
Gateway to Opportunity: Improving Parental Employment and Family Well-Being Outcomes

Susan N. Dreyfus

President and CEO

Alliance for Strong Families and Communities

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Alliance for Strong Families and Communities Mission:

To strengthen the capacities and influence of our national network of high-impact nonprofit human-serving organizations so that **together** we may pursue our vision of a healthy society and strong communities for all children, adults, and families.

*Partner for Impact
Drive Innovation
Achieve Influence*





What will it take to move families onto pathways out of poverty?

Major Trends Influencing Us

A move from program thinking to social and systems change thinking

“Wrap” as an Orientation

Integrating health and social care

Unique networks and partnerships are the currency of the day

Data analytics:
our new frontier



One Secretary ... One State's Experience

WorkFirst Redesign

Moving from Participation that Counts to Engagement that Matters

Principles

- Achieving stable and successful employment—maximizing opportunities for participants to successfully attach to the workforce and move out of poverty
- Using a family-centered case planning and engagement approach to achieve good outcomes, reduce long-term dependency, and interrupt generational cycles of poverty
- Policies recognize the critical role and responsibility of parents in their children’s development
- WorkFirst is a transitional, not long-term, program to assist families on the pathway to self-sufficiency
- Importance of leveraging all resources

WorkFirst Redesign

*Moving from Participation that Counts to
Engagement that Matters*

Measuring WorkFirst Program Success

- Kids are doing well
child welfare, education, and early learning
- Parents are doing well socially
housing, medical, chemical dependency, mental health, and job readiness
- Parents are doing well economically
wage progression, job retention, and education level



Five Domains of Child Well-Being:

Social Connectedness

Safety

Meaningful access to relevant resources

Stability

Mastery

WorkFirst Redesign

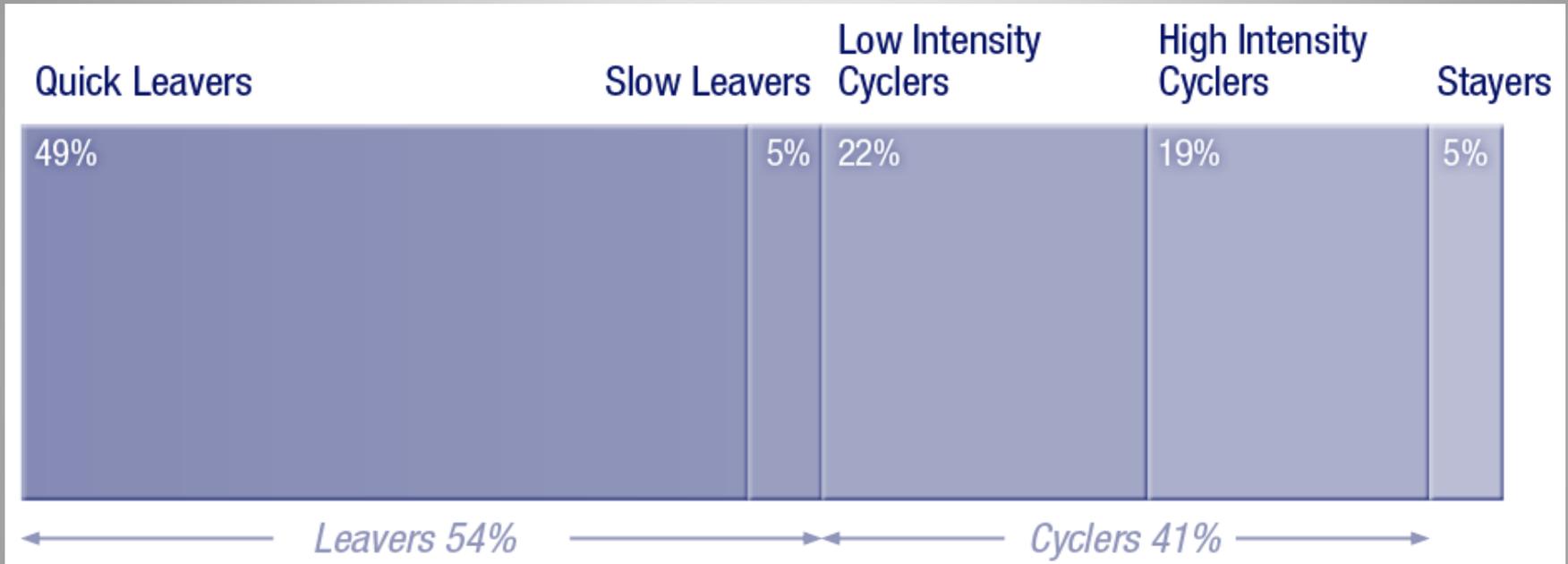
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Knowing Who We Serve

Distribution of leavers, cyclers, stayers



* Quick leavers represent half of the population of FY2007 adult TANF recipients, even though the follow-up period includes the most severe economic downturn since the Great Depression.

* Only 5 percent of FY2007 adult TANF recipients stayed persistently on TANF through FY2010

* More than half of cyclers were in the low-intensity group that spent no more than 12 months on TANF in the 36-month follow-up period.

How do we know if we are making a difference?

Moving from Theory to Action

“ . . . spending that time with her to assess the situation, allowing her to verbalize her thoughts and concerns, reflecting and summarizing her statements and allowing her to create a plan for her success, enabled her to feel a part of the process instead of being told what she has to do in order to keep her benefits.
What a truly rewarding feeling for both of us!”

~ DSHS WorkFirst Case Manager

Resources

- Resetting Washington's WorkFirst for the 21st Century
- Washington State Family Policy Council Community Network Partnership Explained
- Alliance's Change in Mind: Applying Neurosciences to Revitalize Communities
- "Strengthening Adult Capacities to Improve Child Outcomes: A New Strategy for Reducing Intergenerational Poverty," by Jack Shonkoff of Harvard University. Appeared in Spotlight on Poverty and Opportunity in 2013

Susan N. Dreyfus

Alliance for Strong Families and Communities

414-359-6546

sndreyfus@alliance1.org

@SusanDreyfus

