

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

2014 Region VI State TANF Meeting



**Adult and Family
Services**

**Oklahoma's Special Projects
and the TANF Work Program**

Job search
Job Readiness

CORE
activities

TANF Program flexibility

- Flex Funds**
- Transportation contracts**
- Disability Advocacy Program (DAP)**
- Job Readiness and work based programs**
- TANF funded GED and literacy classes 30 hours per week**
- Extended vocational training time without core activity**
- Career Development Specialists**
- OSBI background checks**
- Homework/Study Time**
- “Special Projects”**
- Statewide Assessments**

Non-core
activities

ABE
GED
2nd year
training

30 hours work participation

Vocational
Training:
12 months

Once approved for TANF benefits, every non-exempt client must complete:

- **Upfront assessments**
 - **Vision Screening**
 - **Washington State Learning Disabilities Screen**
 - **TABE Locator and Full TABE Assessment**
 - **CAPS/COPS/COPEs**
 - **KeyTrain® Pretest**
- **A “joint staffing”**
- **An Employability Plan**

If the client wants training and it is a viable option, a referral may be made to the local two-year college or technology center.*

*There are multiple programs in the Oklahoma City Metro area.

The “Special Projects”

- Collaboration with the Department of Career and Technology Education (aka CareerTech) and State Regents for Higher Education
- Two separate intergovernmental agreements to provide vocational training to TANF participants, including
 - Basic workplace skills
 - Adult basic education/remediation
 - Job readiness/job search skills
 - Private and public sector work experience
 - Six month employment retention services
- Currently 44 staffed locations across the state
 - 12 community colleges – 20 sites
 - 17 technology centers – 22 sites



**Adult and Family
Services**

OKLAHOMA STATE REGENTS
FOR HIGHER EDUCATION

Improving our future by degrees



careertech

Once accepted into a Special Project, the program is responsible for all work activities up to and including employment placement and a minimum of six months of employment retention.

- **Includes work site training/internships on school breaks and holidays, usually at a nonprofit or community based organization.**
- **May include work site training upon completion of the vocational training program if a job is not immediately attained.***
- **Job search activities and structured job search for up to four consecutive weeks, not to exceed 12 weeks in a year.**
- **Includes core work activities between job readiness or job search activities to maintain federal work participation requirements.**
- **If employment is lost within the first six months, the program is responsible for additional employment assistance.**

***This training is generally related to the vocational training program recently completed.**

Special Projects = Vocational Training

Training programs offered:

- full time;
- part time;
- short term training;
- college classes;*
- online classes supervised by the program; and,
- approved curriculum may be taught by program instructors.

Supervised homework and study time while in the program's classroom count toward the 30 hours per week of participation.

Non-traditional training programs are encouraged, and a plan of study is completed with each student to develop a Career Pathway Plan.

*A "TANF Top Issue" was developed to set guidelines for Training and Education Beyond 12 Months.

Additional Program Responsibilities

- **Must provide a minimum of 30 hours per week of work activities**
- **Activities must meet federal work participation requirements**
- **Extra time may be worked in for “life skills”**
- **Activities must be Scheduled, Structured, and Supervised**
- **Provide feedback to DHS at the following times:**
 - **Program acceptance (after probationary period)**
 - **When work activities change***
 - **When client becomes employed****
 - **If client leaves program or has an eligibility change**
- **Verify Attendance and sign Time and Progress Reports**
- **Develop internships/work site training**
- **Track and provide retention services for six months after program completion and employment placement.**

***Note: Program staff cannot change work activity without TANF worker approval and Employability Plan update.**

****Employment verification completed by program staff is comprehensive enough to meet DHS requirements.**

Allowable Expenditures

Each Special Project may pay tuition when financial aid is not an option.

Financial Aid eligibility must be determined for each program participant that goes to college or a full time technology center program.*

Funds are included in each program's grant amount for Supportive Services.

Supportive Services Funds may be spent during the six month employment retention period.

***Student loans are discouraged for most students**

Supportive Services Funds may be used for:

- **uniforms;**
- **work appropriate clothing**
- **job-related equipment;**
- **gas vouchers;**
- **child care enrollment fees;**
- **driver's license reinstatement fees;**
- **car repairs;**
- **national background checks when needed for employment or training; and,**
- **anything that DHS Flex Funds cannot cover, within reason, when necessary for program retention or employment.**

Expenditures such as major car repairs, driving lessons, driver's license reinstatement fees, etc. are approved on a case-by-case basis by the state level partners.

Contract Outcomes



- Employment
- Employment placements related to training
- Six month employment retention
- Career Readiness credentials
- Associate degrees
- Short term training



- Employment
- Employment placements related to training
- Six month employment retention
- Career Readiness credentials
- Industry credentials, certificates, and licensures

Program Challenge #1

12 month time limit on training restricts training choices. Many full time training programs at the technology centers are 30 hours per week and may take two academic years* to complete. Most single parents cannot participate another 20 hours to meet the requirement of a core work activity as participation time would exceed the maximum coverage under the child care subsidy program.

***Mid-August through May**

Possible Solutions:

- Fast track training at some of the tech centers may shorten the length of training time.**
- Clinical hours such as in the medical field or a practicum hours may be coded as work experience.**
- 20 core hours may not be enforced.**

Program Challenge #2

Associate degrees take longer than 12 months, and generally a full time schedule is not encouraged the first semester of college for a single parent who has been out of school for a long time.

Solution: Work study positions or internship sites are found for college students after the first 12 months of college courses to meet the 20 core hour requirement.

Program Challenge #3

TANF recipients may prioritize work over longer-term training.

Solution: The programs emphasize the advantages of longer term training and career advancement . They point out where short term training certificates already attained can build to an associate's degree or higher.

TANF caseloads



Cost per Participant



**Special Projects Expansion
Non-TANF acceptance**

Eligibility:

- **Receive other DHS service or benefit**
- **Eligible child in the home**
- **Never displace TANF or turn away TANF client in need of training**
- **Need for training, generally short term**
- **Not already a student**
- **Did not want to lose programs in rural communities**
- **Resource sharing – Oklahoma Works!**



GOVERNOR'S COUNCIL FOR WORKFORCE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

EDUCATION. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT. EMPLOYMENT.

- **Complete College America** - a plan for increasing degree and postsecondary credentials to fuel Oklahoma's economic expansion by restructuring remedial and developmental education and developing accelerated degree completion options - the “**New Minimum**”
- **A New Day, New Way (Oklahoma Works!)**
- **Career Pathways**
- **Workforce Portal** - an initiative to provide one place on the web where citizens and employers can find information and access services from all system partners.
- **okjobmatch.com** - an interactive tool that allows Oklahoma employers to find Oklahoma talent.



Oklahoma Works!

A New Day, New Way

Oklahoma's Workforce Development System

What's Our Role?

America Works:

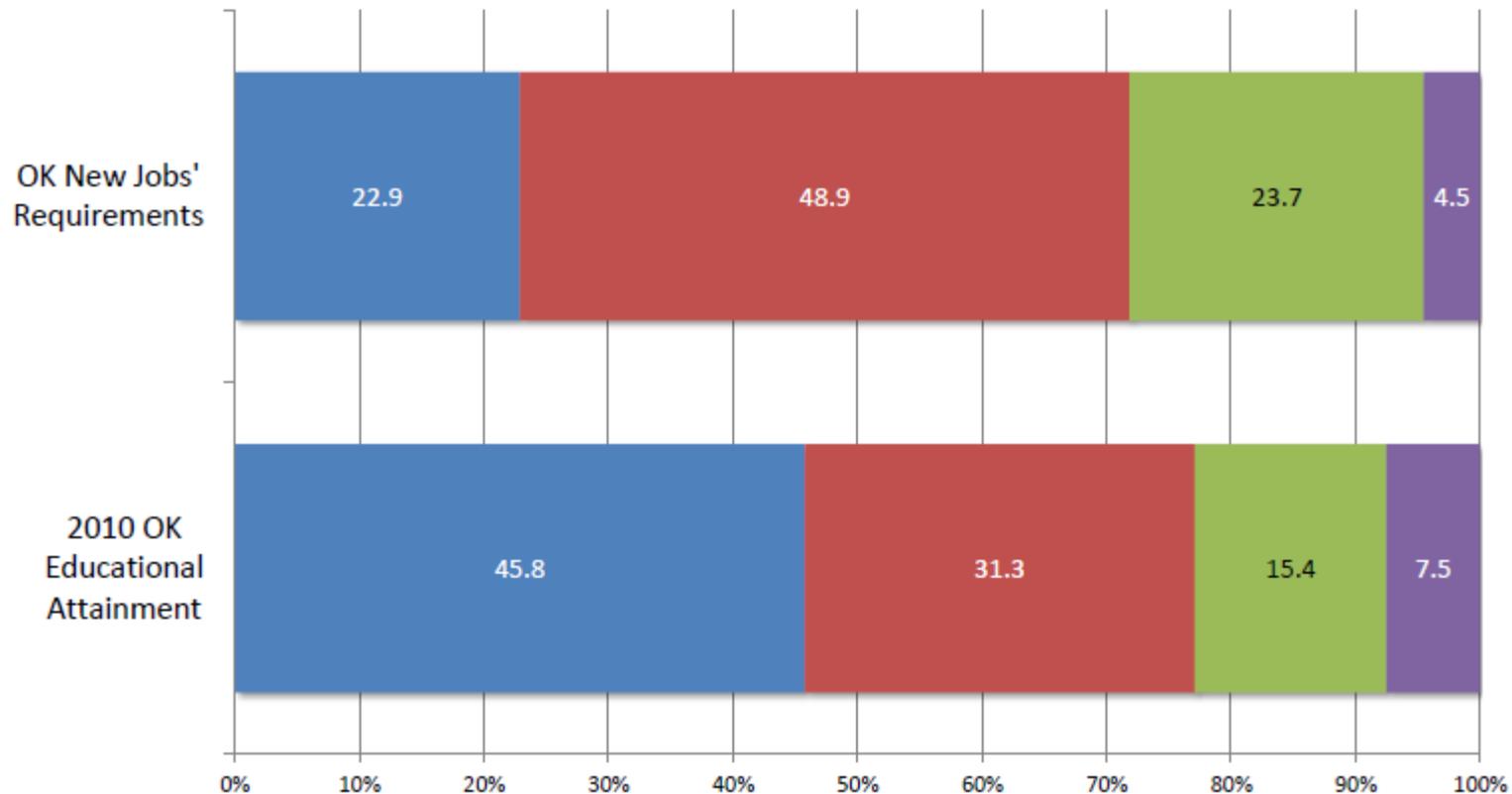
Education and Training for Tomorrow's Jobs

- Articulate a strong vision & message - redefining the “New Minimum”
- Use data to inform policy, track progress & measure success
- Build partnerships to get results
- Modify the use of resources & incentives to support integrated vision

The “New Minimum”

OK's Educational Gap for New Jobs

- High School Degree and less
- Some college/Vocational/Associate's Degree
- Bachelor's Degree
- Post Bachelor's Degree



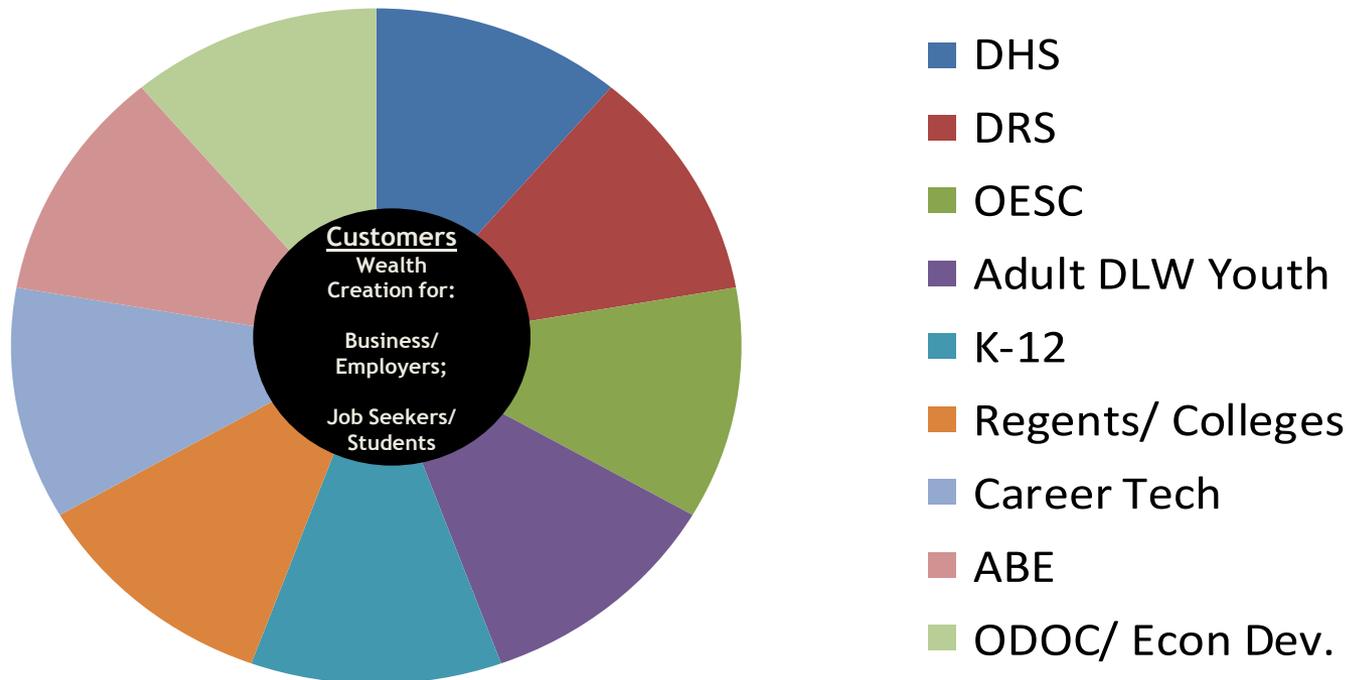
New Jobs defined as those jobs projected to be created between 2010 and 2020.
Source: 2010 ACS; EMSI Complete Employment - 2011.4

Oklahoma Works!

“A New Day, New Way”

Customer Focused, Business Driven

System Thinking & Alignment





The New Day, New Way initiative has Regional focus that:

- **Brings local education, training and economic development partners together**
- **Has a common goal of creating a pool of job seekers with the skills that local employers need**
- **Has a Customer Focus, with customers being job seekers, students and employers**
- **Continues to grow by bringing in other partners necessary for success, such as community based organizations that provide wrap around services**

Career Pathways

GCWED Initiative: Create and use Career Pathways approaches to increase the proportion of low-skill learners who ultimately earn a degree.

The Council established career pathways as a priority model to put emphasis on helping workers/learners understand how to move up levels in their education and careers.

Who does this involve?

Adult Education

TANF Work programs

Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth Programs

Post Secondary Education

DHS

OESC

Higher Education

K-12

Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth
programs

What's your role?

Adult Basic Education

Tech Centers

DRS

Commerce/Economic Development

To create this workforce development system, partners must

- ***look at the system holistically;***
- ***look at where their particular agency and its services fit into the larger vision; and,***
- ***commit to jointly producing the tools and processes needed to implement a workforce system.***



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