

**ACF RAPID RESPONSE TECHNICAL
ASSISTANCE PROJECT**

**APPROACHES TO SERVING
TANF/WtW CLIENTS WITH MULTIPLE
BARRIERS TO EMPLOYMENT**

Final Report

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BARRIERS TO EMPLOYMENT**

**January 9-10, 2002
Philadelphia, PA**

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This report summarizes the key findings of the Administration for Children and Families and U.S. Department of Labor Employment Training Administration's seminar on Approaches to Serving TANF/WtW Clients with Multiple Barriers to Employment held January 9-10, 2002 in Philadelphia, PA.

I. CONFERENCE OVERVIEW

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The Administration for Children and Families (ACF) and the U.S. Department of Labor's Employment and Training Administration (DOLETA) sponsored a one-and-a-half-day seminar on the development of strategies to help Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) and Welfare to Work (WtW) clients overcome barriers to employment. The purpose of the conference was to give practitioners an opportunity to exchange information on experiences, to learn of promising program strategies, and to consider what can be done to help clients with multiple barriers to work who are facing time limits get on the path to employment. The conference included an address by Andrew Bush, Senior Advisor to the Secretary, Office of Family Assistance (OFA), Administration for Children and Families (ACF), Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS). There were also presentations by State and local welfare and employment and training administrators and service providers. Specific strategies discussed at the conference included forums on performance management, one-stop centers for serving multi-barriered clients, and collaboration between TANF and WtW offices and the Workforce Development System that support self-sufficiency goals and outcomes. This summary highlights the main points from the conference workshop sessions.

II. BACKGROUND

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On August 26, 1996, the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 (PRWORA) was signed into law. PRWORA established the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program, which replaced the Aid for Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) program. The purpose of TANF is to increase the flexibility of States in operating a program that is designed to:

- Provide assistance to needy families so that children may be cared for in their own homes or in the homes of relatives
- End the dependence of needy parents on government benefits by promoting job preparation, work, and marriage
- Prevent and reduce the incidence of out-of-wedlock pregnancies and establish annual numerical goals for preventing and reducing their occurrence
- Encourage the formation and maintenance of two-parent families.

Under TANF, public assistance was transformed from an entitlement program to one that requires work. The second goal of TANF emphasizes work and reads to “End the dependence of needy parents on government benefits by promoting job preparation, work, and marriage.” Under TANF, States are required to impose work requirements on welfare recipients. In their State plans, States must outline how they will require a parent or caretaker receiving TANF funds to participate in work once the State has determined them job-ready or once they have received assistance for two years. Work activities can include unsubsidized employment, subsidized private sector employment, subsidized public sector employment, work experience, on the job training, job search and job readiness assistance, community service programs, vocational educational training, direct job skill training, education related to employment, high school and GED completion and child care services to an individual who is participating in the community services program. States also have to achieve minimum participation rates depending on the fiscal year. In Fiscal Year 1997, 25 percent of TANF participants had to be involved in work activities, and in Fiscal Year 2002 the rate is 50 percent. The required average weekly participation rate for FY 1997 was 20 hours, which increased to 30 hours in 2000. Higher rates and longer hours are required for two-parent families. States are required to reduce or terminate TANF assistance to recipients who do not participate in work activities.¹ The Federal time limit for receipt of public assistance is five years or less, depending on State option.

¹ *Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996* H.R. 3734. <http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/Z?c104:H.R.374.ENR:>

All 50 States and the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico met the overall work participation rates for all families in 1997, 1998, and 1999.² Although the overall work participation rates have increased, many recipients face multiple barriers to work. Recipients with such barriers often have health problems, substance abuse disorders, learning disabilities, or criminal records, and can be victims of domestic violence. Therefore, while the total number of recipients on welfare is decreasing, States are struggling with how to serve clients who are facing multiple barriers to work. Transitioning welfare recipients to work also requires supports such as child care, transportation, and housing, which adds additional time and expenses to States trying to serve clients.

One source of funding for States implementing programs for the hardest to serve is the Welfare to Work grants. WtW grants, administered by the Department of Labor, help hard-to-employ welfare recipients transition into lasting, unsubsidized jobs. Possible WtW grant activities include job readiness, community service or work experience, job creation through public-sector or private-sector employment wage subsidies, on-the-job training, job placement services, post-employment services, or job retention and support services.³

The Workforce Investment Act (WIA) provides another source of funding to States trying to help clients with multi-barriers to work. WIA provides a framework for a workforce preparation and employment system that can meet the needs of both businesses and job seekers. The Act's key components include new workforce investment systems, youth councils, "one-stop" delivery systems with career centers, adult education and literacy programs, accountability for performance, and authority for State unified plans on workforce development.⁴ TANF can be an optional partner in the one-stop system under WIA.

² *HHS Reports All States Meet Overall Welfare to Work Participation Rates*. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services August 22, 2000. <http://www.acf.dhhs.gov/news/press/2000/welfare822.htm>

³ *General Program Questions*. U.S. Department of Labor. <http://www.doleta.gov/q&a/general.asp>

⁴ "Workforce Investment Act of 1998." U.S. Department of Labor, Employment and Training, September 1998. <http://www.usworkforce.org/Runningtext2.htm>

III. WORKSHOP SESSIONS

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1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

David J. Lett, Region III Administrator, Administration for Children and Families

David Lett opened the meeting by talking about the effectiveness of the working relationship between the TANF program and Welfare to Work programs. This relationship is particularly important because of the new sense of urgency as many TANF recipients face the upcoming 5-year time limits on Federal assistance.

States have been given flexibility to develop strategies and approaches to the use of TANF funds. They have risen to the challenge and reduced caseloads; however, there is still a lot of work to be done for hard-to-serve clients who remain on the rolls.

Mr. Lett provided an overview of the conference that included successful models, a sense of what's working, and challenges. Some of the specific areas that the conference addressed are:

- Communication
- Sharing common objectives and strategies when collaborating
- Identifying system changes
- Ways to improve services for TANF recipients
- Outcomes and results.

2. LESSONS LEARNED FROM THE FIELD: ARE PROGRAMS WORKING?

Andrew Bush, Director, Office of Family Assistance, Administration for Children and Families, Department of Health and Human Services, Washington, DC

2.1 Presentation

For the first part of the session, Mr. Bush talked about performance management and achieving outcomes.

Over the past five years, there have been dramatic changes in welfare policy and procedures. There is a new vision of Federalism. In the past there was heavy Federal regulation

on the creation of programs. Because of devolution, today States, counties and localities have great flexibility to design their welfare programs. In the past, welfare offices were primarily administering benefits. Today, contractors and service providers are helping clients pursue the highest degree of self-sufficiency.

One of the key issues of linking public assistance to the workforce is performance management. Performance management involves the use of indicators and objectives. Performance management marks where we are and where we want to be. Under performance management, data and information are used strategically in order to see what is being done effectively and if objectives are being achieved.

One key question is how can we make local service better. Performance can be driven through measurements and common definitions. It is important to set targets on achievements.

2.2 Interactive Session

The next part of the session was interactive. This session gave directors and staff of TANF and employment programs a chance to discuss key issues around performance management, collaboration and approaches for engaging the hard-to-serve. Mr. Bush asked conference participants to respond to the following questions:

How Do You as Program Administrators Measure Effectiveness on an Ongoing Basis?

In Pennsylvania, contractors deliver many of the services. A series of program goals such as retention in programs and wages have been developed. The State monitors the achievement of these goals through data collection and site visits. If a contractor is not meeting the program goals, the State works with them on a correction plan. If goals are still not met, then the contractor is put on probation and could have their contract terminated.

In Maryland, clients were languishing in programs and not moving on to the next steps of self-sufficiency. As a result, performance goals were created for contractors. Contractors now have three weeks to engage a client. They are required to enter data into a data management system that tracks the movement of clients and sends system alerts when it is time for them to move on to another activity. This data can also be used for reporting to the Federal level on how many clients are engaged in activities. Contractors are paid for their performance based on the achievement of outcomes such as enrollment and participation. Contractors submit monthly reports on how many clients are enrolled in the program, the activities in which they are enrolled, and how many more are expected to enroll in the future.

In New York City, the Job Stat program engages front line workers in performance management. The program encourages them to come up with strategies to help the hardest to serve. The city has developed indicators and measures that can be understood by clients and workers alike. The data management system, Center Stat, compiles statistics by group and worker.

Agencies in Virginia complete a monthly report on employment statistics, including monthly earnings and placement. Each agency is given a ranking that creates competitiveness among the agencies in order to achieve. Funds for employment programs are allocated by agency ranking.

How Do You Foster Coordination Between TANF and Workforce Development in Your States?

In Maryland, performance indicators are created jointly for TANF and workforce development in order to improve coordination. Many of the objectives that are applied to the TANF program are also used for WtW programs. WtW, WIA, and TANF staff meet biweekly to discuss the coordination of services.

How Do You Engage Clients with Multi Barriers in Programs?

In DC, TANF contractors submit weekly reports on the number of clients referred and those not engaged. The District staff meets with vendors on a quarterly basis to look at the data and figure out what is not working. When they determine there is a problem, a home visit is made. In DC's home visitors program, community-based organizations visit two groups of TANF clients. The first is sanctioned TANF recipients. These recipients first receive a letter explaining they will lose their benefits. If they do not respond, a home visit is made and community-based organizations make referrals in order to re-engage them. Sometimes these clients need exemptions. In many cases, the District has also found that many of these clients could not read the letters they were sent about their benefits. The second group includes clients who have been on welfare too long, but who are complying. Community-based organizations make home visits to this group and make referrals for such problems as domestic violence or substance abuse. These community-based organizations make three attempts to knock on the door and visit clients. Some of the staff from these organizations are former welfare recipients. DC has found that this "old style social work" approach is making a big difference.

In Baltimore City, MD, there is a demonstration project aimed at increasing employment and retention among the TANF population. The project utilizes an interdisciplinary team of case

managers comprising those working on eligibility, substance abuse issues, day care, and work activities. This team meets with clients when they enter the TANF offices. The client undergoes a comprehensive assessment. Then the team works with the clients to determine activities to engage them. Each team of case managers is responsible for meeting performance measures that may include increasing the rate of retention and the number of jobs found.

3. WORKING LUNCH: PRESENTATION ON ENTERPRISE COMMUNITY, INC.'S FAMILY SUPPORT PARTNERSHIP

Edwina Bell-Mitchell, Enterprise Community, Wilmington, DE

3.1. History

The Enterprise Community (EC) started out by soliciting community input through neighborhood planning councils. Through these councils, the partnership learned of the community's expectations and priority services. The EC then invited more than 100 agencies to a presentation about the partnership. At this presentation, 60 percent or almost 40 agencies, expressed interest in joining the partnership. Through this presentation, the EC learned of agencies concerns and obstacles. A final meeting took place between interested agencies and communities. This meeting allowed both groups to discuss the program from each other's perspectives and to address concerns. Both groups agreed to meet regularly. The next step involved soliciting Request for Proposals (RFPs) for lead and partner agencies. After the lead and partner agencies were chosen, they met to resolve concerns and obstacles and to develop general intake forms. Agencies received free hardware/software, training, manuals, and Internet access.

3.2 Program

The Enterprise Community provides a neighborhood based service delivery system. Five lead agencies cover each enterprise community neighborhood. More than 100 partners support them. The EC Family Support Partnership coordinates clients from 100 agencies that represent more than \$30 million worth of services per year. The EC Family Support Partnership has created a virtual one-stop shop. Each program in the partnership is part of a shared computerized database. This database contains secure client data and has a tracking system. Based on this tracking system, the EC has determined that the most requested client service is food. The database helps coordinate clients services and tracks performance and effectiveness. Clients who come into the Enterprise Community fill out a universal intake form in order to avoid providing the same information multiple times.

The EC Family Support Partnership has achieved many successes. The number of partner agencies has increased from 50 in 1998 to 126 in 2000. The number of people served by the EC has grown from 1542 in 1998 to 4851 in 2000. The EC Family Support Partnership has received many awards, including the 1998 Village Merit Award, the 1999 Service Coordination Award, and recognition in President Clinton's Community Empowerment Board's publication "What Works! In the Empowerment Zones and Communities, Volume IV."

3.3 Challenges

Despite the EC's program successes, there have been many challenges with on-line referrals. The agencies in the partnership still use paper instead of entering the information electronically. Ms. Bell-Mitchell said the lack of technology use was surprising considering each agency is provided with free hardware/software and Internet access.

4. VISION FOR THE INTEGRATION OF TANF, WtW, AND THE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM

Thomas M. Dowd, Region III Administrator

Employment and Training Administrator, Department of Labor

David Florey, Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare, Harrisburg

Karen Sitnick, Director, Mayor's Office of Employment Development, City of Baltimore, MD

4.1 Introduction

Mr. Dowd opened the session by stressing the importance of communication and collaboration between TANF, WtW, and The Workforce Development System. It is necessary for these groups to talk and meet about how to make things better for the clients they serve.

4.2 Overview of Workforce Development System and WIA and One-Stop

In Pennsylvania, welfare and employment services have a history of working together. Currently, the director of public welfare meets with the director of the WIA programs on a monthly basis. WIA allows for great flexibility through the use of M.O.U.s with the Department of Labor. The Department of Public Welfare in PA provides almost \$140 billion to the workforce investment system. The Department sets clear guidelines on outcome standards for the funds the workforce investment system receives. Some performance measures include obtaining a job, retaining a job, wages, and medical benefits. If the workforce investment system

contractors do not meet these goals, they receive a correction letter. If the goals are still not met, they are put on probation and the last step is that the money is withdrawn.

In Pennsylvania, Welfare recipients who are granted exemptions from work requirements must enroll in the Maximizing Participation Program (MPP). This program uses a team of county assistance office, mental health, drug and alcohol, Office of Vocational Rehabilitation, Children and Youth, and medical assistance personnel and community staff for assessments and the development of individualized self-sufficiency plans, including treatment.

The welfare office in PA, however, faces some challenges in working with the workforce investment systems. Challenges exist over different regulations and goals such as particular rates and time limits.

4.3 TANF/WtW/WIA—What Works? What Doesn't?

Today Baltimore has an integrated workforce system. The city has a consortium of community-based vendors called Work Matters. Work Matters is Baltimore's federally funded Welfare to Work Initiative which places TANF recipients and non-custodial parents in jobs in high growth areas. In addition to helping clients obtain employment, the program also offers comprehensive services, including career development counseling, remediation, occupations skills training, and personal support such as child care and transportation assistance, substance abuse treatment, family crises intervention, and mental health counseling. The city also has a competitive WtW, housing, TANF program grant administered by the Department of Social Services.

In addition, the Baltimore Workforce Investment Board is a mayoral appointed alliance of business leaders and representatives from education, community, human services and economic and workforce development organizations. The board serves to guide a process to ensure that Baltimore City's workforce has the skills to meet the current and future demands of the region's employer base. The board was created through the Workforce Investment Act of 1998. The board's activities include sponsoring seminars, hosting nationally recognized workforce experts, school to work initiatives, business-designed customized training, and skills upgrade education for incumbent workers.

In the past the city had a system of silos. Collaboration was challenging because each agency had its own agenda, there was competition, and the landscape was not always conducive to cooperation. Ms. Sitnick defined collaboration as an unnatural act among unconsenting partners.

Ms. Sitnick talked about three phases for transitioning from a system of silos to an integrated system. The first step is education. It is important to know the organizations you want to collaborate with in terms of target population, eligibility, performance standards, and outcomes. It is also necessary to know the people who are empowered in agencies. The city of Baltimore did not examine all of the differences between TANF and WIA and collaboration, therefore, was difficult in the beginning. For example, WIA allows for universal access for recruitment while TANF recipients are told to come. For service levels, WIA clients have universal access and TANF clients flow through tiers. TANF clients are sanctioned for noncompliance while WIA clients do not have to commit. The city learned that it would have been better for TANF and WIA representatives to talk and understand these differences early in the collaborative process.

The second step is effective coordination. In Baltimore, there has been an expansion of the one stop career network. The city has also created a clear referral process between Welfare to Work vendors and welfare services. Employ Baltimore is a program that recently formalized a relationship with the Department of Social Services. The city has also established a new WIA Workforce Board which is composed of staff from WIA and social services.

The third step is system integration. This involves looking at the big picture and determining who in the city is doing workforce preparation. It is necessary to define the workforce system and identify niches and areas of expertise.

5. THE EFFECTS OF 24-MONTH TANF BENEFIT LIMITATION AND STRATEGIES TO DEAL WITH LEAVERS AND CLIENTS WITH MULTIPLE BARRIERS

Mark Golden, TANF Program Manager, Commonwealth of Virginia

5.1 Introduction

The federally imposed time limit on the receipt of TANF benefits is five years; however, States have the option of adopting shorter time limits. Virginia is an example of a State that has opted to make its time limit shorter by imposing a 24-month time limit. This session covered how Virginia has served clients who have approached this time limit and strategies for serving clients with multiple barriers.

5.2 Virginia's Independence Program

Virginia's welfare reform program, the Virginia Independence Program, was implemented on July 1, 1995 and imposes a 24-month time limit on welfare recipients; however, there is a waiver program. The program emphasizes work and the Personal Responsibility Provisions.

5.3 Virginia Initiative for Employment Not Welfare (VIEW)

The Virginia Initiative for Employment Not Welfare (VIEW) involves a personal responsibility agreement with a work requirement. VIEW replaced the Federal Job Opportunities and Basic Skills (JOBS) program. In Virginia, TANF recipients are required to participate in the VIEW program unless they are deemed exempt. Able-bodied parents with children who are older than 18 months must apply to the VIEW program. The program has earned income disregards, which rewards clients who obtain work. Clients are only allowed to participate in the VIEW program for 24 months. After the 24 months has expired, welfare recipients are ineligible for the VIEW program for another 24 months, after which they can return to the program. Transitional benefits are provided to clients for up to one year after cash assistance has ended. These benefits include day care and transportation. The following groups can obtain exemptions from the 24-month time limit:

- Under 16 or over 60 years of age
- Temporarily or permanently disabled
- Second or third trimester of pregnancy
- Needed to care for incapacitated household member
- Caring for child under 18 months.

Clients who participate in the VIEW program are first referred for a work skills assessment. The next step is participation in a 90-day job search at three levels: unsubsidized employment, subsidized, and work experience, which provides job training and skills. After the client has been assigned to an activity, there is an assessment, review, and revision of their plans. Each client is given an automated plan so caseworkers can see where they are on the 24-month cycle. Services to clients in the VIEW program are delivered locally with State supervision.

5.4 Hard-to-Serve and Collaborations

In 1999, the Virginia budget required an assessment of services to the hard-to-serve and the development of a plan. All local agencies were required to develop plans to deliver services to the hard-to-serve in Virginia. For the next biennium, \$15 million was allocated to 90 local agencies that administer hard-to-serve programs targeted at:

- Rehabilitative services projects
- Learning disabilities
- Alcohol/substance abuse
- Mental health
- Domestic violence
- Transportation projects, especially in rural areas
- Workplace supports
- Literacy.

The Bridges to Practice program was the result of a collaboration between the Departments of Rehabilitative Services and Education. The Program focuses on the identification of learning disabilities and the creation of diagnostic approaches and service interventions that result in jobs for individuals with them. Agency Staff attend a comprehensive training that involves using specialists in education, employment, learning disabilities, organizational development, and follow-up technical assistance.

The Workplace Essential Skills program through PBS is targeted on those who lack basic skills. The program uses video programs, workbooks, and Web-based lesson units. The programs also offers GED preparation and adult education classes, on-the-job training, one-stop skill centers, and distance education programs.

The Department of Rehabilitative Services (DRS) administers projects through employment services organizations and centers for independent living. DRS has an M.O.U. with providers who further contract with organizations and Independent Living Centers. These projects include preparation to obtain and maintain employment, job training, job readiness, work experience, job placement, and job retention. Seventy-eight percent of the clients who participate in DRS programs have substance abuse problems or physical or mental disabilities.

The programs have had success with an 84 percent job placement rate and a 72 percent retention rate.

Project Link is a collaboration project between the Department of Social Services, Department of Rehabilitative Services, and Department of Mental Health Mental Retardation and Substance Abuse Services. The program takes an interdisciplinary approach to case management, treatment, and other services. Its services include:

- Initial and ongoing assessments regarding clinical need and readiness for treatment
- Oversight of the client's experience with a particular treatment service, in terms of its appropriateness, impact, length, and duration
- Intensive case management and a point of contact for all services provided
- Wrap-around support services, including transportation, child care, affordable housing and access to employment services.

5.5 Virginia Tech and Commonwealth of Virginia Studies

Virginia Tech has been conducting studies on Virginia's welfare program. The data for the study was collected within 6, 8, and 10 months after a welfare recipient who participates in the VIEW program's case was closed. The study showed the following:

- The State of Virginia has had a 57 percent reduction in their caseloads
- 69, 720 clients have participated in the VIEW program
- Only 10 percent of these clients have reached the 24-month time limit
- Ninety-two percent of the time limit cases were working after the case had closed
- Seventy-five percent of time limit clients are employed at the time their case is closed
- Half of the cases reaching the time limit reported they had consciously planned to remain on TANF for 24 months
- Approximately 2,500 clients leave TANF each month. Less than half of these are participants in the VIEW program
- For VIEW clients who leave TANF, 70 percent have become employed
- Fifty-eight percent of those who left welfare report that their circumstances were the same or better

- The proportion of families receiving child support increased from 19 percent to 29 percent after the case was closed
- For more than half of the cases, family income increased or stayed the same after the closure of the TANF case: families lost TANF benefits but made up for the difference with increased earnings, food stamps, and child support
- Hourly wages, hours worked, and earnings increased between the time of closure and 18 months later
- Thirty-one percent of clients who were unemployed reported a health problem as the reason
- Almost 12 percent of cases have returned to the VIEW program.

The Commonwealth of Virginia is also currently conducting a comprehensive study on the State's welfare system. The initial findings showed that many clients are facing between 10 and 15 barriers. Examples are low educational attainment, mental health problems, and poor job retention history. These barriers are not preventing clients from finding jobs, but instead are not allowing them to retain them.

6. PRESENTATION ON BERKS COUNTY CAREER LINK: INTEGRATION OF SERVICES AND PARTNER COLLABORATION WITHIN WIA/ONE-STOP SYSTEM

Pat Adamcyk, Manager, Berks County Career Link, Reading, PA

Gary Rightmore, Executive Director, Berks County Assistance Office

6.1 History

In 1997, five organizations in Berks County started planning for a one-stop center, Career Links. The partners included Employment Training (a WIA contractor), Labor Exchange, A community college, Career Technology (Vocational and technical centers), and the Kennedy Assistance Office. This group established an advisory committee made up of 20 to 30 organizations such as the United Way, the Chamber of Commerce, and other employment and social assistance groups. An implementation plan for the one-stop center was developed. The group split into investor level partners, contributor level partners, and affiliate partners. The County Employment and Training Offices (WIA), The Bureau of Career and Employment Services, Good Will, and the county assistance office are investor level offices. This group makes up the staff of the one-stop. They formed integrated teams with one member from each

investor level organization to serve clients. The contributor level partners offer services such as childcare to one-stop center clients. The affiliate partners support the efforts of the one-stop. In August 1999, the program started. The partners wanted to find a neutral location so one agency's facilities were not being used. When choosing a location, they also thought about public transportation and parking.

6.2 The Program

There are two teams at the one-stop center: an employment services team and an employment planning team. The employment services team does screening and referrals and also works with employers. The employment planning team works with clients to help them find a job. The center offers information sessions on the following topics:

- Goal setting/time management
- Job retention
- Job management
- Resume writing
- Interviewing
- Hidden job market
- Budgeting and money management.

When clients enter the career center, they enroll on the Career Link's automatic job-matching Web site. Clients can find jobs which they gain computer skills. Specific employment services include:

- Job matching and referral of applicants to job orders
- Mass recruitment activities for designated employers
- Development of on-the-job training and subsidized employment contacts
- Information on tax credits and other hiring incentives.

TANF and WIA clients can go through skill and aptitude assessments at the center. Using client satisfaction surveys to determine what services they offer, the one-stop center has been

successful in making an impact on the community. Welfare recipients are receiving more services at the one-stop center than they would from separate departments.

6.3 Challenges

The biggest challenge for the county has been working out significant differences among different employment organizations accustomed to their own style of management and delivery of client services. It has been difficult at times to work as a team. The county is working on blending all of the differences in order to attain a single outcome of integrated services.

7. PROBLEM SOLVING EXERCISE: IDENTIFICATION OF KEY OBSTACLES TO SERVING CLIENTS WITH MULTIPLE BARRIERS

Development of an Action Plan with Strategies for Dealing with Identified Obstacles and Improving Local Collaboration Among Programs

Facilitator: Terri Thompson, The Urban Institute

The last two sessions of the workshop were interactive. Participants talked about the challenges faced when trying to serve clients with multiple barriers to employment and identified ways to overcome these challenges. Participants also talked about collaboration among local agencies. The following section describes the identified obstacles and the strategies for dealing with them.

Obstacle: Clients who are engaging but have disabilities and are not capable of working. For example, there are a lot of problems with getting clients who have mental health and substance abuse issues to work.

Strategy: It was suggested that partnerships be formed with community-based organizations with licensed social workers who can help clients with mental health problems. Agencies could also work with universities who have social work students who need hours of work for their degree programs. The city of Philadelphia contracts with mental health providers to help TANF clients. In Delaware, the Bridge Program is an intense case management program for TANF clients with substance abuse problems.

Obstacle: TANF staff are often frustrated with the system. Referrals and assessments are made by TANF staff, who are not confident that clients found work or were helped since they are no longer involved in the process.

Strategy: In Baltimore City, social services workers take a tour of facilities for employer services so they can understand the services offered. A final report is also completed on clients.

Obstacle: In the rural areas, resources often don't exist.

Strategy: Pool resources and funding from many organizations. Set up more one-stops for collaborations.

Obstacle: Helping clients who are facing the upcoming 5-year time limits.

Strategy: In DC, home visits are made to the hardest to serve. Community-based organizations make home visits to sanctioned clients and clients who have stayed on TANF too long but are complying. Three attempts are made to reach the clients. During the home visits, community-based organizations conduct assessments and make referrals for domestic violence, substance abuse and other problems. Home visits have proven successful. Clients are responding to the personal contact of a community organization staff member. Sometimes the community organization's staff member is a former welfare recipient. In addition, front line workers should be consulted on how to best help clients.

Obstacle: For collaborations, many partner agencies are interested in the program but are not willing to give funds.

Obstacle: There are too many sets of standards and rules for WtW, WIA and TANF. Conflicting standards and rules make it hard to collaborate.

IV. SEMINAR EVALUATIONS

IV. SEMINAR EVALUATIONS

This section summarizes evaluation forms and written comments about the seminar.

1. SEMINAR EVALUATIONS

At the conclusion of the seminar, attendees were asked to complete an evaluation form.

1.1 Evaluation Form Question: “Please rate the following on a scale of 1 to 4”

Exhibit IV-1 summarizes the respondent’s rating of the pre-workshop information/rating, on-site registration, participant packets and resource materials, and workshop organization/flow of day. The following scale was used:

1 = poor 2 = satisfactory 3 = good 4 = excellent

EXHIBIT IV-1								
Question	1		2		3		4	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
A. Pre-workshop information/registration	1	3.57%	5	17.86%	11	39.29%	11	39.29%
B. On-site registration	0	0%	2	7.69%	11	42.31%	13	50%
C. Participant packets/resource materials	1	3.7%	5	18.52%	12	44.44%	9	33.33%
D. Workshop organization/flow	2	6.9%	7	24.14%	15	51.72%	5	17.24%
E. Overall workshop	0	0%	9	34.61%	14	53.85%	3	11.54%
F. Location	0	0%	4	14.29%	7	25%	17	60.71%
G. Meeting space/set-up	0	0%	5	18.52%	8	29.63%	14	51.85%
H. Sleeping rooms	0	0%	3	20%	2	13.33%	10	66.67%
I. Food services	0	0%	5	19.23%	7	26.92%	14	53.85%
J. Overall-facility	0	0%	2	10%	8	40%	10	50%

1.2 Evaluation Form Question: “Please rate the following on a scale of 1 to 4”

Exhibit IV-2 summarizes the respondent’s rating of the workshop sessions, the luncheon address, the workshop exercises, and the wrap-up session. The following scale was used:

1 = poor 2 = satisfactory 3 = good 4 = excellent

EXHIBIT IV-2								
Question	1		2		3		4	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
A. Workshop session: “Lessons from the Field: Are Programs Working?”	2	7.14%	10	35.71%	12	42.86%	4	14.29%
B. Luncheon address	2	7.4%	1	3.7%	12	44.44%	12	44.44%
C. Workshop session: “Vision for the Integration of TANF, WtW, and The Workforce Development System/Overview of Workforce Development System WIA and One-Stop”	0	0%	10	35.71%	12	42.86%	6	21.43%
D. Workshop session: “The Effects of 24-Month TANF Benefit Limitation and Strategies to Deal with Leavers and Clients with Multiple Barriers”	5	18.52%	12	44.44%	5	18.52%	5	18.52%
E. Exercise 1: “Identification of Key Obstacles to Serving Clients with Multiple Barriers”	5	19.23%	7	26.92%	11	42.31%	4	15.38%
F. Exercise 2: “Develop an Action Plan with Strategies for Dealing with Identified Obstacles and Improving Collaboration Among Programs”	2	8.7%	7	30.43%	10	43.48%	4	17.39%
G. Session: wrap-up—Next steps	0	0%	4	21.05%	9	47.37%	6	31.58%

1.3 Evaluation Form Question: “Please rate the following using the 5-point scale”

Exhibit IV-3 summarizes the respondent’s rating of the technical assistance providers, e.g., facilitators and speakers. A 5-point scale was used, with 1 representing the lowest rating or strongly disagree and 5 representing the highest rating or strongly agree.

EXHIBIT IV-3										
Statements Rated	1's		2's		3's		4's		5's	
	n	%								
a. The TA providers were knowledgeable about the content of the TA	1	3.86%	2	7.69%	7	26.92%	9	34.61%	7	26.92%
b. The TA providers had adequate background and experience to successfully provide TA	1	3.57%	3	10.71%	7	25%	11	39.23%	6	21.43%
c. The TA provided will be useful to our State/jurisdiction in advancing and/or enhancing TANF/WtW implementation	2	8%	4	16%	7	28%	9	36%	3	12%
d. The expected outcomes of the TA were successfully achieved	3	12%	3	12%	10	40%	6	24%	3	12%

2. WRITTEN COMMENTS

Participants were also given the opportunity to provide open-ended comments. A summary of their responses is as follows:

2.1. Workshop Session: Lessons from the Field: Are Programs Working?

- The focus of the session was unclear.
- Excellent interaction with the audience.
- Good chance to exchange program ideas. I would have liked to discuss overcoming barriers as they relate to larger cities.
- Success stories are great, but I want to hear more about problem areas and how they are handled.

2.2 Luncheon Session

- Very on point
- Excellent content and preparation
- Excellent presentation and vision for the program
- The speakers passion was obvious in her delivery
- I didn't think the handling of the TANF meeting vs. the other luncheon session was handled very well. Overall, the address was well done.

2.3 Workshop Session: Vision for the Integration of TANF, WtW, and the Workforce Development System/Overview of Workforce Development System, WIA and One-Stop

- Excellent idea to separate your one-stop from other programs. Keeps the focus on the one-stop shop

2.4 Workshop Session: The Effects of 24-Month TANF Benefit Limitation and Strategies to Deal with Leavers and Clients with Multiple Barriers

- Very dry.
- I needed to hear more information regarding how other States are dealing with the hard-to-serve clients, especially those clients who are difficult to contact.
- Content presented was helpful. Presentation was poor.
- The Virginia model presentation was highly enlightening.
- This workshop did not give definitive information on the subject matter. A historical perspective of the program was presented.

2.5 Exercise I: Identification of Key Obstacles to Serving Clients with Multiple Barriers

- Good discussion.
- It might have been more helpful to allow the conference participants to brainstorm in smaller groups and then process the information in the larger group.
- Comments did not address barriers for hard-to-reach clients.
- Useful discussions.

2.6 Exercise 2: Develop an Action Plan with Strategies for Dealing with Identified Obstacles and Improving Local Collaboration Among Partners

- Lots of useable information
- Encouraged interaction.

2.7 Wrap-Up—Next Steps

- Pragmatic and applicable action steps—very empowering

2.8 Facility

- The location that was selected for this conference was excellent.
- The location was easily accessible.

2.9 Workshop Organization/Flow of Day

- Too long a day
- Very organized with a strong moderator
- The barriers issue was not addressed properly; on the first day, the barriers issue was not heard, instead only the stats of progression
- The first day morning session did not get to the core reason for being at the conference
- Too many sessions.

2.10 On-Site Registration

- The registrars were very cordial and professional.

2.11 Participant Packets and Resource Materials

- The materials will be very helpful.

2.12 Open-ended Comments

Participants were asked to describe the benefits they anticipated as a result of attending the workshop.

- Will look at barrier data closely. Work to develop team approach to TANF clients. Will try to find passive data to get a clearer picture of outcomes.
- I heard some things that I can take back to my office and possibly integrate into our systems, such as information on obstacles to serving clients with multiple barriers.
- With the ideas shared at the conference, I hope our agency will be able to successfully handle the 60 month time limit.
- Several new ideas such as M.O.U's and M.O.A.'s.
- Better definition of barriers.
- The need to communicate more effectively with our client base.
- I learned new ideas on how to foster collaborations between TANF and WIA. I enjoyed the dialogue with other service providers.
- Gaining a better understanding of other WIA/WtW/TANF integrations.

Participants were asked to describe what they found most useful about the workshop.

- Applying performance measurement techniques to monitoring vendors. Looking at possible mental health service strategies.
- The presentation from Baltimore's Office of Economic Development was excellent.
- Sharing of ideas and information. Discussion of issues our agency is going to face shortly on time limits.
- Discussions about DC home visitor program.
- The notion that many ideas and solutions should/could come from front line employees.
- Differences in commonly used indicators of programs success versus client goals.
- Welfare staff need to review how we identify clients with barriers to avoid discovering at a later date that the barrier has existed since the beginning.
- Dialogue with the different organizations at the conference.
- Performance management discussion.
- Hearing about programs in other cities.
- Continuing to network with my own partners.

- For the session led by Andy Bush, there was discussion and added value from a National perspective to the program.
- The information presented on the final day during the last two workshops was the most useful. It was helpful to see that other cities and agencies are experiencing similar problems and issues.

Participants were asked to provide comments on how the workshop could have better met their needs.

- I would have liked to find out about new strategies addressing barriers.
- I would have liked more information on problems surrounding clients who have multiple barriers and how we address their needs once we see them.
- More handouts, written materials made available.
- It would have been helpful if more questions could have been answered.
- More hands-on workshop situations to help learn how to deal with hard-to-serve clients.
- If we could have addressed Family Savings Accounts, which are excluded resources in determining eligibility.
- More information on providers who work with clients on multi-barriers such as domestic violence, learning disabilities, and housing issues. More information on what is needed to formally collaborate with these providers. More information on language to secure Memorandums of Understanding/Agreement to providers.
- More time for participants from various programs to communicate.
- Building a better correlation between TANF and Workforce Investment Needs.
- A stronger discussion of barriers that prevent programs from working together.
- There were not a lot of solutions offered. Needed the nitty gritty of “how to.” We tended to talk around the issues.
- There needed to be more information on retention. Also more information on how to obtain information from clients for evaluation purposes.
- Needed more information about the identification of barriers.

Participants were asked to provide any additional comments about the workshop.

- I would have liked to hear from other conference participants on what is working and what is not regarding hard-to-serve clients.
- The sessions were too close together. Needed more break time.
- The conference had two audiences-administrators of WtW and TANF programs. Each has different needs. There are programmatic issues that need to be addressed and policy level issues that impact program operations. These need to be broken out. It seems that it should be made clearer how lessons learned could be used and applied to the TANF reauthorization process. Also, someone needs to address how the capacity built via the finite resources of WtW can be used in the future and which of these resources are depleted and gone. New networks have been created; there are many new providers out there. How can these providers continue to do their good work when the resources are not sustainable?
- Should have also had a group exercise session on the first day or earlier on the second day in order to capture more information from the audience.
- A suggestion for future workshops is the exploration of initial assessment forms used on TANF clients that reveal reading levels, substance abuse problems, and other barriers.
- I did not get a lot out of the conference. The audience did not seem to match the subject matter.
- The issues and problems associated with integration could have been more closely anticipated.
- The workshop gave many success stories for programs that have worked but not much information.
- A lot of good information was given and helpful but most of it addressed Philadelphia agencies rather than the joint problem all agencies experience, no matter what State.

**APPENDIX A:
CONFERENCE AGENDA**

APPENDIX B:
QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

The following section offers a summary of the questions and answers from workshop sessions.

1. “Vision for Integration of TANF, WtW, and the Workforce Development System”

Q: Can you make any comparisons in your work from before you were in the Mayor’s office? (directed to Ms. Schnick)

A: Having the support of the mayor is key. We have a 51 member Workforce Investment Board. Staff from Department of Social Services and Department of Labor work on the Mayor’s cabinet.

Q: Who are the partners in your one-stop?

A: Aging, Veterans, Social Services, Insurance, Rehabilitation, and Housing.

Q: From a State and local perspective, what can the Feds do to promote more relationships?

A: Use the power of the office to lobby for consistent standards on regulations, reporting, and eligibility. Different standards are too time consuming for us.

A: Hold more forums like this.

A: Provide incentives for collaboration.

Q: For David Florey, what kind of contracts does PA have?

A: We have cost reimbursement contracts. The contract will end if the performance is poor. We tried performance based contracting but it was too hard to verify outcomes.

Q: How can community based organizations get involved with WIA?

A: Find out who is on your Workforce Investment Board.

2. The Effects of 24-month TANF Benefit Limitation and Strategies to Deal with Leavers and Clients with Multiple Barriers

Q: What do you attribute to the success of 75 percent time limit cases being employed at the time of case closure?

A: An emphasis on work throughout the entire 24-month period. Also, these clients are only VIEW clients.

Q: What do you do for people who reach the time limit and are not working?_

A: In Virginia, we have added hardship exceptions.

A: In NYC, we have a safety net for clients who reach the time limit. Services are provided through vouchers.

A: In DC, we find and work with the client before they reach the time limit.

3. Berks County Career Link

Q: Do you screen TANF clients for eligibility?

A: Most clients who come into the center are already recipients of TANF benefits; however, clients can complete applications at the center and there is some screening done at the one-stop.

Q: How do you reconcile the differences between TANF and WIA clients?

A: There are not a large number of WIA clients at the center. We track TANF clients to meet work requirements.

Q: Is your one-stop model similar to others?

A: It is unique because of the degree to which welfare and employment are engaged in career link. Also, the integrated teams are unique versus the usual trend of separate departments in one office. The management structure is also different because each of the investor level partners are the decision makers for the center.

Q: Could you describe the economic base of Berks County?

A: A diverse community with less than 400,000 residents. The county has a diverse employer community, where 26 percent are from manufacturing. The county has a lower per capita income in the surrounding suburban counties. The county also has a lower educational achievement level than the State average. There is a large Latino population in the county. Agriculture is the largest industry; there are a lot of family farms.

Q: Do you offer weekend and evening hours?

A: We usually do not offer weekend and evening hours because our staff is covered by collective bargaining; however, we sometimes offer services or programs at night and pay our staff overtime.

APPENDIX C:
CONFERENCE SPEAKER LIST

APPENDIX D:
CONFERENCE PARTICIPANT LIST