



## Client Success Through Partnership: 2010 State TANF and Workforce Meeting

Resource Sheet

### Community Service and TANF

#### **Kitsap Community Resources**

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Kitsap Community Resources (KCR) is a community organization located in Kitsap County, Washington. The organization runs an AmeriCorps program, which is the largest in the state with currently 36 members. The members serve in various positions that include:

- Placements in local schools as tutors;
- Placements with local Head Start program as family advocates;
- Placements at the Red Cross;
- Placements inside KCR as case managers and facilitators;
- Placements with the YMCA;
- Placements as family legal advocates;
- Placements in a KCR-run program “Kitsap Youth in Action,” which helps gets youth interested in volunteering to do projects within the county. AmeriCorps members are placed with this program and work directly with the youth;
- Placements in a KCR-run program that works directly with the courts. Members help provide some of the community service that the courts do, which is a huge savings to the County;
- Placements with the Kitsap County Health District; and
- Placements with the Children’s Health Center, a program that goes into the schools and helps prepare meals that are sent overseas.

Along with the AmeriCorps program, KCR is made up of several divisions, including the Community Trade and Economic Development department, which provides services to TANF families. Staff work closely with TANF participants, get to know them, and are able to select which individuals will be placed in AmeriCorps. Many of the staff members at KCR are or have been AmeriCorps participants that were referred through the TANF program. This dynamic is also valuable as it allows the staff to reach other TANF participants on a different level.

One program KCR operates, called “Supported Works,” helps some of the hardest people to serve: TANF participants that are not ready for employment activities. Others are work-ready but their activities may not be ready for them. In order to meet Federal participation regulations, participants are placed in work activities, which is often AmeriCorps. The goal of





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the program is to help TANF participants either find out what their career goal is and move them forward, or to simply keep them in work activities while they are waiting for their career to start.

Finally, within the Community Trade and Economic Development department, KCR runs a Community Jobs program which provides unsubsidized employment opportunities to TANF participants to help them exit the KCR program. The majority of the staff on this program are alumni or currently enrollees in AmeriCorps. The program involves intense case management, as the participants are not quite ready for job search. They may need some updated work skills, an updated resume, or may be changing career fields and need work experience in that avenue.

#### **Lower Mississippi Delta Service Corp, Inc.**

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The Lower Mississippi Delta Service Corp (LMDSC) is a national direct AmeriCorps program. The program is currently operating in the states of Mississippi and Arkansas and has 45 members in the Delta counties. In 2004, the past Executive Director formed a Volunteer Center as a way of connecting nonprofit agencies with volunteers that are underserved and interested in doing something to give back to the community. The Volunteer Center includes a partnership with the Department Human Services, where the organization works with current TANF participants.

TANF participants come to the Volunteer Center office for placement. They complete an application, staff determine what their interest areas are, what their educational level is, and try to find a placement for them based on these criteria. The organization's nonprofit partners work with the Volunteer Center in placing the TANF participants in a work environment. An effort is always made to place the participants in a field in which they are interested.

As the organization is associated with the AmeriCorps program, staff encourage participants apply to the program. Part of the training they receive when they come to the office includes professional development training such as:

- resume writing;
- interview skills;
- core ability skill training;
- conflict resolution, and
- communication.





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Because many participants do not have a high school diploma, the program also works to connect them with other agencies that provide GED programs free of charge.

Participants serve 20-30 hours per week up to six months before the Department of Human Services places them into a job readiness class. Participants have the option of returning to the LMDSC program. The organization has seen several individuals exit from TANF to enter the AmeriCorps program. Once they enter the program, they receive a financial award, which will assist them in receiving the education they need in pursuing a future career.

#### **The AmeriCorps Appalachian Self-Sufficiency Program**

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The AmeriCorps Appalachian Self-Sufficiency Program provides (AASSP) life skills classes to help TANF participants overcome the barriers that are keeping them from self-sufficiency and independence. AmeriCorps members learn marketable skills while assisting individuals who wish to leave TANF system.

Teams of two AmeriCorps members plan and facilitate each life skills class. Their duties include coordinating with host sites, researching class topics, setting agendas, and scheduling guest speakers. Members with prior public speaking experience are chosen for the teams, who then receive additional training in event planning and facilitation. An emphasis is placed on presenting local "experts in the field" as guest speakers. This helps AASSP participants connect with services provided by other community organizations.

Class topics cover such issues as:

- Career choices;
- Time and stress management;
- Money management;
- Job search skills;
- Parenting tips;
- Dressing for success and makeovers; and
- Health and wellness.





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The AASSP is funded by the Corporation for National and Community Service via the Kentucky Commission on Community Volunteerism and Service and by the Cabinet for Families and Children, the state agency that administers the TANF program. The host agency for staff and fiscal agent is the Big Sandy Area Development District (BSADD) in Prestonsburg, Kentucky. Program partners include the Department for Employment Services, the Department for Community Based Services, Prestonsburg Community College, and the BSADD.

