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# **URBAN PARTNERSHIPS FOR WELFARE REFORM – ACADEMY III**

# 1. BACKGROUND

The Administration for Children and Families' (ACF) Office of Family Assistance (OFA) designed the Urban Partnerships for Welfare Reform Initiative as a means of fostering collaboration to improve administration and the delivery of services to TANF families. These included reaching for a level of engagement that would result in increased movement of families to self-sufficiency. The project grew from an understanding that TANF families living in urban areas face a number of unique challenges. Cities have different types of workers, jobs, and attitudes about work and welfare. Given that families on welfare are increasingly concentrated in urban areas, it is vital to gain a better understanding of how to design and implement successful programs in the places where welfare families live. Effective programs must address challenges that converge for recipients in urban areas. They include:

- **Engagement**—People in urban areas often endure low levels of expectations and engagement. A vast amount of welfare recipients are exempted from work requirements causing work engagement programs to be viewed as weak and or become nonexistent. Urban areas who have developed good engagement tracking systems and enforce high levels of engagement, have strong belief in their clients assets which ultimately move them towards work and self sufficiency.
- **Location of Jobs**—There is a spatial mismatch between where workers live, and where jobs are located. Low-income workers often have barriers to commuting from home to work (Pugh, 1998). Welfare recipients often live great distances from new low-skill job opportunities. A majority of recently filled jobs for less skilled workers are located in the suburbs of metropolitan areas, while most low-income persons reside in the central/urban cities (The Brookings Institution, Center on Urban & Metropolitan Policy, 2001).
- **Transportation**—Inner city residents' ability to access low-skill jobs depends heavily on the location of jobs as well as private car ownership and the availability of local public transit in these areas. Because many available jobs have relocated to the outlying suburban areas, where they generally are not accessible by public transit, these jobs are not viable options for TANF recipients living in central/urban cities.
- **Housing**—It has become increasingly difficult to find affordable housing that does not consume excessive portions of family income. In 1999, approximately 5 million households with incomes below 50 percent of the local area median income, paid more than half of their income toward housing or lived in severely substandard housing (HUD, 2001). These low-income families are particularly vulnerable to economic downturns.
- **Concentrated Poverty**—Urban areas with higher levels of concentrated poverty tend to have higher concentrations of the State welfare caseload. Concentrated poverty is

associated with illiteracy, chronic unemployment, substance abuse, school dropout, and teenage pregnancy and out-of-wedlock births (The Brookings Institution, Center on Urban & Metropolitan Policy, 1999). People in these neighborhoods often face barriers of poor schools, weak job information networks, and scarce employment opportunities (The Brookings Institution, Center on Urban & Metropolitan Policy, 2000).

Despite these challenges, major progress has been made in urban areas to successfully move large numbers of welfare recipients to self-sufficiency. Former recipients are now successfully attached to the labor market resulting in significantly lower welfare case loads and the decline in child poverty (The Manhattan Institute, Center for Civic Innovation, *Child Poverty and Welfare Reform: Stay the Course*, December 2004).

It is important that welfare reform in the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century plays a continuing role in further reducing poverty of single headed households, child poverty rates, and other associated social concerns. This is accomplished through effective work and related engagement strategies by states as proposed in TANF Reauthorization.

Under contract with Caliber Associates, Inc., ACF has hosted three Academies, made several on-site technical assistance visits directly to the cities, and provided telephone and Webbased TA. The three-day Academy described in this report is the third Academy hosted by the Urban Partnerships Initiative. This third Academy welcomed two new cities (Boston and New Orleans) to its membership and built on the previous focus of collaboration and service improvement to provide new strategies for full engagement and preparation for TANF Reauthorization. The Academy provided a forum for peers to share information about their experiences, their promising practices, and their program models used in supporting full engagement for TANF families. Like its predecessors, the third Academy stressed that peer-topeer learning is vital to success, and that every city had both something to teach and something to learn. The Academy was held March 8-11, 2005 in St. Louis, Missouri.

The next section of this report highlights the main sessions of the Academy program, focusing on key points and lessons learned.

# 2. ACADEMY SESSIONS

This report focuses on the critical content and peer learning generated at the third Academy. Specific agenda sessions are highlighted below. Academy participants were tasked to:

Be purposeful about connecting with other people in attendance by seeking and learning from each other

Be extremely clear and concise with all points and presentations

Focus on details of management approaches and specifics of content and implementation of programs instead of talking in broad generalizations.

The icebreaker session guided participants through an exercise where each city identified the most important expertise that someone can learn from them, and the most important topic area that they'd like to learn about from another city at the Academy. Answers from the ten cities' participation in the icebreaker are presented in the following chart:

Team Name	Most Important Expertise to Offer	Most Important Expertise to Learn from Others
Atlanta	A team approach to problem solving and data collection	Special approaches for child-only cases
Baltimore	How to jumpstart a dormant program	How to reach universal engagement, especially TANF recipients in their third trimester, and those who are disabled but not ready for SSI
Boston	Motivating staff to implement change and getting front-line buy-in	Universal engagement, especially with those clients that were exempted until now
Dallas/Ft. Worth	Collaborating with multiple community partners	Rapid engagement of the client and working with employers
Detroit	State and local partnerships	Establishing family relationships
Minneapolis	Success in the immigration service model	Increasing Federal countables
New Orleans	Upfront engagement	Innovative strategies to raise participation rates
Oakland	Application of technology in social services	How to implement early engagement of TANF clients
Seattle	Partnerships and collaboration between State and local agencies	Achieving full engagement and participation rates with diminishing resources
St. Louis	Collaboration and contract management	Strengthening sanction policies

# 2.1 Ten Cities TANF Engagement

This session of the Stakeholders Meeting featured a panel with Al Fleming, Program Specialist from the Office of Family Assistance (OFA), and Jason Turner and Paul Saeman, both Consultants with Turner Government Operations. Prior to the Stakeholders Meeting in St. Louis, consultants from Turner Government Operations conducted joint site visits with Federal OFA staff to all ten Urban Partnerships cities. The site visits were conducted to gather relevant information about the many challenges cities are facing in serving their TANF customers. These site visits informed the meeting by revealing the particular challenges cities are facing in serving their TANF caseloads. Examples of the types of customers cities are working to serve include pregnant mothers, customers with disabilities, long-term customers, and new applicants. In addition to providing insight about characteristics of the caseload, these site visits also assessed program effectiveness and addressed issues related to full engagement.

Panel members discussed how universal engagement and work is helpful for all families and how creative and innovative strategies for achieving full engagement benefit a wide variety of stakeholders. Full engagement ensures that every TANF customer has a plan for a healthy transition from welfare to self-sufficiency. The panel also emphasized that universal engagement, when promoted in conjunction with comprehensive case management, helps TANF customers to develop the tools needed to maintain long-term self-sufficiency.

Jason Turner specifically addressed a number of key lessons learned from his visits to the cities. These lessons include:

- **Preparation for full engagement -** The majority of the ten cities are preparing for full engagement in many ways and putting themselves in a position to meet all of the TANF objectives.
- **External constraints are not unique -** Most cities tend to cite external constraints as a unique problem, but it is clear that all cities are facing difficult external constraints such as budget limitations and staffing problems.
- All cities have something to offer the others All ten cities are implementing interesting, innovative, and effective practices, which further demonstrate that each city has something unique to offer. The cities have strong leadership, initiative, imagination, and a solid mission-focus.
- **Unified and mission-focused leadership -** Turf battles in the process of partnership and collaboration have occurred in every city, although the leadership within the cities are unified around the mission to support low-income families.
- **The need for more immediate engagement -** Several cities are starting the discussion of work participation and moving from welfare to work after welfare payments have begun.
- **Missed opportunities as the result of exemptions -** Many cities are exempting up to 30-50 percent of participants who are potentially eligible to be counted towards the work participation rate.
- Lengthy sanction and re-engagement processes Many cities have cumbersome processes for sanctions, which may leave participants unengaged for weeks or months. Other cities permit extended periods of non-engagement between activities or after drop-outs.

The need for supplemental work activity - Several cities are almost exclusively using training, education, and job search, which must be supplemented with work activity.

Touching on immediate engagement, diversion, the benefit of accountability systems, and the need to identify areas of opportunity. Mr. Turner concluded his presentation by enumerating a variety of issues for managers that can move programs closer to full engagement. These points include:

Leadership commitment to change

Base actions on long-term interest of TANF families

Change multiple areas simultaneously

Phase-in new requirements

Use opportunities to pilot new approaches and engage staff

Develop strategic approaches for continuous improvement using performance management.

Following Mr. Turner's remarks, Mr. Paul Saeman, also of Turner Government Operations, concluded the panel by outlining the engagement strategies around which the Academy was organized. Each strategy either directly or indirectly engages TANF customers and works toward an increase in a particular city's participation rate.

**Diversion Strategies -** including immediate engagement at the time of application and moving many to work.

**Saturation Engagement -** requires constant attention from management and new strategies for groups that have been exempt until now (e.g., disabled).

**Sanction Policies and Practices -** devising new ways to re-engage TANF customers who have failed to meet their work requirements and been subject to sanction.

**Work Experience/Community Service/Wage Subsidy -** can be used effectively in combination with job training and substance abuse treatment and often involves building relationships with employers.

**Faith-and Community-based Initiatives -** utilizing community-based resources can bring new partners to the table and leverage more existing resources.

**Operations and Management** - the use of technology, such as web-based tools for tracking and monitoring, frees up more resources for case management and focusing on the work participation rate.

**Performance Measurement** – monitoring and tracking the performance of all stakeholders, including staff, contractors, and other partners to ensure quality, cost effective service.

At the end of the panel, Mr. Turner reminded the audience that the cities at the Academy, when combined together, probably comprise up to 10-15 percent of the national caseload. If this academy model is used effectively and true peer-to-peer learning takes shape, this meeting may be responsible for dropping the national caseload by five percent in three days of intense work.

# 2.2 City Presentations and Reactions

City-teams were given the opportunity to present on a key strategies in which they have had a particular expertise or innovative approaches.

# **Diversion Strategies**

# **Diversion Strategies – Hennepin County**

Hennepin County is the largest county in the State of Minnesota, where approximately one third of the State's TANF caseload resides. Noteworthy characteristics of the TANF caseload in Hennepin County are its diverse clientele and large refugee and immigrant populations. Hmong and Somali populations are a significant presence in urban areas.

The Hennepin County Diversionary Work Program (DWP) was launched in July 2004 as an alternative for TANF applicants going on traditional welfare. The goal of DWP is to meet an applicant's employment goals quickly through a short-term and intensive program with supplementary supports. Families can participate in DWP for a maximum of four consecutive months, which do not count towards their 60-month lifetime TANF limit.

Due to its work-first focus, the very first priority for a participant in DWP is to develop an employment plan. This employment plan must be in place before any benefits are received, and before the applicant can apply for economic or day care assistance. To stay within legislative requirements, this employment plan must be completed within 10 days of a referral to an Employment Service Provider (ESP). During the first two weeks of DWP, participants engage in a variety of work-related activities such as classes, identifying barriers, and working closely with employment counselors. At this point, many participants in DWP find jobs. While engaged in work, the DWP program offers supplemental supports such as cash benefits, child care, housing supports, utility costs, and transportation. Earnings from the job can be kept in their entirety for all of the four months and do not count against or alter DWP benefits. If at any time, a DWP participant does not comply with the employment service plan or with child support efforts, they are disqualified from the program for the first and following month until they begin to comply with all program requirements.

Exceptions who are ineligible from the DWP program include:

Families with a parent who received MFIP in the past 12 months

Families with a parent who received DWP in the past 12 months

Child only cases

Caregivers age 60 or older

A minor parent without a high school diploma or GED

An 18- or 19-year-old teen parent without a high school diploma or GED who chooses the education plan option

A single-parent family with a child under 12 weeks of age.

In its first year of existence, the DWP has already revealed positive results. After the four-month limit for DWP, 33 percent of program participants are ineligible for continued TANF due to their income. In addition, 67 percent of DWP clients do not go onto traditional TANF at the end of the fourth month.

At the end of their presentation, Hennepin County representatives offered a few lessons learned about how they implemented DWP. These lessons include:

Because they had a full year's worth of notice that this program would be created, the Hennepin County team had ample time to meet with collaborative partners such as child support, child care, employment services, and income maintenance.

Specialized work units which co-located eligibility workers, case managers and vendors proved to be an effective component of the model.

The enhanced technology support provided by the TEAMS system and Lotus Notes email notification system helped to merge the four major database systems of income maintenance, employment, day care, and child care, and also to streamline the scheduling of meetings.

It was required to speed up the process of getting child care providers, which occurred because the State provided a child care addendum to the traditional welfare application.

# **Diversion Strategies – Seattle**

The State of Washington's WorkFirst program is operated by six Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) regions that are made up of 57 local offices. King County and the City of Seattle are located within DSHS Region 4, which is the most populous region in the State. After welfare reform passed, Region 4 achieved significant reductions in the welfare caseload, demonstrating a 55 percent initial success rate by reducing the caseload from 17,958 in 1997 to 8,135 in 2004.

The Seattle city-team believes in a Workfirst front-end model, which immediately promotes self-sufficiency from day one. Seattle's diversion program begins when intake staff determine if an applicant family meets TANF eligibility requirements, has a short-term financial crisis, and has recent ties to the labor force. The program is called Diversion Cash Assistance or DCA. Once the eligibility criteria are met, DCA is offered as a positive alternative to going onto welfare. Diversion payments are intended to help resolve a short-term financial crisis and salvage attachment to the labor force.

In Seattle, diversion assistance payments can total up to \$1500. These short-term payments can be used for the costs associated with child care, housing, transportation, keeping a job, food, and medical costs. When possible, diversion payments are made directly to the service provider instead of given to the family. Also at the time of intake, diverted families are put on Food Stamps and into medical programs. However, diversion payments are largely viewed as a loan, and it is assumed that the family "owes" the State the entirety of their diversion amount. For each month that the family stays off of TANF, one twelfth of the loan is forgiven. Because diverted families are expected to remain off of TANF for at least 12 months when they have "paid back" their entire diversion amount, if the family returns for TANF within one year, they are expected to repay the remainder of the diversion payment that is still owed. Five percent of the TANF grant is deducted each month until the full loan is repaid.

Families who are ineligible for Seattle's diversion program include families where:

Any adult member received a diversion payment within the last twelve months

Any adult member already receives TANF assistance

Any adult member is not eligible for cash assistance, except (in a two parent family) the second parent can be receiving SSI

There is no needy adult in the assistance unit, (i.e., the TANF application is for a child-only grant).

The Seattle city-team reports that their diversion program has been a positive success in its first four years of existence. Selected performance measures and noteworthy statistics include:

From 2001 to 2005, almost 19,000 Washington families received diversion assistance, 3000 of which were in Region 4/Seattle

Of the total families who received DCA, only 26 percent returned to apply for TANF within 12 months

For the families that did return on TANF, the average time between diversion and TANF receipt is 6.2 months.

One of the main challenges for the Seattle DCA program is that the success of the program relies heavily on the discretion of intake staff. As a result of the potential subjectivity in the process, staff discretion can lead to inconsistent implementation and missed opportunities. Consequently, the Seattle city-team realizes that constant and continuing training opportunities need to be provided to intake staff to help ensure that the diversion program will run smoothly.

# Additional Examples: Diversion Strategies – Baltimore & New Orleans

Baltimore City has implemented a local diversion program that gives Welfare Avoidance Grants (WAGs) to individuals who applied for TANF but who are more job ready than others. WAGs are three months of cash assistance to deal with a short-term financial crisis or difficulty that the family may be facing. Many of these short-term grants go for transportation needs such as fixing up a car to a point of minimum functionality again. The local University of Maryland School of Social Work conducted a research study on the Family Investment Program in Baltimore, and found that WAGs have been extremely successful in helping people to stay off welfare.

The City of New Orleans has an early engagement program called Job Readiness, which focuses on preparation and engagement in the workforce. Before the program begins, all TANF applicants receive a thorough orientation process that outlines the requirements of the TANF program and the procedures related to sanctions and compliance. After the orientation, the TANF customer is interviewed, processed, and scheduled to attend the 4-week Job Readiness program. This activity occurs during the application process and participation is a required condition of eligibility. For customers who are either pregnant or not ready for the job readiness program due to substance abuse issues, New Orleans offers a parenting skills program and a drug screening program in lieu of job readiness.

### **Saturation Engagement**

### **Saturation Engagement – Baltimore**

Baltimore City has seen a steady decline in caseload. Defined as separate and distinct from Baltimore County, Baltimore City serves only TANF residents within the City limits. Baltimore has had one of the lowest work participation rates in the country and is home to 60% of the State's TANF caseload and 85% of the long-term caseload. In response to these trends, Baltimore changed their focus from those reaching their 24<sup>th</sup> month of services to asking immediately "what can this client do?" From the point of application, an assessment team focuses on developing an independence plan, and, from day one, applicants must be in compliance with that plan. A 90-hour New Beginnings program is required in order to receive cash assistance. All customers are required to go to new beginnings program. Those customers who fail to comply have their applications denied immediately. If customer wants to reapply, they have to come back and start the process all over again. A sanction is imposed when a customer stops attending an activity. The sanctions are progressive in three tiers with the final being a full-family sanction. When a sanction is cured, benefit starts the day they cure the sanction, not back to first of the month.

### Additional Examples: Saturation Engagement – Boston & Minneapolis

Boston discussed a change in their exempt population to remove parents of children between 2 years and school age. Education and training programs are allowed to satisfy the work requirement for this population. By exposing this population to work, the caseload has decreased even though the overall caseload has risen.

Minneapolis has focused on engaging customers with disabilities, parents of young children and those with other barriers to successful work attachment. While not all exemptions have been removed, the rate of exemption has been cut in half. One challenge they are facing is in writing a responsibility plan for TANF and also one that complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). There are occasions when a recipient has a doctor's note stating that they are capable of only working 20 hours a week, but there is a requirement for 24 hours of active work participation for this individual to be "counted." In accordance with ADA, the county must make appropriate accommodations for this person, thus relieving them of the 24-hour work requirement, which appears to be in direct conflict with TANF law. There is a concern that the State cannot comply with both laws at once.

# **Sanction Policies and Practices**

# **Sanction Policies and Practices – Minneapolis**

Minneapolis discussed their reasons for moving toward a full family sanction. Previous policy allowed for a 10% reduction in the TANF cash grant for the first instance of non-compliance and 30% for the second and third instances. However, a family could continue to receive a reduced grant through the 60<sup>th</sup> month. If this reduced grant was "big enough," there was no incentive to comply with the program. The new sanction policy is a full grant sanction beginning in the 7<sup>th</sup> month. Months in which a customer fails to comply do not have to be consecutive – they all add up to the sanction clock. Minneapolis is seeing what they think are good results from this program, but are struggling to measure disqualifications and returns due to a poor computerized tracking system

# Sanction Policies and Practices – Dallas/Ft. Worth

Facing a situation similar to that of Minneapolis, Dallas/Ft. Worth had an indefinite sanction status where customers might lose \$78 for failure to participate in required activities. This was not significant enough incentive to ensure compliance. Now, non-participation results in full-family sanction and the parent(s) lose eligibility for Medicaid. Two months of non-participation results in denial of TANF and a family would have to reapply from the beginning, including orientation and review of expectations regarding participation. They have seen a 47% caseload reduction since beginning this program. Most significantly, with full-family sanction TANF participation rose from 25% to over 43% and the percent of families with a sanction dropped from over 30% to under 10%.

# Work Experience and Wage Subsidy

# Work Experience and Wage Subsidy – Seattle

Following a strong caseload decline, Seattle was looking for effective strategies for serving a harder to employ caseload. Their Community Jobs program is designed to provide a work activity for those customers who have been unsuccessful in traditional job search. Most of those deferred need more time in a work environment to build self-confidence, develop basic and job-specific skills, and resolve family issues. The TANF grant is converted into a paycheck at the State minimum wage of \$7.35/hour. There is a standard 50% wage disregard for income eligibility. Building on the foundation that these customers are better off working, the program provides specialized services including assessment, work and barrier reduction combinations, and connection to stable work. Seattle is working to develop additional slots for Community Jobs, which they see as a bridge to the world of work.

# Work Experience and Wage Subsidy – Dallas/Ft. Worth

Following the expiration of a Federal waiver, Dallas/Ft. Worth was faced with a challenge: no longer would requiring 30 hours per week of GED coursework be sufficient to meet Federal participation requirements. Based on the limits on education and job search, they decided to explore community service. The partners wanted to ensure that the experience was valuable, positive, empowering and created an attachment to the labor market. Under a state law change, any TANF recipient not in a mandatory activity within 4 weeks must be placed in community service. By working in conjunction with the business community, they are able to provide the TANF customer with marketable skills and workforce attachment and provide their business partners a trained, ready-to-hire workforce. To date, over one-third of all participants have been hired from the program. They have turned a state mandate into an effective strategy.

# Additional Example: Work Experience and Wage Subsidy – Baltimore

Baltimore has undertaken extensive wage subsidy pilot programs to encourage employers to hire TANF customers. The agreement stipulates that if the TANF customer completes the job training, the employer will hire that person. TANF is used to subsidize the employment, paying the customer \$6.10/hour for up to 30 hours/week. Baltimore is currently developing a pilot for their post-60-month customers using a grant diversion model in working with private employers in their growth industries. Rather than continuing assistance past 60 months, job-ready customers will be offered one of these subsidized employment positions.

# Faith-Based and Community Partnerships

# Faith-Based and Community Partnerships - St. Louis

St. Louis has developed the Career Assistance Program (CAP) as a collaborative between the Missouri Division of Work Development, Family Support Division, St. Louis Hospital, the Employment and Training Department, the East-West Gateway Council on Government, Employment Connection, and Better Family Life, Inc. The CAP program focuses on job assessment, development of an individual employment plan, job placement, and retention. A Web-based system allows customers to enter home and work addresses and see all child care providers en route. One of the distinctions of the CAP program is the inclusion of multiple faithbased partners.

The East-West Gateway and Better Family Life links together 8 churches to CAP-funded vans to provide reliable transportation services to customers in reaching their job sites. This strategy fills the gaps of the public transportation system which leaves areas of the city unreachable for these customers.

### Faith-Based and Community Partnerships – Detroit

Detroit works with faith-based and community providers to serve two target populations: ex-offenders and youth. Their focus is on strengthening the family – either the family of the exoffender or the family of the youth. 80% of released offenders in Michigan return to Detroit and there is no system to serve them. The Wings of Faith program in Detroit address the needs of returned ex-offenders who typically have no money, no transportation, and no place to stay – all of which set them up for failure as they attempt to rejoin a community. Engaging them in employment is critical.

For youth, ages 14-15, employers may not want to take them on in the summer when they are looking for work. In response, Detroit developed the Youth Employment Initiative – a work experience model where youth assist in day care centers, tutoring programs, summer lunch programs, and work with senior citizens. The target is to expand the program to serve all youth 15-17 years of age.

### **Operations and Management**

### **Operations and Management – Oakland**

In response to significant budget cuts, Alameda County (Oakland) turned to technology to support improved cost efficiencies in social services. Three initiatives: a foster care tracking system(FCTS), CalWIN, an automated eligibility/case management system; and, the WebFields Imaging Project were highlighted. FCTS is a voice response system that allows real time transfer of payments as children move within the foster care system. It also improves accuracy, is available 24/7 to providers, and maintains records to support child welfare case managers in their workloads. CalWIN will go live in December of 2005. The software eliminates the need for paper narratives and can determine eligibility at the end of an interview. It supports intake and case management for food stamps, CalWORKS, Medi-CAL and other programs. WebFields is built on the operating procedure to "only handle paper once." By imaging and storing all data electronically, information is accessible to all appropriate personnel. They system also eliminates the need for physical warehousing of data, thus saving a \$2.9 million facility lease for the County.

### **Operations and Management – Boston**

Boston highlighted two online application processes: EOHHS Virtual Gateway and BEACON. EOHHS Virtual Gateway is new way to access health and human service programs in Massachusetts: through a single point on the Internet, the EOHHS web page at Mass.gov (www.mass.gov/eohhs). Tools available are:

Catalog of Services A searchable catalog with descriptions of EOHHS programs.

**Screening** A short on-line survey to determine potential eligibility for services. Multiple programs and services can be selected and assessed at the same time.

**Intake** An online common intake data collection tool for registered providers. Providers can collect information from a client into one on-line form to generate applications for multiple HHS programs and services. The form is submitted electronically.

These tools will be available for seven EOHHS programs, including MassHealth, Child Care, Early Intervention, Food Stamps, Substance Abuse, WIC, and Women's Health Network. EOHHS offers providers and consumers improved access through a single point on the Internet, a central source for program descriptions, and a straightforward way to apply for multiple programs and services.

# **Performance Management**

# **Performance Management -- Detroit**

In a review of program performance of the 25 State agencies that administer TANF, Detroit was #8. Following a leadership change in the City of Detroit, more attention was focused on performance management and monitoring of contractors. In meetings with the TANF contractors, Detroit shared tracking reports that held individual contractors accountable for their performance. In addition, business incentives were in play as contractors with stronger performances saw new awards. After this program shift, Detroit became the #1 performer, received a high performance bonus from the State, and placed more TANF participants in jobs.

### **Performance Management – New Orleans**

After years of working with fragmented system reports, manual tracking, and significant delays along the eligibility and enrollment process, New Orleans committed to a massive redesign to create an active front end of full engagement. Today, all applicants go through a 4-week job readiness curriculum, and an orientation to the STEP (TANF) program. Additionally, three tracking systems interface more successfully than in the past. The system allows for feedback at all levels, and illustrates gaps that partners need to fill. New Orleans gets on demand reports daily and monthly and has increased their participation rate from 38 to 46 percent. The placement rate has risen from 57 to 73 percent, and the percentage of customers returning within 12 months has dropped from 41 percent to 18 percent.

# **Performance Management – Atlanta**

Atlanta builds from the premise that "TANF is not good enough for any family." Job placement happens immediately and is a three step process of identifying barriers, assessing skills, and placing the customer in a job where they will be successful. It is important that the customer be involved in the employment plan. Atlanta specifically highlighted two facets of their program: a call center and a system for tracking work participation by case managers. The call center concept allows for calls received when a particular worker is not at his/her desk to be answered in the call center, which is staffed by work experience customers. This allows for improved access to case managers and provides work experience for other TANF participants. Atlanta computes the federal participation rate for each case manager's caseload. The Federal work participation rate is tracked over time for each case manager and shared at monthly staff meetings. These are further organized by supervisor. This leads to improved accountability as no case manager or supervisor wants their participation rate to be under the agency-wide 50% target.

# 2.3 City-to-City Dialogues

Following the formal presentations on promising practices, each city hosted an informal dialogue for representatives of the other cities. These dialogues focused on lessons learned and models for replication and were among the most lauded session of the Academy. Topics discussed were:

Atlanta	Work Participation Report Card
Baltimore	Fresh Start Program – Serving Long-term TANF Caseload
Boston	Serving Families with Children ages 2-6; Experience with PM <sup>2</sup> ; Universal Engagement Pilots
Dallas/Ft. Worth	REAP: Rapid Employment Attachment Program; Business Access; Long-term TANF
Detroit	Collaboration between Human Services and Workforce Development Boards
Minneapolis	Diversionary Assistance
New Orleans	Data Usage and Universal Engagement
Oakland	The EITC Collaboration Model
Seattle	Working with the Pregnancy to Employment Pathway; Creating local collaboratives
St. Louis	Engaging the Client; Tracking

In addition to highlighting the promising practices of the city participants, the Academy included presentations from other best practices in the field. Two of these practices – Project Match and MEE Productions – are highlighted in the following sections.

# 2.4 Project Match

Project Match conducts program development and research activities in the fields of welfare-to-work and workforce development to explore the process by which poor Americans move toward economic and family stability. Project Director, Toby Herr, highlighted the case management system , Pathways. Developed by Project Match for state and local welfare agencies, Pathways provides a set of tools and protocols for ensuring monthly contact between caseworkers and welfare recipients; for developing and monitoring customized, month-at-a-time self-sufficiency plans; and for promoting a teamwork approach among agency staff.

The Pathways System has four components: an activity diary, a monthly group meeting for welfare recipients, monthly case review and debriefing sessions for agency staff, and a computerized tracking system. Pathways takes into account all the roles that welfare recipients must learn to balance. In the lives of many, work is the last thing to be ignored in a time of crisis. Developing this strong work attachment is necessary for TANF customers to be successful. Project Match uses three "lenses" in its Pathways program:

- The **Science research lens** expects social scientists to uncover facts and truth. Ms. Herr argues that barriers are not the challenges, but rather being a welfare recipient itself is what determines who will be able to work.
- The **Standard practice lens** delivers the message to balance work and problems rather than "fix barriers then work." In most of them, set backs are the norm. Communicating to welfare customers that you have to fix the problem in order to work is not the right message. Customers are always going to have challenges or problems and must learn to manage those to move forward.

The **Reality lens** reminds us that people are motivated by many factors. Why one person may go to work and another wouldn't isn't necessarily determinable. The reality of each individual being served is important.

The Pathways System is committed to supporting kids early. In response to a sense that poor kids did not have the opportunity to discover those activities at which they would excel, Project Match gave them small grants for summer programs in whatever activity they wanted to explore. They learned that no matter how much a child liked the activity and wanted to be there, it was still important to focus on whether the parents could manage their own schedules to get their children to these activities on time.

Asking people to participate in Pathways is a real decision for them. It is qualitatively different than their previous experiences in "the system." It is incredibly supportive, but highly intrusive and is not for everyone.

# 2.5 Motivational Educational Entertainment Productions

Motivational Educational Entertainment Productions (MEE) is a source of information on the many facets of urban culture and society. MEE is nationally recognized for its communication strategies to reach and influence urban youth. MEE uses insights gained through years of focus group research, media production experience, and industry-proven marketing and advertising expertise to provide data for program managers and service providers. MEE mostly works with low income, black, urban youth around social marketing in youth sexuality, HIV, substance abuse, teen violence, early childhood literacy, and child development issues. MEE's success can be traced to the fact that they are simply a conduit or facilitator for work done by, for, and about urban youth and their challenges. MEE helps them to find their voice, articulate their problems, and chart their solutions. MEE works from a premise that to support low-income populations, you must respect the oral culture of those communities. Literacy-based strategies (e.g. brochure publication and dissemination) will not work as well as an oral message will in changing behavior. In order to reach youth, you have to first understand where they are (Point A), then where they want to go (Point B) and stay completely away from the baggage and misinformation "adults typically bring to the table" (Point Zero).

Building from this framework, MEE delivers several types of messages regarding youth sexuality:

Prevention – abstinence, negotiation of condom use, effective condom use

Retention - reinforcement of prevention messages

Recovery – secondary delay of sexual activity, inclusive (e.g. teen parents). "We all fall, we all must learn to get back up." Teens recognize that how one is treated when s/he falls is how they will each be treated when any falls.

Message senders are the youth themselves, not celebrities. The program fosters youth development, leadership, and self-esteem.

# 2.6 Strategies for Full Engagement

At the conclusion of the meeting, pairs of cities were tasked to draft guidance for others about specific populations that can be served with full engagement strategies. They were tasked to develop plans with significant specificity for action items and partners. Each team was asked to define the population, consider how they would measure success, articulate potential pitfalls and brainstorm solutions. In a preliminary exercise, teams defined the populations for whom they were most interested in developing strategic plans for full engagement. They also brainstormed which of the highlighted strategies might be best suited to the targeted population. Based on these selections, teams were divided as described below.

# Connecting Long-Term TANF Customers to Work: Minneapolis and Baltimore

Minneapolis and Baltimore focused on identifying service priorities and strategies for serving the 60-month and beyond caseload. In addition to focusing on their needs sooner than at the 48<sup>th</sup> month mark, the team articulated the need for staff outreach and training to support morale around serving this population. Customers would have improved skills, better time management, and be more able to participate in requirements. Staff would have enhanced ability to assess for barriers and make appropriate referrals. Contractors would witness improved communication and collaboration and eventually see improved service outcomes. This team saw lack of staff buy-in as potentially dangerous and identified education and training as strategies for the solution. Other potential pitfalls included a lack of available alternative support services, and a delayed response due to legislative process and advocate behavior. Respective solutions included aggressive development of new partnerships and in-house services and informing and educating advocates and legislators with a data-driven policy.

# Stabilizing Labor Force Attachment for TANF Customers with Barriers to Work: New Orleans, Seattle, Atlanta

This team focused on TANF customers with disabilities, low literacy, and limited English proficiency. The notion for them is that "a slip is not a fall," and that continued barrier removal is critical to long-term success. Collaboration, especially in education and barrier removal, is critical. The team identified the following as success metrics:

Proper diagnosis

Develop a plan using appropriate resources

Successful treatment

Job placement/retention or alternate source of monies (SSA/SSI)

Incremental gains in literacy or steps forward in the world of work

Attachment to labor market or successful obtainment of alternate resources.

The team described the following as behavior changes they would expect to see.

	Skills	Behavior	Performance / Outcomes
Customers	Increased accountability Coping skills	More self-confident Independence	Showing up at work Keeping appointments
Staff	Better understanding of customers Ability to identify needs and solutions	Expect more of customers and themselves Willing to serve all	Higher job satisfaction due to better performance
Contractors	Increased expertise in literacy/disabilities Better partnerships	Expect more of customers and themselves Willing to serve all	More willing to meet customer's needs Willing to go the extra mile
Partners	Better understanding of customers and programs Develop better communication Develop a curriculum that is adaptable and effective with the target group	Increase in willingness to work Coordination of resources Less turf war	Improved communication Meaningful services are being delivered Success in engaging customers

Potential pitfalls and their respective solutions included: ongoing assessment to prevent missed appointments and cycling; regular meetings to prevent poor communication, and identifying barriers and having a proactive correction action plan to prevent decline in performance.

# Increasing Independence for Job Ready and Employed TANF Customers: Detroit, Oakland, Dallas/Ft. Worth

This team focused job ready and employed TANF customers to focus on job attainment, job retention, and wage progression. These customers are committed to being strong, positive role models for their children. Success for them means career advancement, earning a living wage, and having employer-supported benefits. They are working from a career lattice perspective, where social services can be a mechanism for workforce development. The team articulated the following changes in behavior to be expected:

	Skills	Behavior	Performance / Outcomes
Customers	Developed or Improved	Positive work ethic, seek & develop viable support systems	Increased self-esteem. Role model positive work behavior for their children. Increased wages, skills, & retention.

	Skills	Behavior	Performance / Outcomes
Staff,	Understand & Practice	Enthusiasm, Confidence,	Higher productivity, more job
Contractors, and	"Career Lattice" Concepts.	Assertiveness, Proficiency in	placements. Better retention
Partners	Develop rapport with local	business terminology.	rates, higher wages.
	employers & Customers	Improve skills in customer	
		support & problem resolution.	

Proposed solutions to potential pitfalls include providing longer post-employment services to prevent recidivism, using more in-depth initial assessment to avoid incomplete information, and monitoring for continuous quality improvement to avoid unbalanced attention to certain program areas.

# Engaging New TANF Applicants Through Diversion: St. Louis and Boston

The diversion team worked on developing strategies for supporting a new TANF applicant who has a short term, non-recurrent need best served via diversion. They focused on defining the customers most likely to benefit from diversion, and devising a method for measuring cost savings associated with successful diversion. The team defined the following success metrics:

Begin with "Diversion Rate Credit", adjust performance criteria requirements to reflect fewer "job ready" applicants

Success = diverting 9 to 12% of applicants

Cost savings of 75 to 85% of annual assistance to those diverted

Supervisory review sample of diversion-ready applicants to be sure all were treated correctly. Follow up discussion with worker

Stayed off for longer than it would have cost (cash grant) to enroll them.

The team commented on avoiding the pitfall of a "silver bullet" mentality that diversion will work for everyone. Further, they articulated the need to carefully define diversion in order to meet Federal requirements and advocated for a Federal participation rate credit for successfully diverted clients.

# 3. CONCLUSION

The Urban Partnerships for Welfare Reform Initiative is a vehicle for supporting peer learning and collaboration among stakeholders involved in serving TANF customers in urban populations. For over three years, Federal, State, and local partners have joined together in this initiative to learn from one another and creatively develop strategies to improve services to families so that they may achieve and maintain self-sufficiency. This Academy was focused on performance management and program participation, and delivered to the city partners new tools for building networks and fostering continued success for TANF customers.

By bringing together Federal, State, and local partners into this environment, the third Academy was rich with city-to-city dialogue, best practices, creative thinking and high energy, solution-focused approaches. The cities stated that they learned so much from one another in this peer exchange, and that the major benefit of the Academy was to "see first hand" what colleagues around the country were doing and how they were addressing their different challenges.

"It is one thing to be able to read someone's best practices, it's another to be able to hear it and feel the passion that comes from the best practices that they have developed. It really energizes you to go back and energize your staff, to say 'we really can do this' we get bogged down in day to day hassles, this environment is so reinvigorating, we can go back and give the staff a shot in the arm."<sup>1</sup>

The third Academy demonstrated that all of the 10 cities are taking Federal participation requirements seriously. Each of the cities had best practices and innovations to share with the other cities. A set of key policies, practices and management approaches are emerging. These will enable cities to meet federal participation requirements and, most importantly, to help TANF families become more self-sufficient.

The one issue in particular that the cities felt that they needed more information on was funding. They want to better understand how to diversify the funding base of their initiatives how to acquire funds, not necessarily more TANF funds – using EBT and food stamps – more emphasis on alternative funding sources. The cities also encouraged the Federal partners to think about a "diversion caseload credit" as reauthorization of welfare legislation is debated. All participants were asked to evaluate the success of the meeting. A detailed evaluation summary is included as Appendix D. Appendix A provides the agenda, and Appendix B the participant list, and Appendix C a listing of next steps for the Academy.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Comments from the benefits of the Academy and Recommended Next Steps can be found in Appendix C; and the overall evaluation summary is in Appendix D.

APPENDIX A: AGENDA



# Urban Partnerships for Welfare Reform



Stakeholders Meeting — "What Counts" St. Louis, Missouri March 8-11, 2005

# Tuesday, March 8, 2005 4:00 PM to 7:00 PM Registration **Ballroom F Foyer** Evening On Your Own—City Suites are available for team time. Wednesday, March 9, 2005 7:30 AM to 8:00 AM **Registration/Continental Breakfast Ballroom F Foyer** 8:00 AM to 8:30 AM Welcome **Ballroom F** The Urban Partnerships Stakeholders Meeting will kick-off with welcoming remarks from the host city on behalf of the Mayor of St. Louis. The Office of Family Assistance will provide an overview of the Urban Partnerships Initiative, the goals of this Stakeholders Meeting and an update on the status of TANF Reauthorization. **Speakers:** Tom Jones **Executive Director** St. Louis Agency on Training and Employment Andrew S. Bush Director Office of Family Assistance Grant E. Collins, II Chief Program Officer Office of Family Assistance **Moderator:** Lois A. Bell Director Division of State and Territory TANF Management Office of Family Assistance 8:30 AM to 9:15 AM Ice Breaker and Teambuilding Session **Ballroom F** Facilitator: Kent Peterson **Caliber** Associates

9:15 AM to 9:45 AM	Ten Cities TA Ballroom F	Ten Cities TANF Engagement Ballroom F	
	(TGO) will pr highlight curre	Family Assistance and Turner Government Operations esent components of a full-engagement model and ent approaches being used by the cities. They will ples of lessons learned and solution-based strategies.	
	Speakers:	Al M. Fleming Program Specialist Division of State and Territory TANF Management Office of Family Assistance	
		Mark Hoover, Consultant Turner Government Operations	
		Paul Saeman, Consultant Turner Government Operations	
		Jason Turner, Consultant Turner Government Operations	
	Moderator:	Lisa M, Washington-Thomas Program Specialist Division of State and Territory TANF Management Office of Family Assistance	
9:45 AM to 10:00 AM	Break		
10:00 AM to 12:00 PM	City Presenta Ballroom F	tions and Reactions	
	topic. Follow with the audie	o cities will be asked to make brief presentations on each ing the presentations, there will be an interactive Q & A nce. Cities will highlight the issues faced in their and specific strategies they embraced to address the	
		sion Strategies ation Engagement-including engaging the Exempt dual	
	Speakers:	City Representatives	
	Moderator:	Kent Peterson Caliber Associates	

12:00 PM to 1:30 PM

#### City to City Dialogues City Suites

These City-to-City dialogues will run concurrently. A representative from each city will host a discussion in his/her team suite on a best practice or lesson learned in his/her program. The remaining city teams will visit other team suites and share in these varied dialogues. A box lunch will be provided to each participant as they leave the plenary and go to the city suites.

Atlanta: Work Participation Report Card Suite 2103

**Baltimore:** Fresh Start Program-Serving Long-term TANF Caseload Suite 4220

**Boston:** Serving Families with children, ages 2-6; Experience with PM<sup>2</sup>; Universal Engagement Pilots *Suite 3226* 

**Detroit:** Collaboration between Human Services and Workforce Development Boards Suite 4208

**Grand Prairie:** *REAP/Rapid Employment Attachment Program; Business Access; One Time TANF Suite 2208* 

Minneapolis: Diversionary Assistance Suite 1202

**New Orleans:** Data Usage and Universal Engagement *Suite 3220* 

**Oakland:** *The EITC Collaboration Model Suite 3210* 

Seattle: Working With the Pregnancy to Employment Pathway; and Creating Local Collaboratives Suite 1208

**St. Louis:** *Engaging the Client and Tracking Ballroom B* 

Ballr Includ A par topic. with t		tions and Reactions in. break o cities will be asked to make brief presentations on each ing the presentations, there will be an interactive Q & A nce. Cities will highlight the issues faced in their and specific strategies they embraced to address the
	<ul> <li>challenges.</li> <li>Topics: <ul> <li>Sanction Policies and Practices</li> <li>Work Experience/Community Service/Job Subsidy</li> <li>Faith-and Community-based Initiatives</li> <li>Operations and Management Strategies</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	
	Speakers:	City Representatives
	Moderator:	Kent Peterson Caliber Associates
4:30 PM to 6:00 PM	Team Building in City Suites	
6:00 PM to 8:00 PM	Reception/Academy Dinner Sponsored by the St. Louis Agency on Training and Employment Ballroom F	
	Speaker:	Tom Jones Executive Director St. Louis Agency on Training and Employment Toby Herr Director
		Project Match Chicago, Illinois
	Moderator:	Lois A. Bell Director Division of State & Territory TANF Management Office of Family Assistance

# Thursday, March 10, 2005

7:30 AM to 8:00 AM	Continental Breakfast Ballroom F Foyer	
8:00 AM to 11:30 AM	<b>Site Visit: Metropolitan Education and Training Center</b> The site visit will allow participants to observe first hand how St. Louis effectively balances work first and education and training.	
	Facilitator:	Carolyn Seward Director of METC Operations
11:30 AM to 12:15 PM	Reflections on Site Visit Ballroom F	
	Speaker:	Mary Bell St. Louis Agency on Training and Employment
	Moderator:	Kent Peterson Caliber Associates
12:30 PM to 1:45 PM	Lunch	
	Effective Use of Community Data in Creating Positive Youth Development Programs Ballroom F	
	Motivational Educational Entertainment (MEE) Productions	
	MEE is a source of information about the many facets of urban culture and society. MEE is nationally recognized for its communication strategies to reach and influence urban populations. MEE uses the insights gained through years of focus group research, media production experience, industry proven marketing and advertising expertise to provide data for program managers and service providers.	
	Speakers: Ivan J. Juzang MEE Founder and President Philadelphia, PA	
		Kate Jesberg District of Columbia Income Maintenance Administration
	Moderator:	Al M. Fleming Division of State and Territory TANF Management
1:45 PM to 2:00 PM	Break	Office of Family Assistance

2:00 PM to 3:30 PM	Performance Management Ballroom F This session highlights various performance management models tha will give management the ability to anticipate, track and measure outcomes from various indicators. It will address the need to establis local accountability, generate increased performance and decentralize welfare bureaucracy. Several cities will describe their performance model.	
	Speakers:	Jason Turner Turner Government Operations
		Mark Hoover Turner Government Operations
		Paul Saeman Turner Government Operations
		City Representatives
	Moderator:	Lisa M. Washington-Thomas Division of State & Territory TANF Management Office of Family Assistance
3:30 PM to 3:45 PM	Break	
3:45 PM to 5:30 PM	Cross-City W Models	Vork GroupsDevelopment of Full-Participation
	to develop a c within defined	divided into three groups in separate breakout sessions omprehensive participation model based on similarities I strategies. Groups will use the ideas and approaches ing the meeting to develop their model.
	Moderators:	Federal Staff and Contractors
5:30 PM to 6:30 PM	Team Time ii	n City Suites
	Dinner on Yo	our Own

# **Friday, March 11, 2005**

7:30 AM to 8:00 AM		Continental Breakfast Ballroom F Foyer		
8:00 AM to 9:15 AM	Cross-City V	Cross-City Work Groups		
	-	ams will reconvene to prepare presentations on their full- models in their breakout rooms.		
9:15 AM to 9:30 AM	Break			
9:30 AM to 11:00 AM	Presentation Ballroom F	Presentation of Participation Models Ballroom F		
	-	orkgroups will present their models for feedback from ers, TGO, Caliber, and other cities.		
	Speakers:	Representatives from the cities		
	Moderator:	Kent Peterson Caliber Associates		
11:00 AM to 12:00 PM Next Steps Ballroom F				
	Moderators:	Lois A. Bell Division of State and Territory TANF Management		
		Kent Peterson Caliber Associates		

APPENDIX B: Participant List



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## FULL ENGAGEMENT

Final Session: Next Steps Facilitator: Lois Bell



We're very interested in finding out, has this meeting been useful. We understand that a lot of information has been given to you in the last 2 days, and if any of this will be used in terms of when we go back, if you'll do one thing, what will it be? In terms of the long range, we have limited TA dollars to invest, and we want to understand if this something you want to do again? What was useful? What wasn't useful? You are the cutting edge –the front end; so we want to understand what you found most valuable that we should share with the rest of the country.

### What worked really well? What was most meaningful?

Atlanta model for PM by case worker was meaningful

- The presentations we'll go implement them as pilots the saturation engagement model, the in home learning system from Dallas, and the WEX models by Seattle and Tarrant County we can go implement them immediately as pilots
- Before the meeting, TGO came down with Lisa Washington-Thomas and that was very helpful, in that it set the stage for this meeting. We learned a lot more from all cities. When we get back, we'll continue the conversation around full participation really enjoyed dialogue with other cities. Thank you HHS for sponsoring this. Dallas and Seattle are going to become sister cities.
- I think one of the best things for us is this environment—bringing together the different cities, and allowing us to get a large dose of what everyone is doing all at once.
- This is one of the best 2-day conferences that I have ever attended. The ability to dialogue and share...we all have different challenges that we are facing. It is one thing to be able to read someone's best practices, it's another to be able to hear it and feel the passion that comes from the best practices that they have developed. It really energizes you to go back and energize your staff, to say 'we really can do this" we get bogged down in day to day hassles, this environment is so reinvigorating, we can go back and give the staff a shot in the arm.
- The site visit to the MET program outstanding job putting a big group of people together and making it work I commend you for the tour that we had, absolutely outstanding.

- This whole urban initiative has been wonderful for Dallas/Ft. Worth. of the 3 academies the first one in Dallas resulted in two contracts for us with AG's office, talking to people who came who gave overview of HHS. The second conference in MN resulted in an expansion of our fatherhood and ex-offenders programs. Now, this time I'm going to go back and look at Atlanta's model don't think that this isn't becoming a whole product our ROI from these have been tremendous we've saved a lot of money. Thank you HHS for all of this.
- The timing of this conference has been invaluable for us as a whole some of the immediate things that come to mind include MET model. We're going to take the MET PPT and insert it into an RFP for a million dollars also invaluable is contacting us and putting us in the direction of people that are doing things that directly related to what we're doing MN and diversion models and all of it the timing is invaluable hope this kind of conference continues.
- Field trip to the MET center was great we're trying to get an LPN program started and seeing that was a help, yesterday, after I left there, I called back to talk with my folks – director of adult ed and said we gotta make this happen because it can happen.
- I think a panel of TGO and the Federal partners talking about having been to all the cities and synthesizing what they saw and suggesting hey Baltimore we saw this in MN they can connect the dots in a synthesized way it would have been interesting to hear their synthesis. The city to city dialogues were great. St. Louis sparked a two hour debate in our team suite about pregnant women learned some instant things with child care in MN we really did learn something from all the cities. Thank you.

### What had less impact - what can we do differently - what else - what was missing?

Wish we could talk more about FUNDING – more about funding, how to acquire funds, not necessarily TANF funds – using EBT and food stamps – more emphasis on funding – show us other and alternative sources for funding.

Well. Thanks to the St. Louis team – a wonderful host city; we couldn't have had a better host.

## **APPENDIX D: EVALUATION SUMMARY**





		AVERAGE SCORE
I. Logistical and Meeting Support		1-5
Α.	Project staff adequately prepared me for the meeting by providing clear written and verbal communication regarding the meeting's purpose and expected outcomes.	4.1
В.	Project staff handled the preparation, arrangements, and scheduling of the meeting in a timely, courteous, and competent manner.	4.4
II.	Content and Presentations	
_	The speakers were thorough in the subject areas presented, engaged the audience, and facilitated useful interactive discussions.	4.3
_	The meeting provided opportunities for dialogue and sharing lessons learned with other cities.	4.3
_	The information gained from the meeting will be useful to our city in developing new approaches to serving low-income families.	4.2

## **EVALUATION SUMMARY**

# III. What do you anticipate as any immediate or long-term benefits to you/your staff as a result of your attendance?

"Monitoring employment counselors' performance"

"In home learning system"

"Innovative ways to serve our customers"

"How we connect with employers"

"How to align performance measures with regards to Federal participation"

"Learning more about the potential of a whole family sanction"

"Engaging the faith-based community"

"Diversion tactics that will work better than ours"

"Full participation, review of sanction practices, and performance and evaluation practices"

"New ideas around engagement"

- "Strategies to increase participation rate"
- "Saving a lot of time because we got excellent ideas from other cities and validation that participant goals can be reached"

"Experiences of other cities that are more expert in what we want to do"

"Development of a diversion program"

"Listening and learning about best practices from cities"

"The dialogue forces our city to look at other opportunities that we had not looked at prior to coming here"

"Use of the Business Access program in my State/city"

"How to re-energize staff"

"Redefine and redesign early engagement strategies"

"Three specific pilot projects will be launched as a result of the Work Experience/Retention discussions"

"Immediate benefit for better ways to address participation rate issues for both worker and customer"

"New tools to bring to our staff"

"Taking a harder look at disabled populations"

"Improving our technology to improve performance measures"

"We made progress on third trimester post-partum customer"

"Performance measurement to achieve participation rates"

"Supervisory tool to measure how caseworker teams rate versus other teams"

"Listening to other cities in learning how to implement a full engagement model."

### IV. What issues would you like to have had more discussion?

Workforce

Funding issues to maximize use of TANF funds and leverage other sources

"How States count: What numbers do they use for tabulating countable hours"

"How Federal work activities are defined by each State"

"TGO observations of cities"

"Advancement and retention strategies"

"More on operational issues"

"Earned Income Tax Credit"

"Faith- and community-based initiatives"

"Leveraging available funds"

"More time for city-to-city dialogue"

"TANF Reauthorization"

"Specific strategies to full participation with ADA"

"Data reporting to measure change"

"More forced interactions"

"More evaluation of performance measures"

"Utilization of Food Stamps"

"Ways to grow work experience program"

"How to cash out Food Stamps and use to fund community jobs program"

"Interactive discussion with Federal staff on additional funding sources."

# V. On which of the following areas would you like to receive additional technical assistance?

Торіс	Number
Diversion Strategies	14
Saturation Engagement	19
Sanction Policies and Practices	4
Work Experience/Community Service/Job Subsidy	12
Faith- and Community-based Initiatives	8
Operations and Management Strategies	6
Performance Management	13

Торіс	Number
Funding	2
Serving disabled customers	1

# VI. Please share any overall comments, which you feel might be helpful in planning future programs.

"The conference as very good and helpful"

"Site visit should have focused more on urban residents"

"More ideas from Federal staff about increased funding"

"Its important to continue these sessions"

"The site visit was a great preparation for the conference"

"Very good conference; more time needed for city-to-city dialogue"

"I enjoyed everyone's presentation. It would be nice to have the same 10 cities meet next year to see if they have any impact on participation from this meeting."

"Excellent conference. The group sharing sessions were excellent"

"Shorten the days"

"Excellent conference. Just need a little more time for city-to-city dialogue"

"More time for city-to-city dialogue"

"Excellent session. Good return on investment"

"Excellent MEE presentation"

"Kent did a great job. Enjoyed the tour"

"Thank you Caliber and HHS for organizing a great conference"

"Thanks to Turner Consultants"

"This has been the best of the three Academies"

"More city-to-city interaction"

"I learned so much"

"More city-to-city dialogue"

"Continue the great work!"

"Get DOL and HHS together to really work on integrated services"

"Excellent Academy. TA should be continued."

