



TANF Rural Initiative
Rural Communities Academy



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Rural Communities Initiative Academy
Office of Family Assistance
Kansas City, Missouri
September 3rd-5th, 2008



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Background

The face of poverty in America is often perceived to exist in a predominantly urban setting. However, families in rural environments have continually experienced higher poverty rates than their counterparts in America's cities since the late 1950s.¹ Fourteen percent of the *national* Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) caseload lives in non-metro communities. However, rural states experience a very different reality – with as many as three-quarters of their TANF caseload living outside urban areas.² TANF participants face severe challenges to becoming self-sufficient such as less favorable employment opportunities, lower-paying jobs, health care, food security, transportation, and child care. Rural TANF agencies at the State, Tribal, and local levels also need support and technical assistance in meeting the higher work participation requirements under the Deficit Reduction Act of 2005. Given the continued scale of poverty and limited job opportunities in rural areas, it is important for State, local, and Tribal TANF agencies to continue supporting programs that reduce barriers to employment and strengthen delivery of social services to low-income families.

In recognition of the needs of rural communities and TANF agencies, the Office of Family Assistance, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services is sponsoring the Rural Communities Initiative. The Rural Communities Initiative provides States, Tribes, and local TANF agencies in 16 nominated rural sites from across the United States the opportunity to share information and promising practices on critical rural issues and barriers to employment such as transportation, education, technology, job skills, economic development, and child care. Beginning with the Rural Communities Academy which was held in Kansas City, Missouri on September 3rd through September 5th, 2008, this Initiative is providing a variety of technical assistance to rural sites

The Rural Communities Initiative will continue until September 2010 and will include technical assistance events such as Roundtables, site visits, site exchanges, Webinars, teleconferences, information resources, and a capstone Leadership Forum event. Events will occur as laid out in the Academy participants' technical assistance plans. In addition group technical assistance will also be offered.

The Rural Communities Academy was the “kick off” event for the 16 selected rural sites and included time for each rural site team (consisting of four-five team members) to participate in information gathering, networking, and action planning. The team members who attended the Academy participated in workshops and plenary sessions, and met with Rural Content Specialists and representatives from other rural communities who shared their insight into strategies being utilized in rural areas with TANF participants. The rural site representatives also participated in outcome-focused action planning. In addition, Academy participants also worked

¹ Rural Sociological Society. (2006). *The Challenges of Rural Poverty*. RSS Issue Brief – Challenges for Rural America in the Twenty-First Century, Number 2, January 2006. <http://www.ruralsociology.org/briefs/brief2.pdf>

² Government Accountability Office. (2004). *Welfare Reform – Rural TANF Programs have Developed Many Strategies to Address Rural Challenges*. United States Government Accountability Office. <http://www.gao.gov/new.items/d04921.pdf>



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to address programmatic and policy challenges as a team by developing individualized technical assistance plans for each site. These technical assistance plans, informed by the participants' Academy experience, will be used as a roadmap for the implementation of new ideas and strategies.

Welcome and Opening Remarks

The Academy was opened by Gary Allen, ACF Region VII TANF Program Manager, who welcomed participants to Kansas City. Mr. Allen spoke about the need to not neglect rural America when designing solutions for serving the TANF population. Ms. Janel Luck, Director of the Family Support Division, Missouri Department of Social Services, welcomed participants. She stressed the importance of the individual approach to solving rural challenges and that no "one size fits all" approach will work to address all issues. Bobbi Mariani, Director of the Economic Development and Support Division, Kansas Department of Social and Rehabilitative Services, also welcomed participants. Ms. Mariani stressed to participants that what works for one individual may not work for another individual. She also emphasized the importance of individual contributions in the lives of other people and the difference a case worker can make in the life of one TANF participant.

Ms. Lisa Washington-Thomas, Technical Assistance Bureau Chief, Office of Families Assistance (OFA) provided welcoming remarks to Academy participants. She explained that OFA's motivation for wanting to create a Rural Academy and Initiative emerged from the Office's prior technical assistance initiative that focused on 26 selected urban sites. Ms. Washington-Thomas credited Mr. James Butler, the Federal Project Officer for the Rural Communities Initiative, who could not attend the Academy, as being a driving force behind the creation of the Rural Communities Initiative. She then spoke about the goals that OFA wanted participants to take away from the Initiative. These included: finding strategies for raising the work participation rate, an awareness of current self-sufficiency models being done in the United States, the continuing opportunity to network, build partnerships, work with rural content specialists, and to strategize both within teams and with teams from other states.

Plenary Session: Rural Area Introductions

After providing an overview of the Initiative, Ms. Washington-Thomas led the introduction of the Rural Teams. The 16 rural teams represented at the Academy briefly discussed their specific TANF program or community challenges and successes.

Hoopa Valley Tribal TANF, California

The Hoopa Valley Tribe is located in northwestern California on a 12 mile square reservation that has only one road in and out of the reservation. They have a population of 2,700 people and an unemployment rate of over 60 percent. They are in their fourth year of operating their Tribal TANF program.

White Mountain Apache Tribal TANF, Arizona



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The White Mountain Apache Tribe is located in western Arizona in the town of White River which is three and half hours from the nearest city. There are a total of 13,000 White Apache Tribal members although many do not live on the reservation. There have recently been a number of job layoffs and the unemployment rate is 75 percent. Despite this, the TANF caseload for the Tribe has been declining.

New Mexico

The team from New Mexico works with three major contractors in the state: the university, the transportation authority, and the workforce development board. The state is very diverse in terms of population demographics and due to the size and geography of the state, service delivery can be difficult.

Roosevelt County, Fort Peck Tribe, Montana

Roosevelt County is located in northwestern Montana along with the Fort Peck Tribe reservation. The area is five hours from the nearest town. Roosevelt County and the Fort Peck Tribe work closely together and they have a variety of local partners. They fully contract out their employment and training activities to their partners. There is a high unemployment rate on the reservation and their major challenges are lack of transportation and healthcare. The site's goal is to engage their TANF participants who have no time limits. An interesting fact about the county is that the Missouri River originates in it.

North Dakota

North Dakota as a state was selected to participate in the Initiative. Along with state representatives, the state brought contractors who work on child care issues, workforce, and the hard-to-serve population. The Tribal areas that the state serves have an unemployment rate of 60 percent. The state historically used a "one size fits all approach" to service delivery but has found that it does not work with the hard to serve population. A fun fact about North Dakota is that the state has the largest Holstein cow sculpture.

Crawford and Pittsburgh Counties, Kansas

The two counties are located in southwest Kansas in an area that borders Missouri. In Kansas, each region is given an allotment of money to create its work programs for consumers. The area has an 84 percent graduation rate from high school and a 22 percent unemployment rate. In addition, a major industry currently employing about 600 people is moving to a new location. An interesting fact about the counties is that they are home to the largest ball of twine.

Fannin County, Texas

Fannin County is located in northwest Texas on the Red River and the workforce investment board they work with serves three counties in their region. Fannin County brought their workforce and housing partners.

Helena, Arkansas

Helena is located in Philips County in western Arkansas in the Delta region along the Mississippi border. The TANF program in the area is operated by both the Department of Workforce and



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the Department of Human Services. Helena is located in a rural and agricultural area and the biggest barriers to work are a lack of jobs, transportation, and child care. The unemployment rate is 4.4 percent and the median income in Phillips County is about \$10,000 less than in surrounding counties.

Forest County, Wisconsin (Forest County Potawatomi Community and Sokaogon Chippewa Tribes)

Forest County is located in northern Wisconsin. Both the Potawatomi and Sokaogon Tribes reside in the county and the Tribes are the largest and second largest employers in the county, respectively. The Sokaogon Tribe operates a gas station, a hotel that is connected to the local casino, and a Boys and Girls Club. There is not a stoplight in the county and the major challenges that both Tribes face in connecting TANF participants to work are transportation and substance abuse issues.

Gadsden County, Florida

Gadsden County is located in the middle of the Florida panhandle, near the state capital of Tallahassee. In the county, TANF agencies work closely with the workforce boards and they are currently meeting their work participation rates. Recently the state of Florida cut its staff by 47 percent. A significant success for the Florida site is their electronic system that allows staff to process electronic eligibility determinations. For the system, the state won the Ash Award from Harvard University for innovation in government.

Hampton County, South Carolina

Hampton County is located in southern South Carolina. The TANF agency in the county partners with many different agencies and is currently meeting their work participation rate. The biggest challenges for TANF participants are transportation and child care.

Ward County, Gilmer County, Calhoun County, West Virginia

These three counties are located in central West Virginia and they have a centralized program. West Virginia is the largest coal producer in the United States but it needs more economic development. The biggest challenges for TANF participants are the lack of jobs, transportation, and child care. Transportation is also an issue because the state's infrastructure is not well developed.

Montour County, Pennsylvania

Montour County is located in central Pennsylvania, and the county population is 18,000. Each county has their own TANF office and the county was the first to meet a 100 percent work participation rate. County residents are one and a half hours from any major shopping or an airport and they do not have a Wal-Mart. The Pennsylvania team is interested in exploring Florida's technology model, online assessments, and transportation.

Greene County, New York

Greene County is located in the Catskill Mountains in western New York State. Since the county is in the mountains, there are opportunities for work in the winter from the ski industry but it is



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only seasonal employment. Aside from lack of employment opportunities, transportation is the other major challenge for the county residents.

Essex County, Vermont

Essex County is located in the northwest corner of Vermont and is bordered by Canada and New Hampshire. Along with representatives from the state and two local district offices that serve Essex County, two community partners were also present at the Academy. The county has an unemployment rate of 42 percent and many jobs that are available are in the service industry and located in New Hampshire. Previously there was a large logging and agriculture industry in the area but it has since declined. Ethan Allen is a large employer in the area and employs about 400 people. However the Company have been downsizing considerably in recent years.

Washington County, Maine

Washington County is located in western Maine and is represented at the Academy by the two regional offices that serve the county, Machias and Calais. The county representatives expressed that their challenges were similar to what was already mentioned. An interesting fact about the county is that it produces 85 percent of the world's blueberries.

Following site introductions, everyone participated in an ice breaker exercise. During the ice breaker, participants were instructed to put together a puzzle that was a map of the United States and on the back of the puzzle were two different clues that instructed each team to visit two different teams. After the exercise, Mr. Kent Peterson, the facilitator, asked particular teams to share with the group what was similar and different about the other teams they met with.

Academy 101

Ms. Jeanette Hercik, Vice President with ICF International and Project Director for the Rural Communities Initiative provided an overview of the "Academy" which stresses peer-to-peer learning and information exchange and is not a typical conference with many plenary sessions. Participants have the opportunity to engage and network with other rural sites along with rural specialists who have developed solutions to some of the unique problems that face rural areas. Each team will leave the Academy with an action plan for technical assistance in addition to the connections formed with others. Ms. Hercik also discussed future work that will happen under the Initiative including the capstone event, the Rural Leadership Forum.

Mr. Peterson then introduced the teams to the Rural Content Specialists, who each gave a short description of their breakout session, their background expertise, and some initial information about their presentations.

Team Times

Throughout the Academy, the teams from each rural site were given time to meet in their own suites with a trained facilitator. There were a total of five designated team times in which



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participants were able to plan and digest their learning with one another. Through guidance from their facilitator, each team translated their learning and ideas into a written technical assistance plan that outlined the issues they wanted to address using the technical assistance offered through the Rural Communities Initiative.

Breakout Sessions

In addition to the five designated team times, there were three sets of breakout sessions throughout the two and half day Academy that provided more in-depth exploration around nine topical areas with a specific focus on rural strategies and innovative resources. These nine topical areas were economic development; innovative work supports; connecting tribal populations to work; using innovative technologies; rural transportation solutions; family strengthening; education, training, and workforce development; addressing health needs in rural areas; and substance abuse and domestic violence. An overview of each breakout session is provided below.

Breakout Session: Rural America and 21st Century Economic Development

Ms. Trina Gress, the Chief Operations Officer for Community Options Inc., Career Options Employment Program, discussed her organization's Career Options program which is contracted to provide employment services to TANF participants within the state of North Dakota. The agency serves 75 percent of the state's TANF population and provides the services statewide through their 10 office locations. The program maintains a work participation rate between 60 and 70 percent. Ms. Gress explained that the program offers both pre and post employment services within a person centered approach and attributes the success of the program to the individual and hands on attention that each TANF participant receives.

Dr. Marvin Pichla, Executive Director of the Thumb Area Michigan Works! Agency explained three key innovations that his agency has developed and put in practice to better serve TANF participants. He preceded his comments by clarifying that his agency has requested many waivers from the state of Michigan to implement some of these innovations. The Thumb Area uses a "Toolchest system" which is a voucher system that allocates TANF participants a certain amount of money according to their needs to make themselves work ready. Growing to Work Enterprise was also developed to assist TANF participants in moving towards employment at their own pace. Until recently, TANF participants kept their own work log on a computer which assisted in helping them develop computer literacy skills. Through the system TANF participants are also able to keep track of their smaller successes which promoted a feeling of achievement.

Lastly, the Thumb Area established an Employment Builders Alliance which was created with WIA incumbent worker money (the agency receives a set amount as a WIB). Employers can participate in the Alliance by contributing \$10 through the "co-op" format; then they are eligible to receive any training they would like from various community colleges and trainers. Employers that have participated include libraries, community action agencies, and the Department of



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Human Services. Through the Alliance, the Thumb Area has identified targeted employment sectors that will grow and need a sustainable workforce in the future.

Breakout Session: Providing Innovative Work Supports To Rural TANF Participants

Mr. Daylan Beamon from Business Access provided an overview of an In-Home Learning System for TANF participants. Business Access created the program to engage TANF participants for countable hours without the participant having to leave their home, thus eliminating the need for child care or transportation. TANF participants have computers placed in their own homes by the company and engage in core and non-core activities such as vocational education, job search, job skills, and education directly related to employment and GED preparation. The method helps participants feel included in society and gives them a safe place to try to engage in various work activities. The program helps build self-esteem and a peer learning environment. Internet access is provided to clients as part of the package with the program and a laptop. If computer problems occur there is immediate support and if a new computer is needed, it is sent overnight to participants. The length of a course varies depending on the participant and their speed.

Mr. Pankaj Bhanot, the Acting Division Administrator for the Benefit, Employment and Services Division with the Hawaii Department of Human Services, explained the SEE (Supporting Employment Empowerment) Program. SEE is a work initiative that was designed to meet labor force needs by providing subsidized employment in competitive private sector jobs. The program is privatized and provides bonuses for initial hiring into unsubsidized jobs. The state has found it is a “win-win” situation. Employers get needed staff with pre-employment training and employees learn skills and have a job that creates a better life for themselves and their families. Currently, 78 percent of participants who participated satisfactorily in the program are in unsubsidized employment and have left TANF. After a participant exits TANF, SEE still provides a variety of supports which include transportation assistance, car down payments, assistance with rent payment, and various other bonuses.

Breakout Session: Connecting Tribal Populations in Rural Areas to Work

The moderator, Dr. Bruce Weber gave a brief introduction about Tribal TANF and how it differs from States’ administering TANF programs. Presently, there are 59 Tribes administering Tribal TANF programs. Dr. Geni Cowan discussed the prevalent challenges of transportation, child care, and lack of jobs on tribal reservations and rural areas. She discussed the importance of re-framing how we think about some of these issues and also discovering what we mean by “work” and how we define “success.” Success may be different for different people and it is important not to push ideals or values on others when “success” is discussed and how it is measured. For example, to some, success in terms of transportation might mean owning a car, but for others it might be something else. Dr. Cowan also discussed the high drop out rates of high school students on reservations and the need to enhance basic skills. One way to address this issue is to have participants with those basic skills tutor other TANF participants. Soft skills are also



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important and this can be brought to TANF participants through partnering with local community colleges.

Dr. Cowan also discussed “motivational interviewing” as a technique that she promotes for working with participants who have alcohol and drug problems or have a lack of motivation to complete education or look for a job. She mentioned that motivation is an internal process. It is important to evaluate what motivates people, whether it is negative by means of sanctions or positive by means of incentives, but the most important concept to understand is that people are motivated from within themselves and have to want something themselves first and foremost. She also discussed “red flag assessments” for people who have substance abuse issues instead of mandatory drug testing which is a common phenomenon in Tribes. A “red flag assessment” only tests those who have demonstrated that they might have an alcohol or drug problem through behavior over time.

Another important challenge in Tribal TANF programs is the lack of knowledge and understanding that the Tribal governments tend to have about TANF programs. Because of this, there needs to be communication in place between the tribal government and the Tribal TANF program. Tribes can also define their work activities to best meet their specific needs in partnership with their Administration for Children and Families Regional office. Dr. Cowan also mentioned that Tribes who are submitting new plans for approval should focus on why work activities should be allowable within the context of the four purposes of TANF.

Breakout Session: Using Innovative Technologies in Rural Areas

Ms. Jackie Savage, President of ConnectInc., was originally scheduled to attend the Academy and present on her program. However due to adverse weather, she was not able to attend but the video describing Connect Inc. was still shown for participants. ConnectInc. is a nonprofit organization that bridges the gap between where families are and where they want and need to be to access jobs and support services. Participants call the call center which is located in Battleboro, North Carolina, to be connected with services and jobs. The program makes personal connections with participants and provides personal attention. One example of services offered is having the participant on the phone while the case worker makes phone calls inquiring about jobs to demonstrate how to conduct these activities. ConnectInc. maintains contact with participants at least twice a week.

Ms. Denise Parker, Program Manager with the Department of Children and Families presented on Florida’s electronic public benefits system, ACCESS. ACCESS is an acronym for Automated Community Connection to Economic Self-Sufficiency. Florida has 783,000 food stamp participants, 48,000 TANF participants, and 1.8 million Medicaid recipients. These programs employ 4,100 staff statewide. ACCESS and other modernization efforts were developed and implemented internally by employee groups. The goals of the modernization effort were to:

- Minimize paper documentation;
- Allow participants to use a self-service approach;



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- Reduce use time required to process information and applications;
- Minimize interviews;
- Aim for fast and convenient service;
- Create call centers; and
- Implement document scanning.

There are three call centers that cover Florida, where participants can call to receive services. The call center in North Florida hands 20 percent of cases, and the centers in Central and South Florida each handle 40 percent of cases. Ms. Parker noted that the state's community partners are keys to the success of modernization. Some community partners were hired by the state to act as liaisons to train other community partners. The state has over 3,200 partners from organizations and agencies including: workforce, public health, hospitals, food banks, schools, community centers, faith based organizations, homeless shelters, libraries, independent living centers, and other social services. Partners have varying reasons for participating; for some agencies it benefits their participants and is easier for their staff and others were paid in the beginning of the initiative. The money to pay partners came from state staff cuts (44 percent reduction) and the closing of local service centers. The computers that were left over from the state's center closings were given to partners.

Some staff and participants miss face-to-face time but in general participants have liked the online process. In some cases, participants are still seen face-to-face and abbreviated interviews are done by phone, but if someone is "red-flagged" they can do full interviews by phone. The workforce provider still sees participants in person and the participant must complete orientation before benefit payments are made.

Applications for public benefits are available on the Internet and 90 percent of all applications are now Web-based. Eighty percent of applicants do not need help with their applications and it takes 48 percent of applicants less than 30 minutes to complete the application. Ninety-six percent of applicants who used the online form stated they would use it again. The state has now implemented telecommuting for eligibility specialists because they can access applications from their home computers. Several studies have been done on Florida's modernization process by Mathematica, the General Accounting Office, and the National Governor's Association. The state is currently working on increasing quality controls.

Breakout Session: Transportation Solution in Rural Areas for TANF Participants

Ms. Margaret Morton and Ms. Nancy Dickson from Sylacauga Alliance for Family Enhancement (SAFE) in Alabama gave the participants an overview of their agencies transportation program. The program came about due to the partnership of six agencies: SAFE, East Alabama Regional Planning and Development Commission, the City of Sylacauga, Alabama Department of Transportation, Alabama Department of Senior Services and the Talladega County Department of Human Resources. The effort was a voluntary, community collaboration and now serves many disadvantaged populations including TANF participants. Ms. Morton then used a case example to demonstrate the benefits a participant receives where they work with SAFE.



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Ms. Barbara Bayes of the Good News Mountaineer Garage described the car donation program in West Virginia that she oversees. It was determined that West Virginia was in need of a car donation program because of the rural nature of the state and the lack of public transportation options in most areas. The Garage began as a pilot program because the state was also operating a car leasing program as well. The leasing program proved to be cost prohibitive and not helpful to the recipients of the cars who could often not afford the payments. The Garage has proved to be very successful and helpful to those who receive the cars. The program distributes 15 TANF cars per month, equaling 180 cars per year. In 2003 the program conducted a one year follow up study of those who had received cars and it found that 70 percent of car recipients left public assistance; 82 percent were working; and 13 percent were participating in job training.

To operate the program, Ms. Bayes noted that it is crucial to have people on staff that really understand the mechanical technology of cars and can evaluate the condition of a car on the spot. These are the people who go out to see a car when they get a call and evaluate whether it is worth taking possession of the car for the agency. Any cars that cannot be donated to families (such as luxury vehicles) are sold at auction and the proceeds go back into the organization.

Breakout Session: Family Strengthening

Mr. Doug Burnham from the Drug Endangered Child Training Network at the University of Kentucky discussed the objectives of the Network he works for and who they serve. He discussed who drug endangered children are in terms of physical, cognitive, emotional, and behavioral characteristics. He also discussed the ways that one should respond to endangered children. The characteristics of households, where substance abuse is a problem, were also discussed as well as how to respond to an individual with a substance abuse problem. Lastly, Mr. Burnham mentioned some key ideas to consider when building a community network that addresses drug endangered children.

Identifying drug endangered children early is important because measures can be taken to alleviate future problems. Correct identification of these children can be preventative. Anyone working with families benefits from understanding who drug endangered children may be and how to identify and respond to them. Mr. Burnham also mentioned that TANF agencies may find it helpful to develop good relationships with child protective services, Head Start programs, and other child-focused social services.

Mr. Roger Fisher spoke about the services available at the WSOS Community Action Commission in Ohio and the elements needed to implement similar services and programs. The basics of success for the agency included clearly identifying funding sources and a specific target population, establishing procedures and leadership, a well-trained professional staff, communication among the staff, a web of contacts, and specific goals. First and foremost, to receive funding, thorough grant writing is essential. WSOS Community Action Commission provides a variety of services which include pre-employment, money management, resume writing, interview skills, occupational skills training, and case management.



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WSOS also provides training on traditional soft skills such as job searching, networking, how to use one stop services, filling out applications, resume writing, interviewing skills, dressing for success, and writing thank you letters. The training also provides the essential tools needed for retaining a job such as work ethics, listening skills, attitudinal skills, punctuality and attendance, hidden rules, and safety skills. Mr. Fisher also discussed the importance of bringing employers to the table to discuss incentives for their participation in hiring and working with TANF participants. WSOS provides incentives to employers such as on the job training, internships, job shadowing, job coaching, monitoring, and a trained workforce. Some strategies for getting employers to buy-in and contract with the agency, include visiting employers to give presentations about the benefits of hiring TANF participants, introducing participants to employers, and overseeing participants as they prepare for an interview as well as when they are hired. When working with employers, WSOS monitors job performance and shows the employers that they care about the success of their participants. The case manager makes frequent phone calls to the client and their employer to follow the participant's progress.

Mr. Fisher lastly discussed the most pressing challenges in his area and to his organization. Some of these challenges were similar to the concerns presented by other sites/organizations represented at the academy. They included budget issues, time limitations of TANF, factory and plant closings, transportation, and having to abide by the strict restrictions of TANF and work participation rates.

Breakout Session: Addressing Education, Training, and Workforce Development Needs in Rural Areas

Ms. Lou Ann Hardgrave from the Oklahoma Department of Career and Technology Education (ODCTE) spoke about her program and how it has been successful at promoting education and training for TANF participants. The Oklahoma Department of Human Services (OKDHS) and ODCTE partnered together to fund 20 TANF programs across the state at technology center campuses. When TANF participants enter the program, they are first given certain career assessments and then an education plan is developed. An OKDHS caseworker and other community partners including technology centers, two-year colleges, workforce center representatives, and community based organizations are available to the TANF participants. Participants take part in vocational education, job search and job readiness, work-site learning, community service, education tied to specific employment, and/or job skills training tied to employment depending on their specific needs. Supportive services are also provided for the TANF participants. ODCTE and OKDHS invest about \$3.9 million in this initiative per year and 1,300 TANF participants are served, although the number has been recently dropping. The program's completion target is 80 percent and the wages their participants earn are \$8 or more an hour.

Ms. Shauna King-Simms spoke about the TANF funded Ready-to-Work program which is operated within the Kentucky Community and Technical College System. The program is a \$4.4 million TANF contract that helps support TANF participants in "work study." The Ready-to-Work



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(RTW) coordinators support students through counseling, mentoring, advocacy, and referring them to paid and unpaid work experience. For online classes that students attend, the program recently spent \$15,000 on software that tracks mouse clicks so students can count these courses toward the TANF requirements. Tuition is not directly paid for by the program. The RTW program serves about 94 percent females with an average age of 28 years. The program is also more successful in rural areas. They serve about 2,500 students per year and 98 percent of these students met the TANF work requirements.

Ms. Shawndus Gregory from Phillips Community College, Arkansas, presented on the Arkansas Career Pathways program which has 25 sites throughout the state of Arkansas. It started as a pilot project in 2003 by the National Governors Association and was expanded in 2005 to two year community colleges. The program is funded through TANF and works with community colleges to offer GED classes, career readiness certificates, job club classes, and other services. When participants come to the program they take a Web-based assessment to determine their skills and interests and are then placed into various classes or training activities. Ms. Gregory mentioned that a key to the program's success has been constant contact, communication, and motivation from case managers to their TANF participants.

The Career Pathways program provides certificates in computer operations, the automotive industry, the healthcare industry, welding, office administration, and industrial maintenance. All trainings and certificates are offered to TANF participants at no charge.

Breakout Session: Addressing Health Needs in Rural Areas

Ms. Kathleen Miller of the Rural Policy Research Institute (RUPRI) discussed the nuances of rural populations. In general, rural populations earn less, are older, experience higher poverty rates than their urban counterparts, and experience more persistent poverty. She noted that high gas prices have an impact on health care in rural areas. Many people in rural counties have a problem paying for gas and in addition, hospitals and other health care facilities are far away. Rural areas also have fewer doctors with less convenient hours. Specialists are very hard to find and there are a significant shortage of mental health services in rural areas. Ms. Miller demonstrated that there is a need to invest more in rural health infrastructure and train the rural healthcare workforce.

Ms. Anna Huff from the Mid-Delta Community Consortium, Arkansas, discussed her organization and the various partners, funding sources, and programs that are part of the Consortium. She stressed "community based" solutions to problems and used the example of Rural Health Networks which is a multi-county health network. People in the community are experts about their community and Ms. Huff urged participants to tap into the talent and expertise of local people. It is important to identify people that can be a link between the community members and medical healthcare providers. She also suggested utilizing AmeriCorps volunteers as added resources.



Breakouts Session #3: Substance Abuse and Domestic Violence

This breakout session was structured as a facilitated discussion amongst the speaker, Dr. Geni Cowan and participants. Dr. Cowan began by framing the discussion as viewing TANF as the funding agency to address some of the issues that arise within the substance abuse and domestic violence.

Alcohol and Drug Abuse in Rural Communities

Dr. Cowan highlighted some common challenges among agencies dealing with substance abuse: limited resources, the effectiveness of 12 Step programs and an inability for families to address these issues on their own. In non-urban communities, youth ages twelve to seventeen reported higher drug use than their urban counterparts and young adults ages eighteen to twenty report a lower rate of use than their urban counterparts. Young adults in the rural areas use methamphetamines (meth) at a rate nearly twice that of young urban adults. In rural communities, African Americans report the lowest rates of substance abuse and Native Americans report the highest.

American Indians and Alcohol Abuse

The consequences of alcohol abuse by Native Americans include liver disease, fatal automobile accidents, suicide, and homicide. These consequences are all more prevalent in Native communities than in mainstream society. Some of the causes of alcohol abuse in Indian Country are high unemployment rates, low school completion rates, and greater prevalence of life stressors. These life stressors put a lot of strain on families and stress predisposes people to alcohol abuse and hopelessness. In addition, experiences such as boarding schools in which severe punishments are handed out with the intent to eliminate Indian culture, can cause loss of culture which is detrimental to the general well-being of a person.

Methamphetamine Addiction

Methamphetamine addiction is a growing phenomenon in the rural United States. Treatment for meth includes drug education, family and group therapies, self-help groups, and medication. Dr. Cowan noted that in her experience, only medication has shown any hope against meth addiction. Most people addicted to meth can not self-motivate and do not recover. It is one of the deadliest addictions and often it takes only one time of using to become addicted. Meth is easier to make in rural areas where there is further distance between structures and the smell can not be identified as easily. People that make it are unlikely to be users. Meth is the one drug that if the parent is using or making it, children in that home or in contact with that home or location are being harmed since it very easily enters into a child's bloodstream when children ingest the fumes.

In order to prevent meth use in their areas, communities need to establish communication, create clear rules and enforce them, have positive role models within the community, teach



children to choose friends wisely, monitor children’s activities, be knowledgeable about meth and its risks and establish non-use as a community norm. Dr. Cowan suggested providing training to TANF participants to facilitate 12 step programs as a means of treatment and work for participants. She also cautioned that positive tests for drug and alcohol at the first TANF assessment do not necessarily mean the participant is addicted. The participant may have made poor decisions the night before the appointment but may not have an ongoing, habitual problem with drugs or alcohol. Dr. Cowan suggested some additional resources that can be helpful. These include the following Web sites:

- White Bison: www.whitebison.org
- Carsey Institute Reports: www.carseyinstitute.unh.edu
- Rural Assistance Center: www.raconline.org

Domestic Violence in Rural Communities

Dr. Cowan began with general information about domestic violence in the United States. Every 15 seconds a woman is battered in the U.S. Battering is the use of violence and other forms of abuse to establish control and power in the relationship. Child custody and other litigation such as divorce often exacerbate the violence as the batterer attempts to maintain control. As a result, separated women are three times more likely than already divorced women and twenty five times more likely than women living with their husbands to be battered. Stress and drug and alcohol abuse do not cause abuse and a woman does not provoke abuse from her partner. Women are 75 percent more likely to be murdered after they leave the relationship than while still involved in it.

In rural communities, the closeness and culture make it more difficult for some women to seek help. Rural women are more isolated and may have difficulty accessing health care, transportation, and other needed resources. In addition, offender treatment options are limited in rural communities. Up to 36 percent of TANF participants report an incident of serious domestic violence, about half of which lead to cases of depression. Domestic violence is relatively new in Tribal communities; historically Tribe members would have been banished for committing acts of domestic violence. Some factors that have contributed to the rise of domestic violence in Tribal communities include: relocation, alcohol, boarding schools, loss of traditional lifestyles and culture, and the stress of poverty. People often do not seek help in Tribal communities because of a lack of resources for basic living, lack of confidentiality, perceptions of spirituality which may lead some women to stay in the relationship, and an inability to trust mainstream service providers.

Some risk factors that a person may be a victim of domestic violence or may become one in their future include: intergenerational violence, a history of battering, income, education and background, substance abuse, and psychological traits such as, low self-esteem. “Red flag” behaviors that could indicate that someone is abusive include: possessiveness, verbal abuse, threatening statements, property destruction, use of force during a conflict, controlling their partner, and a rapid relationship commitment.



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In a TANF setting, signs that caseworkers can look for include: a partner accompanying the participant to caseworker meetings to prevent them from disclosing the abuse; sabotaging welfare-to-work requirements; intimidating case managers; calling the TANF office about the participant to find out confidential information or accuse the participant of fraud; stalking at the TANF office or job placement; and or coercing the participant to lie about resources or commit fraud in some way. It is important that for ensuring safety both the TANF worker and the participant are careful of confrontation, take threats seriously, use the buddy system, have control doors in place, and prevent disclosure in front of the perpetrator.

Rural Area Round Robin

The round robin activity was designed so that teams would have an opportunity to network with other teams. Each team assigned a member to stay in their suite while other team members circulated to the other team suites to meet with the teams they wanted to speak with. Teams were able to ask questions, make connections, and share similar challenges and successes with each other. This time also helped teams identify any other sites that they may find helpful to visit through their technical assistance plans.

Rural Poverty in America

Dr. Bruce Weber, Professor of Agricultural and Resource Economics at Oregon State University spoke to participants about the “big picture” of rural poverty in the United States. Dr. Weber first spoke about the geography of poverty. He noted that most teams at the Academy come from areas with the highest estimated percent of a county population that is living in poverty. In remote rural counties, 1 out of 5 people will be persistently poor, which gives certain counties the designation of “persistent poverty counties”. Of all the public benefits, (also called the social safety net), Medicaid is the largest program and the most used by those in poverty. Most poverty in rural areas is working poverty and poverty elimination policies are increasingly related to work.

Dr. Weber then explained policies that have been shown to assist poverty reduction efforts in rural areas. Women enter the workforce more readily when supports are available and this has been shown to be one of the greatest ways to reduce rural poverty. Education and training have less of an effect on reducing poverty in rural areas since there need to be jobs present related to the education and training that people receive. Rural areas have also been shown to have shorter spells of child care subsidy receipt as there are fewer resources for child care in these areas and hardly any resources for non-standard work schedules. Transportation is a key problem in rural areas and there have been positive pilot programs such as one in Vermont which had higher exit rates and more monthly earned income than non-pilot TANF participants.

After his presentation, Dr. Weber posed the question to the audience: how could rural communities “market” their TANF population as a community asset? West Virginia noted that many TANF agencies strive to look at the individuals and their needs instead of the caseload as



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an entity so it may be difficult to change the current thinking. It was also noted that it is tough to sell TANF participants as qualified and reliable employees. Ms. Shauna King-Simms noted that education is the key to making TANF participants a community asset.

Representatives from North Dakota mentioned that they partner with the workforce development agency to survey and identify the five emerging labor fields in their community and then connect TANF participants to these fields. Ms. Lou Ann Hargrave raised the issue of getting the qualified TANF participant to the workplace. Rural areas often do not have enough demand and draw for employers and it is difficult to get a TANF participant to relocate to where the jobs are located. Representatives from Kansas noted that they have a program called Pixes in which a contractor works with participants to develop needed work skills. The program offers transportation by picking up TANF participants at their homes, taking them to job sites, and dropping off their children at their child care site. The TANF participants work with customers at the workplace and with other TANF participants who serves as mentors.

Reporting Out and Synthesis

During this session, groups with similar technical assistance plan objectives and focus areas met together to discuss goals and implementation plans. Groups were arranged according to five topical areas: transportation, program operations and system efficiency, economic and community development partnerships, special populations, and workforce participation rates and full engagement. Groups convened for 20 minutes to discuss their goals and similarities between their plans. After this discussion period, group representatives reported their findings to the entire Rural Academy audience.

Representatives from Florida, Maine, and Texas met to discuss transportation as the focus for their technical assistance plans. Teams from North Dakota and Pennsylvania reported on how their technical assistance plans would address the issues of program operations and system efficiency. Both teams had technical assistance plans which sought to integrate their information technology departments, local workforce boards, and other similar stakeholders. As part of their plans, both state teams agreed on creating a follow-up plan and scheduling a Webinar to keep group momentum moving forward.

The White Mountain Apache Tribal TANF program and Arkansas teams met to review their technical assistance plans around supporting economic and community development partnerships. Both state teams were surprised that despite one group being a tribal entity and the other a state organization, each had a similar technical assistance plan. The initial plan for each team was to convene a group of stakeholders to identify the significant issues around economic and community development. This core group of stakeholders will enter the wider community to engage additional individuals and began laying the groundwork for additional partnerships with other TANF serving organizations. Both groups identified the need for having a facilitator provide a neutral voice during the first convening of stakeholders. Each state also wished to include a promising practice site visit as part of their plan.



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Paired in the group focusing on serving special populations, the teams from Hoopa Valley Tribal TANF program and New Mexico reported out on the critical importance for serving participants using an “individualized” approach. Part of this approach would involve collaborative efforts with other TANF serving agencies such as GED providers. Each state’s plan also included components that would help direct and coordinate staff in the same direction when serving TANF participants with special needs (e.g. disabled clients). Specific steps in each state’s technical assistance plan included site visits and conference calls with promising practice sites in order to enhance their own programs. Both groups stated their intention on following up with Business Access, LLC., and exploring distance learning as an option in their communities. Mr. Beamon of Business Access, LLC., responded to their interest by informing the entire audience on the availability of USDA grants and other financial supports for groups that could provide funding to rural communities.

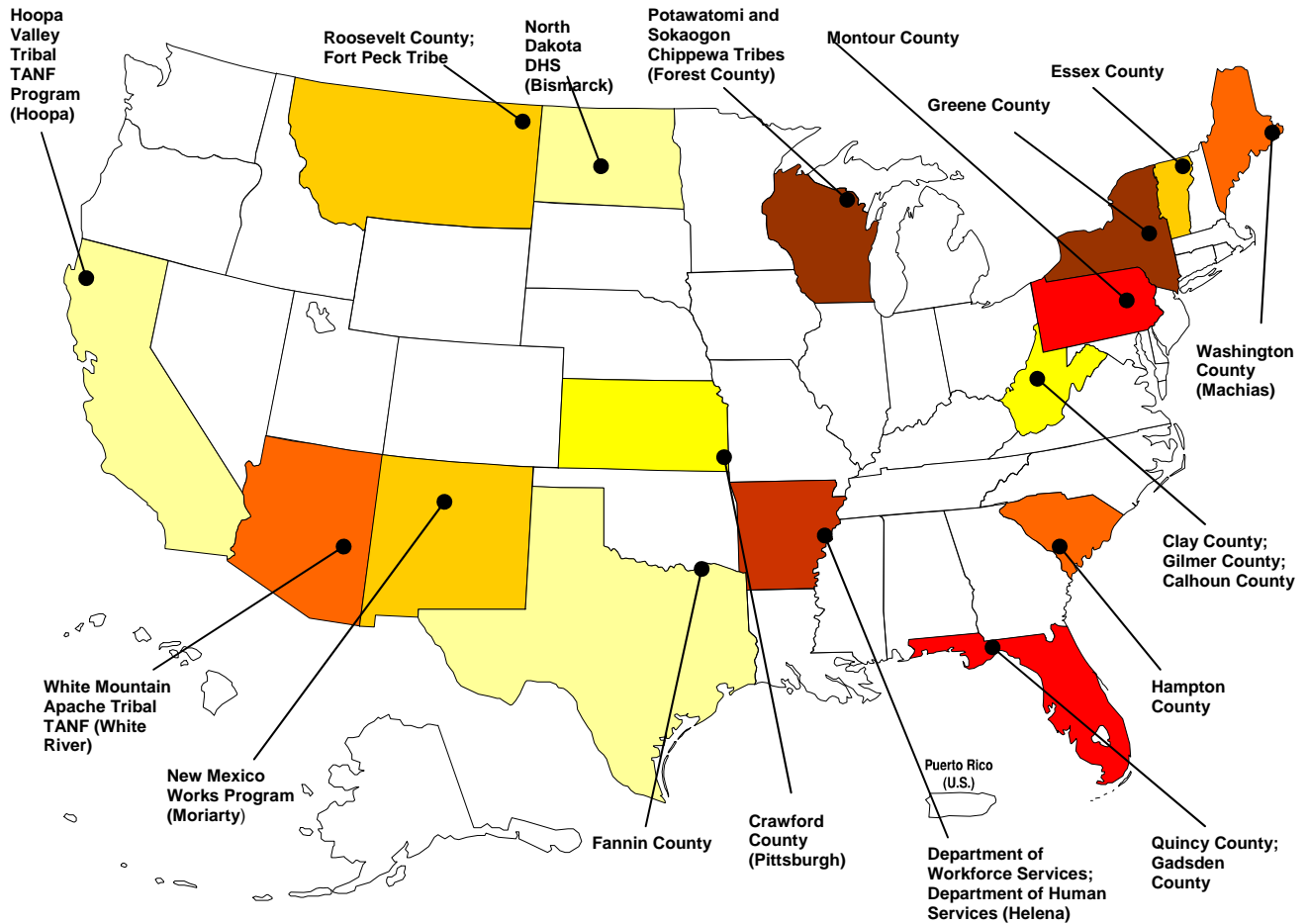
A total of seven states were placed into three separate groups to discuss the issues of full engagement and work participation rates. West Virginia and Wisconsin were the first states to report out on their findings. Both groups had plans which emphasized engaging relevant stakeholders around better data sharing as a way to improve client service. They also agreed that in order for TANF participants to achieve higher levels of self-sufficiency, case managers will need better tools and information. The second group to meet on full engagement and work participation rates was represented by Montana, New York, and West Virginia. These state teams reported that they were all looking at more hands-on approaches for training and educating staff members. They all agreed on the importance of achieving higher levels of staff and stakeholder buy-in in order to have more effective and sustainable programs. As part of their technical assistance plans, all three teams were interested in learning about promising staff and client assessment models.

Representatives from Kansas and South Carolina were the final group to present. Both groups intended on improving the transportation and child care options available to their participants as ways to achieve higher work participation rates. Concerning their technical assistance requests, grant writing assistance and opportunities to visit promising practice sites were identified as critical supports needed. Mr. Peterson closed the session by congratulating the group for expanding partnerships across the board, and investigating new strategies and leveraging their resources.

Closing

In closing, Ms. Washington-Thomas thanked Mr. Peterson and the entire ICF staff for helping to create a very successful Rural Academy. She informed the team members from the rural sites that the Initiative would continue over the next twelve months. OFA will be reviewing the site’s profiles and technical assistance plans in order to determine how best to meet the resource and logistical needs of the sites. Ms. Washington-Thomas closed by thanking sites for their commitment to meeting the Federal work participation rate requirements, as well as for their dedication to supporting low-income families on their paths to self-sufficiency.

Appendix A: Map of Rural Communities Initiative Targeted Technical Assistance Sites





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Appendix B: Agenda

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 2, 2008

5:00 – 7:30 PM **PRE-REGISTRATION (MAIN STREET GRILLE FOYER)**

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 3, 2008

8:00 – 8:30 AM **REGISTRATION (BALLROOM FOYER)**

8:30 – 9:30 AM **WELCOME AND OPENING REMARKS (BALLROOM D/E)**

Speakers: **Gary Allen**, Region VII, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
 Janel Luck, Director, Family Support Division, Department of Social Services, Missouri
 Bobbi Mariani, Director, Economic Development and Support Division, State of Kansas Department of Social and Rehabilitation Services, Kansas

OVERVIEW OF THE RURAL COMMUNITIES INITIATIVE

Speakers: **James Butler**, Federal Project Officer, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Office of Family Assistance
 Lisa Washington-Thomas, Technical Assistance Branch Chief, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Office of Family Assistance

9:30 – 11:00 AM **PLENARY SESSION: RURAL AREA INTRODUCTIONS (BALLROOM D/E)**
(BREAK INCLUDED)

Participants at this Academy represent 16 rural areas with varied and unique experiences. There are also rural specialists, speakers, and other rural areas represented at this Academy that may be tapped into to share and learn valuable lessons. After an initial icebreaker exercise, teams, rural specialists, speakers, etc., will participate in a team building exercise and discuss their priorities for things to learn and things to teach during the Academy.

Speakers: **Rural Area Team Representatives**

Moderator: **Kent Peterson, ICF International**



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11:00 – NOON

ACADEMY 101 (BALLROOM D/E)

Participants will be provided with an overview of the Academy model including plenary sessions, breakout sessions and team times. Participants will learn more about the outcomes of the Academy, the Initiative, and be provided with an overview of the Individualized Technical Assistance Plans. Content faculty will also provide a brief introduction and overview of their background and programs. Teams will also meet their facilitators during this session.

Speakers: **Jeanette Hercik**, Vice President, ICF International
Kent Peterson, ICF International
Content Faculty

NOON – 1:30 PM

LUNCH ON YOUR OWN (SEE RESTAURANT LIST IN BINDER)

1:30 – 2:30 PM

TEAM TIME: ROAD MAPPING (TEAM SUITES)

Teams will convene in their team suites to clarify any questions they may have and strategize their team assignments for the Academy. This includes mapping what breakout sessions each team member will attend and report back on. Participants will also work with their facilitator to discuss and select rural content faculty to work one-on-one with during their team times on Thursday.

2:30 -2:45 PM

BREAK AND TRANSITION

2:45 – 4:00 PM

BREAKOUT SESSIONS

Breakout Session #1: Rural America and 21st Century Economic Development (Seville I)

In this breakout session, the context for rural economic development and the need for workforce development, education, and training will be discussed. Innovative solutions to addressing the particular needs of rural areas will be highlighted and shared.

Speakers: **Cynthia M. Duncan**, Carsey Institute, University of New Hampshire
Marv Pichla, Executive Director, Thumb Area Michigan Works! Growing to Work Enterprise, Michigan
Trina Gress, Chief Operations Officer, Career Options, North Dakota

Moderator: **James Butler**, Federal Project Officer, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Office of Family Assistance



2:45 – 4:00 PM

BREAKOUT SESSIONS (CONTINUED)

Breakout Session #2: Providing Innovative Work Supports to Rural TANF Recipients
(Seville II)

In this breakout session, the context for providing essential work supports to rural TANF recipients will be highlighted and shared.

Speakers: **Pankaj Bhanot**, Acting Division Administrator for the Benefit, Employment, and Support Services Division of the State of Hawaii Department of Human Services
Daylan Beamon, Business Access LLC.
Almetra Franklin, CEO, St. Mary Community Action Head Start, Inc.
Road Home Program, Louisiana

Moderator: **Kathleen Miller**, Rural Policy Research Institute

Breakout Session #3: Connecting Tribal Populations in Rural Areas to Work
(Westport)

In this breakout session, the context for connecting tribal populations to work in rural areas will be shared and highlighted.

Speakers: **Teresa Wall-McDonald**, Development Director, Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes, Montana
Dr. Geni Cowan and Julie Gondry, The Center for Human Services, University of California at Davis Extension, California
Eddie Brown, Professor and Director, Arizona State University

Moderator: **Nicole Thompson**, Mississippi State University, Mississippi

4:00 – 4:15 PM

BREAK

4:15 - 5:30 PM

BREAKOUT SESSIONS

Breakout Session #1: Using Innovative Technologies in Rural Areas (Seville I)

In this breakout session, participants will engage in dialogue about rural economic development and the need for workforce development, education, and training and explore innovative solutions to address the particular needs in rural areas.

Speakers: **Jackie Savage**, President, Connect Inc., North Carolina
Denise Parker, Program Manager, Department of Children and Families, ACCESS Florida, Florida

Moderator: **Judy Kennedy**, TANF Program Manager, State of Kansas Department of Social and Rehabilitation Services, Kansas



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4:15 - 5:30 PM

BREAKOUT SESSIONS (CONTINUED)

Breakout Session #2: Transportation Solutions in Rural Areas for TANF Clients (Seville II)

In this breakout session, the context for providing solutions to transportation barriers in rural TANF areas will be highlighted and shared.

Speakers: **Barbara Bayes**, Executive Director, The Good News Mountaineer Garage, West Virginia
Margaret Morton, Executive Director, Sylacauga Alliance for Family Enhancement, Alabama

Moderator: **James Butler**, Federal Project Officer, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Office of Family Assistance

Breakout Session #3: Family Strengthening (Westport)

In this session, presenters will share strategies and programs that enhance family self-sufficiency and stability including addressing the needs of drug endangered children and families in rural areas, as well as providing valuable and innovative employment and training programs and supports.

Speakers: **Roger Fisher**, Employment and Training Coordinator, WSOS Community Action Commission, Ohio
Doug Burnham, University of Kentucky, Drug Endangered Children's Network, Kentucky

Moderator: **Bruce Weber**, Professor of Agricultural and Resource Economics, Oregon State University, Oregon

5:30 – 6:30 PM

CLUSTER SESSION NETWORKING



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THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 4, 2008

8:00 – 9:30 AM

Rural Area Round Robin (Team Suites)

This time will allow Rural Area Teams the opportunity to engage in peer-to-peer learning, question and answer, and share dialogue around promising strategies, tools, and resources used in delivering TANF services to clients specific to your rural area. One member from each team will staff the team meeting room while the other team members will rotate among the various team meeting rooms during this time. The purpose of this session is to foster the formation of new partnerships and collaborations, while creating peer-to-peer networks. Additionally, rural speakers and presenters will circulate amongst the teams to provide input, feedback, and facilitate conversations.

9:30 – 9:45 AM

BREAK AND TRANSITION

9:45 – 10:30

RURAL POVERTY IN AMERICA (BALLROOM D/E)

This session will set the context and overall picture of rural poverty in America. The presenters will discuss challenge of intergenerational poverty, the context, and background on the economic and social challenges that rural areas face. Presenters will additionally discuss snapshots of success in rural areas facing the challenges of poverty, and the importance of working with peers, colleagues, and all stakeholders to generate new strategies and programs that will provide rural areas with improved programs, resources, and tools.

Speakers: **Cynthia M. Duncan**, Carsey Institute, University of New Hampshire
Bruce Weber, Professor of Agricultural and Resource Economics, Oregon State University

10:30–NOON

TEAM TIME (Team Suites)

During this session, Academy participants will meet as a team and have the opportunity to meet one-on-one with speakers and presenters on various topical issues. Facilitators will also take this time to take teams through an action planning process that will begin the stages for each team to build their own Individualized Technical Assistance Plan.

NOON – 1:15 PM

LUNCH ON YOUR OWN (SEE RESTAURANT LIST IN BINDER)

1:15 – 2:45 PM

TEAM TIME (Team Suites)

During this session, Academy participants will continue to meet as a team and have the opportunity to meet one-on-one with additional speakers and presenters on various topical issues. Facilitators will also take teams through an action planning process that will begin to build each team's Individualized Technical Assistance Plan.

2:45 – 3:00 PM

BREAK



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3:00 – 4:30 PM

BREAKOUT SESSIONS

Breakout Session #1: Addressing Education, Training, and Workforce Development Needs in Rural Areas (Salon G)

In this breakout session, the context for continued education, training, and collaboration will be discussed. Innovative solutions to addressing the needs of rural areas will be highlighted.

Speakers: **Lou Ann Hargrave**, Work Prep, Oklahoma
Shauna King-Simms, Director, Transitional Programs, Kentucky Community College and Technical System, Kentucky
Shawndus Gregory, Community Outreach Coordinator, Career Pathways, Phillips County Community College University of Arkansas

Moderator: **Marv Pichla**, Executive Director, Thumb Area Michigan Works! Growing to Work Enterprise, Michigan

Breakout Session #2: Addressing Health Needs in Rural Areas (Seville II)

In this breakout session, presenters will provide an overview of the health issues and challenges that rural areas are facing, including statistics and trends. Presenters will also provide examples of how rural communities across multiple counties are working together to address rural health needs by providing specialized quality assistance, training, and resources to rural communities.

Speakers: **Anna M. Huff**, Director, Mid-Delta Community Consortium, Arkansas
Kathleen Miller, Rural Policy Research Institute, Missouri

Moderator: **Nicole Thompson**, Mississippi State University

3:00 – 4:30 PM

BREAKOUT SESSIONS (CONTINUED)

Breakout Session #3: Substance Abuse and Domestic Violence (Seville I)

In this breakout session, the context for substance abuse and domestic violence in rural areas will be shared and highlighted.

Speakers: **Dr. Geni Cowan and Julie Gondry**, The Center for Human Services, University of California at Davis Extension

Moderator: **Eddie Brown**, Professor and Director, Arizona State University

4:30 - 6:00 PM

OPTIONAL TEAM TIMES (ASSIGNMENTS: FINAL PREPARATIONS FOR REPORT OUT)



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FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 5, 2008

7:30 – 9:00 AM

OPTIONAL TEAM TIMES (ASSIGNMENTS: FINAL PREPARATIONS FOR REPORT OUT)

9:00 – 11:00 AM

MAINTAINING THE MOMENTUM: TEAM TIME REPORT-OUT (BALLROOM D/E)

During this time, each rural team will provide a report out on the information they are taking away from the Academy including next steps, lessons learned, and their overall objectives for technical assistance from the Rural Communities Initiative.

Speakers: **Rural Area Team Representatives**

Moderators: **Jeanette Hercik**, Vice President, ICF International
Kent Peterson, ICF International

11:00 – 11:30 AM

NEXT STEPS: RURAL INITIATIVE (BALLROOM D/E)

During this session, the participants will be engaged in a discussion on plans for the year and rest of initiative.

Speakers: **James Butler**, Federal Project Officer, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Office of Family Assistance
Louisa Fuller, Rural Initiative Project Manager, ICF International

11:30 – NOON

CLOSING REMARKS AND ADJOURNMENT (BALLROOM D/E)

Speakers: **Lisa Washington-Thomas**, Technical Assistance Branch Chief, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Office of Family Assistance



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