



OFA Regions V-VIII State Technical Assistance Meeting

July 9–11, 2024 • Westin Denver Downtown • Denver, CO

Reimagining TANF Programs through the Lens of Program Participants

Session 6: Connecting TANF Program Policy and Practice with Participant Experiences and Outcomes



ADMINISTRATION FOR
CHILDREN & FAMILIES
Office of Family Assistance



Overview of the session

- How TANF policies and practices might shape participant experiences and outcomes
- Inspire new ideas
- Improve economic mobility and family well-being





Who we are...

Michelle Derr

Camille Wilson





What is the “adjacent possible”?



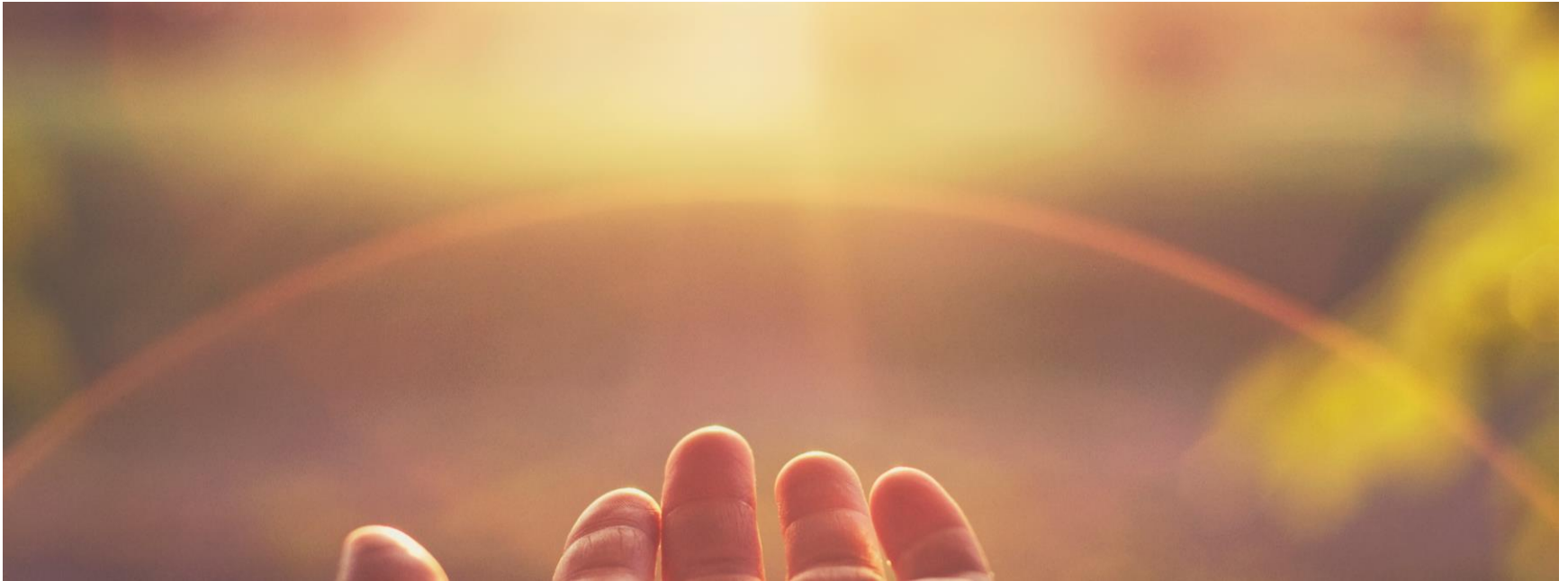


Look at your current program—
your strengths, challenges,
resources, etc.



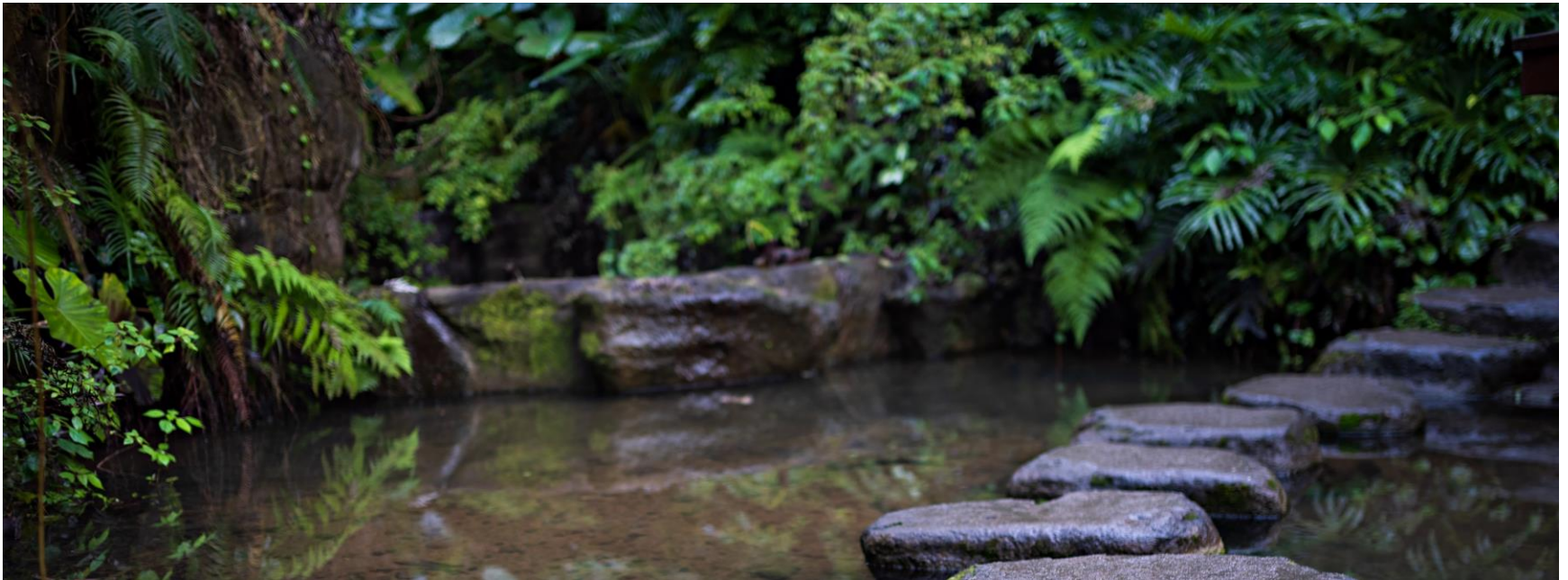


Envision what is possible



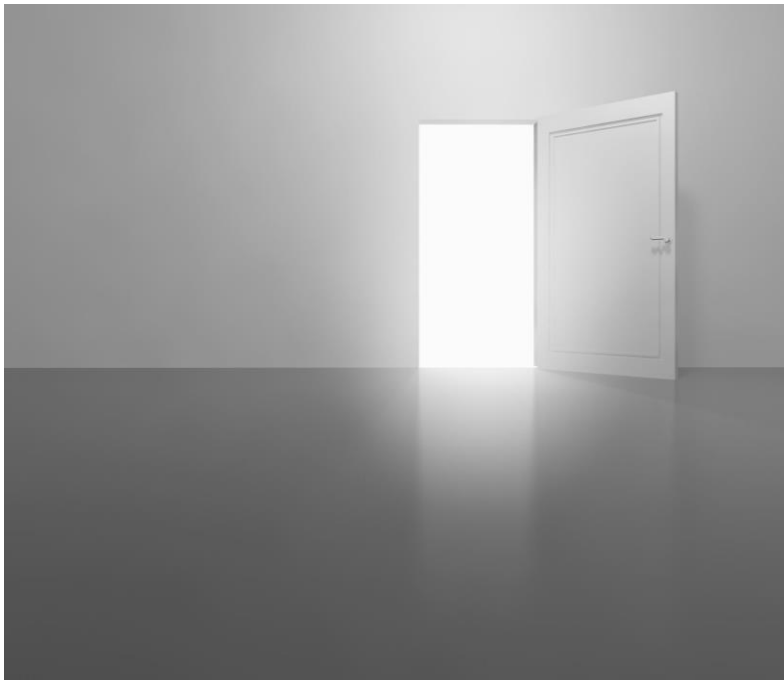


How can you go one step beyond your current state?





We make progress through a series of adjacencies



- Open one door, then another, then another
- You will find lasting, meaningful change





We invite you to explore your adjacent possible





Unpacking the needs of participants





Activity: What do you think participants need to thrive

- Grab a sharpie and some sticky notes
- You will have 3 minutes to write down as many needs as you can think of in each of these categories
- One need per sticky note





Activity (cont.): What do you think participants need to thrive

- Use these categories to inspire your thinking:
 - Resources to address their basic needs and reduce external sources of stress
 - Trusting relationships with their coach or case manager
 - Opportunities to build core skills to improve their economic mobility and life outcomes
 - Wildcard





How state and local TANF programs address the needs of participants through program policies and practices





What participants need

- Resources to address their basic needs and reduce external sources of stress
- Trusting relationships with their coach or case manager
- Opportunities to build core skills to improve their economic mobility and life outcomes

Source: Center on the Developing Child at Harvard University (2021). Three Principles to Improve Outcomes for Children and Families, 2021





Resources to address their basic needs and reduce external sources of stress





Trusting relationships with their coach or case manager





Opportunities to build core skills to improve their economic mobility and life outcomes





Participant-centered policies

- Provide cash and other supports to families
 - Earned income disregard
 - Supportive services
 - Child support pass through
 - Extend child care assistance to working families
- Allow participants to go to school or training beyond 12 months
- Provide flexibility with required hours and activities for families in crisis or who are making steady progress





Participant-centered practices

- Coach rather than process people (not transactional)
- Draw from behavioral science and other evidence about change
- Provide quality, well-implemented services that create meaningful opportunities to families
- Address the needs of the entire family





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Practitioner panel



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Panelists

- Bernadette Beck and Jeremy Ritchie
 - Iowa Promise Jobs
- Nycole Tylka
 - Utah Department of Workforce Services
- Tara LaMont
 - Jefferson County Human Services





Table discussion questions

- What did you like about what you heard?
- What are you curious about?
- What additional questions or information do you want from these program administrators?
- What else is top of mind for you after listening to this panel? What can OFA do to help?





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From evidence and practice to action

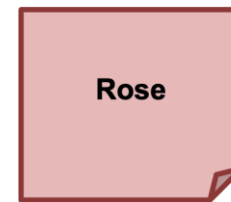


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Rose, Thorn, Bud

- Identify at least two benefits of a family-focused approach (roses=pink)
- At least two things that are potential challenges of a family-focused approach (thorns=blue)
- At least two opportunities for designing a family-focused approach (buds=green)
- 3 minutes of individual brainstorming
- Now, group by topic (not by color)





Full group discussion

