscience and psychology behind coaching, executive function skills, and trauma-informed practice. Subsequent training and technical assistance for the state and pilot offices helped pilots translate these learnings into effective case management and conversation-focused practices. During PAIES, it became clear that additional training was needed for supervisors to build their capacity and confidence to support frontline staff.

In addition, DTA saw a gap in staff knowledge about how poverty impacts whole families (see excerpts at Figure 5).<sup>11</sup> DTA viewed this learning as imperative to supporting its shift to a coaching culture. DTA developed training, offered across the state, aimed to:

- Define poverty and identify different types.
- Develop a deeper understanding of poverty and those who live in it.
- Describe the impact of poverty and stress on brain functions essential for economic mobility.
- Use staff knowledge about poverty to shift how staff support participants.
- Develop a coaching approach to guide participants as they implement meaningful goals for their families.

Figure 5: DTA Disrupting Poverty Training Excerpts

**Barriers to getting out of poverty**

Fewer than 1 in 4 people currently complete the journey

- Increasing costs of Housing
- Increasing costs of Health Care
- Child Care costs
- Low-wages
- Rising Education requirements

Training Together t&d

**Disrupting Poverty**

- To take a step towards disrupting poverty for our clients we must:
  1. Help families get **meaningful** opportunities. Help them connect the dots.
  2. Adjust our behaviors
  3. Understand that learning about the causes and impact of poverty is ongoing
  4. Communicate and partner better with our clients
  5. Poverty is complex enough: collaboration with others is key to success
  6. Let's move away from strategies that only provide stability and instead create better interactions by improving the way we engage with our clients...

✓ So people can open up with us and share what they need allowing us to provide the most appropriate information and resources at that time.

Training Together t&d

# TANF Coaching to Scale

## Lessons Learned from the Policy Academy for Innovative Employment Strategies

### Review and Update Policies

For many organizations, an important aspect to piloting or scaling a coaching strategy is conducting a close and thorough review of agency policies that may inhibit or support the new approach. Coaching is possible in a compliance-oriented program when agency policies support staff performance metrics that are not solely tied to work participation and reduce barriers that may inhibit participants' access to basic and family services. Policies that support coaching also streamline assessment and business processes to reduce staff administrative tasks and duplicative information gathering from participants.

### District of Columbia

Before PAIES, D.C. DHS identified several District policies that included elements which conflicted with its whole family and coaching plans. One was a progressive sanctioning policy with 20%, 50%, and 100% benefit reductions. Other policies related to reductions or elimination of benefits for families who had received TANF for more than 60 months without an opportunity for a hardship extension.

DHS created new TANF policies that would offer the foundation for its ongoing whole family, coaching, and career pathways initiatives. This was done after surveying national best practices and conducting a District-wide survey to better understand participant challenges. These policies removed the time limits for families who receive TANF, increased benefit levels for families who receive TANF longer than 60 months, and reduced sanctions for nonparticipation in work activities. DHS further restructured its service delivery contracts to focus on whole families and to increase participant incentives to promote education and job placement in career pathways.

### Ohio

Ohio's CCMEP focused case management strategies on participant needs and promoted flexibility in work activities. Although counties adopted CCMEP as well as Ohio's coaching model, there was still hesitancy to adopt more flexible policies, especially in very compliance-focused counties. In response, DJFS reviewed staff performance measures to see how they did (or did not) support its new coaching approach. As many staff quality measures focused on participants' work participation, with DJFS support, pilots explored measures relating to assessment, coaching tool uses, participant check-ins, and whether participants achieve their goals. DJFS plans to further streamline policies and processes to reduce administrative and data entry burdens on case managers. It hopes to do so by streamlining duplicative data collection about participants, not collecting more data than is federally required, and moving more forms online.

### Massachusetts

To support piloting and later scaling, Massachusetts' DTA modified several policies to encourage adoption of its coaching model. As noted above, DTA encouraged pilot sites to separate eligibility determination and case management job functions, which several pilot sites tested. It also created a 12-week employment planning period at pilot sites to help participants access basic needs resources, such as housing, transportation, and childcare before requiring engagement in employment and training activities. In addition, DTA changed its policy that required applicants participate in a TANF orientation session and have an active case before engaging in program activities. For pilot sites, participants could begin support services and participate in work activities as soon as their cases were active. They could attend orientation later.

---

***“We were compliance and regulatory driven. We had to challenge our policies and procedures. We had to ask ‘why’ about every policy and procedure... is it necessary? Why is it in place? Is it effective?”***

*–Erin Quinn,  
Director of Employment  
and Training Programs,  
Massachusetts DTA*

---



## Maintaining Momentum During COVID-19

**Ohio:** With 88 Ohio counties, each has been in various stages of virtual work or re-opening. COVID-19 delayed certain aspects of DJFS' scaling plans, but it also learned that the model worked well with remote case management. It helped create stronger connections sooner between staff and participants, especially with new enrollees. It also offered DJFS a chance to provide additional training and supports to counties interested in piloting the coaching model before they adopted it. DJFS offered "building blocks" training on the science supporting the coaching model and training on motivational interviewing to ready counties for coaching training and implementation.

**District of Columbia:** D.C. closed due to the pandemic just as DHS was about to pilot its redesigned coaching strategy. To continue the work, DHS assessed how to pilot the strategy using a virtual coaching approach. It began to adjust its initial engagement to be virtual but remain tailored and personable. It offered an emergency whole family financial package to help families stabilize and focus on well-being, financial literacy, and health before participating in education and employment opportunities. It also began to assess how to help participants access technology needed to maintain engagement with DHS. DHS continued to partner with its TANF Ambassadors (program participants who help inform program and policy changes) to identify ways to engage participants virtually.

**Massachusetts:** The pandemic temporarily paused the DTA's efforts to train and provide staff supports to implement effective coaching practices. However, DTA also saw the pause and immediate shift to virtual work as an opportunity to re-imagine participant interactions in a virtual environment and streamline them to focus on what was truly needed. DTA assessed how to incorporate its coaching strategy at each virtual interaction and broaden its support of families by better leveraging partnerships with community organizations.

## Conclusion

During PAIES, D.C., Ohio, and Massachusetts planned to scale their coaching approaches. Their goals were to increase employment and training opportunities for participants, better address whole families' needs, and support participants in goal setting and achievement. Each started small to test new strategies, embedded coaching into existing practices, built strong training and support structures for staff, and modified policies:

### Start Small and Prepare to Adjust

- ✓ Engage an interested local office in piloting or start with a subset of the TANF population.
- ✓ Gather quantitative and qualitative data from initial pilot efforts.
- ✓ Adjust before scaling and consider needed tools, training, and policies.

### Embed Coaching into Existing Practices

- ✓ Map current processes before scaling to assess where coaching fits.
- ✓ Identify opportunities to streamline or simplify practices.
- ✓ Train staff on how to use coaching techniques with existing tools and forms.

### Seek Buy-In and Build Capacity Across the Organization

- ✓ Provide a research-informed foundation of learning on poverty and stress before offering coaching training.
- ✓ Train staff at all levels, beginning with leadership and supervisors.
- ✓ Identify champions to help co-train and support peers.
- ✓ Create training protocols and tools for supervisors and frontline staff that are accessible across the organization.

### Review and Update Policies

- ✓ Implement staff performance metrics that tie to coaching goals.
- ✓ Consider separating eligibility determination and case management roles to afford more time for coaching.
- ✓ Review policies to increase access to basic and whole family supports.
- ✓ Streamline policies to decrease staff administrative burdens and duplicative information gathering.



# TANF Coaching to Scale

## Lessons Learned from the Policy Academy for Innovative Employment Strategies

### Appendix A

#### Overview of the Policy Academy for Innovative Employment Strategies

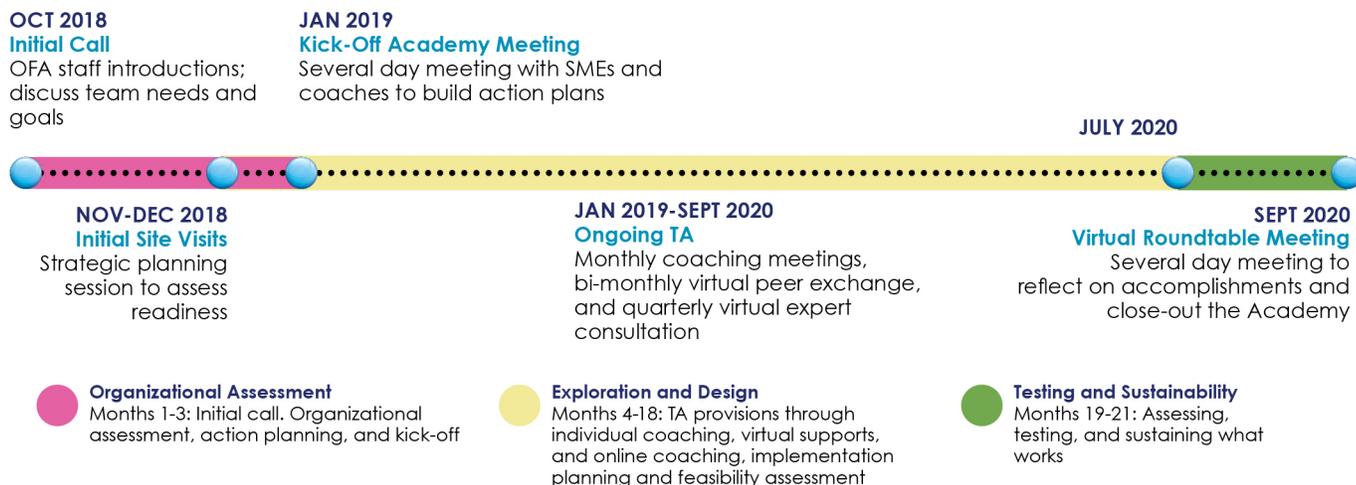
The 2019-2020 Policy Academy for Innovative Employment Strategies (PAIES) helped TANF programs develop, plan, and initially test comprehensive, innovative approaches to increase employment outcomes for TANF participants.

PAIES supported states and localities in transitioning from traditional case management to coaching models. It also helped enhance and improve career pathway approaches.

Participating programs explored, planned, and developed detailed implementation strategies focused on lasting systems change. Guided by an understanding of programs' organizational strengths and needs, technical assistance coaches helped programs assess their readiness. The coaches also assisted participating programs in developing action and implementation plans and building capacity and infrastructure to meet their Academy goals. PAIES included three technical assistance (TA) phases aimed at supporting programs: Organizational Assessment, Exploration & Design, and Testing & Sustainability (see Figure 6).

- **A team-based approach:** Participating programs created "implementation teams" that include committed, relevant stakeholders and community partners. These supporters built and enhanced organizational relationships during the Academy to institute change.
- **Dedicated coaches:** Participating programs have dedicated TA coaching teams who worked with them throughout the Academy to facilitate readiness assessments, develop strategic action plans, track progress, and coordinate in-person and virtual TA activities.
- **Support from experts:** National, state, and local experts and thought leaders acted as faculty at Academy meetings. They were available quarterly for targeted support and guidance to participating programs.
- **Targeted TA:** Participating programs received customized, ongoing support from TA coaches to address program priorities and effect systems change. Support included site visits, in-person Academy meetings, virtual TA, product development, and peer team exchanges.

Figure 6: PAIES Timeline



<sup>1</sup> Joyce, K. & McConnell, S. (2019). *Employment coaching: Working with low-income populations to use self-regulation skills to achieve employment goals*. Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation. <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/opre/resource/employment-coaching-working-with-low-income-populations-to-use-self-regulation-skills-to-achieve-employment-goals>

<sup>2</sup> Administration for Children and Families. (2017). *Establishing coaching and motivational interviewing practices in TANF programs*. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. [https://peerta.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/public/uploaded\\_files/TANFCoach%26Motivat\\_508C.PDF](https://peerta.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/public/uploaded_files/TANFCoach%26Motivat_508C.PDF)

<sup>3</sup> See Appendix A for an overview of the Policy Academy for Innovative Employment Strategies.

<sup>4</sup> For more on common elements of coaching case management strategies, see Joyce, K. & McConnell, S. (2019). *Program snapshot: Goal4It!* Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation. [https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/opre/coaching\\_snapshot\\_jeffco\\_final\\_508.pdf](https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/opre/coaching_snapshot_jeffco_final_508.pdf); Mathematica. (n.d.). *Goal4It!™ A science-informed approach to achieving economic independence by activating motivation and commitment to change*. <https://www.mathematica.org/features/goal4-it>; Office of Family Assistance. (2015). *Executive function skills: A new frontier for workforce and other human service programs that aim to build adult capabilities*. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. [https://peerta.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/public/uploaded\\_files/PPPT\\_execfunction.pdf](https://peerta.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/public/uploaded_files/PPPT_execfunction.pdf); Babcock, E. & Ruiz de Luzuriaga, N. (2016). *Families disrupting the cycle of poverty: coaching with an intergenerational lens*. EMPATH. [http://s3.amazonaws.com/empath-website/pdf/EMPATH-Intergen-Families-Disrupting-Cycle-of-Poverty-Babcock-deluzuriaga\\_7.15.16.pdf](http://s3.amazonaws.com/empath-website/pdf/EMPATH-Intergen-Families-Disrupting-Cycle-of-Poverty-Babcock-deluzuriaga_7.15.16.pdf); Guare, R., Dawson, P., & Guare, C. (2017). *Executive skills coaching with adults affected by conditions of poverty and stress*. Fort Collins, CO: Tuo-Path LLC; Ramsey County Workforce Solutions Department. (2015). *Introduction to coaching*. <https://www.ramseycounty.us/sites/default/files/Work%20with%20Ramsey/Ramsey%20Intro%20to%20Coaching%207.2015.pdf>; PCG Human Services. (n.d.). *Coaching*. [https://www.publicconsultinggroup.com/media/1427/web\\_hs\\_coaching\\_bi-fold.pdf](https://www.publicconsultinggroup.com/media/1427/web_hs_coaching_bi-fold.pdf)

<sup>5</sup> To view summaries of Ohio, Massachusetts and Washington, D.C. PAIES efforts, visit: <https://peerta.acf.hhs.gov/content/ofa-paies-state-profile-series>.

<sup>6</sup> EMPATH. (2016). *Mobility Mentoring*. <https://www.empathways.org/approach/mobility-mentoring>

<sup>7</sup> Ohio Department of Job and Family Services. (2018). *Comprehensive case management and employment program (CCMEP) fact sheet*. <http://jfs.ohio.gov/factsheets/CCMEP-fact-sheet.stm>

<sup>8</sup> Mathematica. (n.d.). *Goal4It!™ A science-informed approach to achieving economic independence by activating motivation and commitment to change*. <https://www.mathematica.org/features/goal4-it>

<sup>9</sup> EMPATH. (2016). *Mobility Mentoring*. EMPATHways.org. <https://www.empathways.org/approach/mobility-mentoring>

<sup>10</sup> EMPATH. (n.d.). *Bridge to Self Sufficiency*. <https://www.empathways.org/approach/bridge-to-self-sufficiency>

<sup>11</sup> Massachusetts DTA's "Disrupting Poverty: Applying a Behavioral Lens to Traditional Approaches" training was based on teachings from Dr. Donna Beegle, President of Communication Across Barriers. <https://www.combarriers.com/index.php/>



ADMINISTRATION FOR  
**CHILDREN & FAMILIES**  
Office of Family Assistance

POLICY ACADEMY FOR  
**INNOVATIVE  
EMPLOYMENT  
STRATEGIES**