

Data and Reporting Learning Collaborative: Synthesis of Activities and Findings

Office of Family Assistance

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Why the collaborative?

- / The Fiscal Responsibility Act (FRA) has prompted states to think about how they track employment and other outcomes.**
- / States are interested in learning from other states about their data practices.**
- / States also want to know best practices in capturing and using data.**

Vision

/ Help Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) programs strategically use their data to make evidence-driven decisions that can support improved outcomes.



Strategies

- / Help states name and understand what they hope to achieve with their data and why it matters.**
- / Provide states with evidence-informed frameworks, processes, and strategies to support data use.**
- / Help states increase their understanding of how data use can support evidence-driven change.**
- / Support states in learning from our team and each other.**

Who participated?

/ TANF administrators, specialists, and data gurus/geeks from 7 states:

- Arizona, Georgia, New Jersey, New York, North Dakota, South Dakota, West Virginia.

/ On average, 9 TANF state leaders and staff attended the monthly sessions.

Facilitators

- / Michelle Derr and Camille Wilson, *The Adjacent Possible*
- / Ella Gifford-Hawkins, *Mathematica*



How we supported them

- / 60-minute content and discussion session each month for six months.**
- / 30-minute working sessions to define a product (social impact poster [a.k.a. logic model]).**
- / Guest presenter from Utah's Department of Workforce Services on data use.**
- / Subject matter experts in data use and measurement.**

Topics we covered

- / Getting to know you and your data**
- / Supporting evidence-driven organizations**
- / Strengthening TANF data and reporting**
- / Making data actionable (and fun)**
- / Measuring program practices and outcomes**
- / Reflect on, apply, and sustain what you learned**



Session 1: Getting to know you and your data

How states described their data and reporting

- / Clunky
- / Archaic
- / Basic
- / Layered
- / Sturdy

An object that best describes your TANF data, reporting, or both:



Data – the good, the bad, and the ugly

/ Roses:

- Fiscal projection tools
- System integration
- Good working relationships

/ Thorns:

- Too many systems
- Volume of data (high and low)
- System limitations
- Generating the *right* data
- Lack of meaningful reports
- Coordination with other agencies

/ Buds:

- New system/system upgrades
- Working on capturing employment outcomes





Sessions 2: Supporting evidence-driven organizations

LI²: Framework and process model for evidence-driven change (i.e., data use!)



Resources from ACF:
LI² [brief](#) and [practice guide](#)

Dimensions of evidence capacity

- / Leadership
- / Evidence culture
- / Evidence infrastructure
- / Human capital
- / Engagement



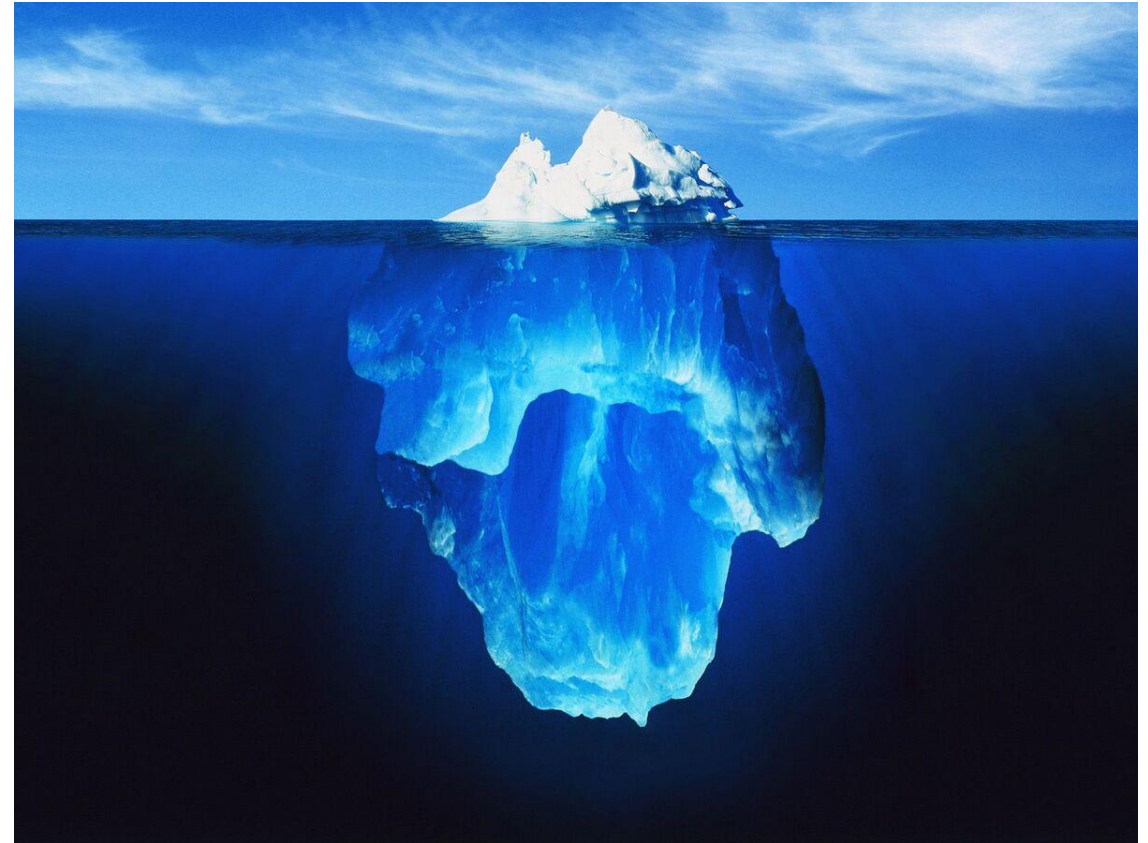
Resources from ACF:
[Brief](#) and [toolkit](#)



Session 3: Strengthening TANF Data and Reporting

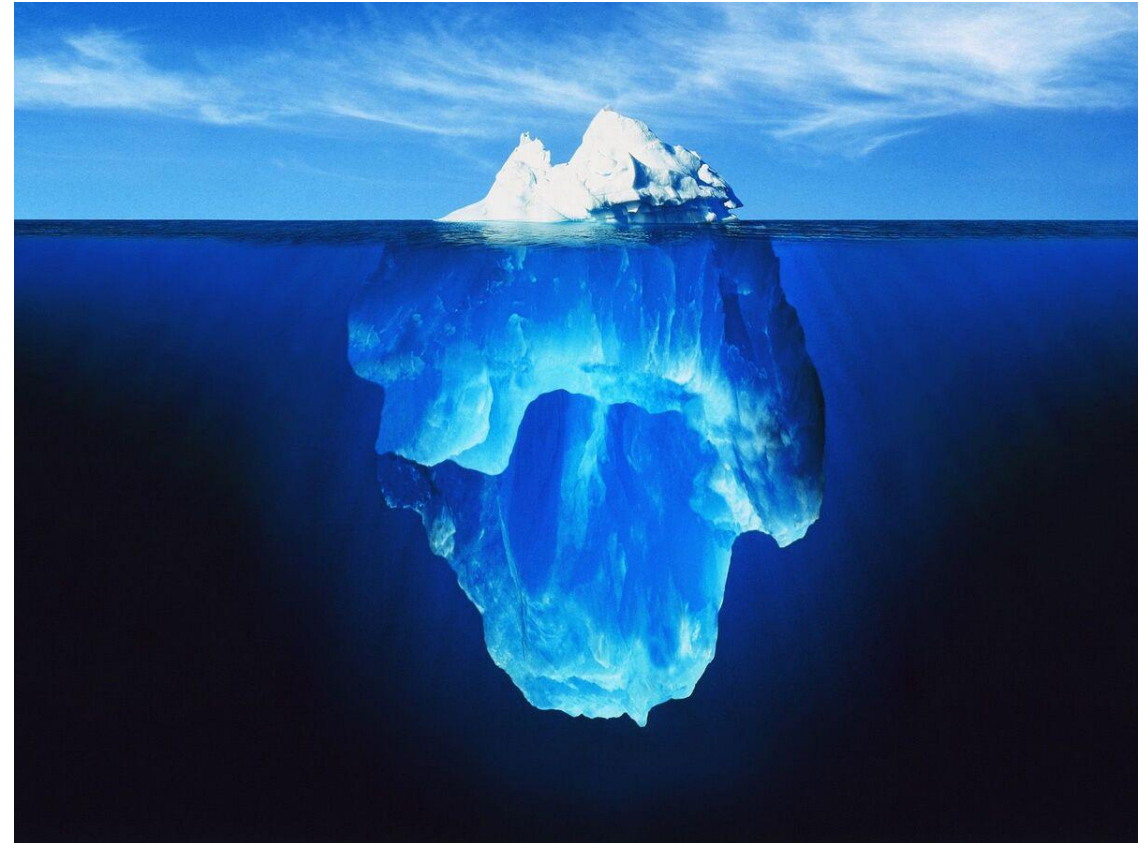
Getting to the bottom of existing data

- / Understand what is above and beneath the surface in reporting.
- / Keep data and reporting lean and intentional.
- / Add only when necessary.



If you *don't*...

- / You accumulate unnecessary “stuff.”
- / You increase the time burden for participants, staff, etc.
- / You take up physical and mental space in the organization.
- / Problems grow back or get worse as time goes on.



Making SPACE for your data

/ Sort

- Consider shared properties of data you are sorting.

/ Purge

- Be intentional about what to keep.

/ Assign a home

- Where will this live so everyone can find it?

/ Containerize

- How will you make sure our data won't get overwhelming again?

/ Equalize

- How do you evolve as information needs change?





Session 4: Making data actionable (and FUN)

Conversation with Nycole Tylka

Utah Department of Workforce Services (DWS)

/ Define your end goal with how you plan to use your data.

- Example from the Upward Mobility Program.

/ Automate anything you can.

- Example: MyCASE is client-facing portal, operates like turbo tax (e.g., update demographic and wage data, report participation hours, upload pay stubs, etc.)

/ Cultivate strong data partnerships that can help you use data to shape policy and practice.

- University of Utah's Social Research Institute to shape policy and practice.

/ Use data to tell your story, what works and what doesn't.





Session 5: Measuring TANF program practices and outcomes

Seasoned researchers shared guiding principles of measurement with states

/ **Content**

- Does it represent what you want it to?

/ **Clarity**

- Is it easy to understand?

/ **Consistency**

- Can it capture what you want in the same way across people, places, and things (reliability)?

/ **Coverage**

- Can you capture it fully and equitably across the population of interest?

/ **Function**

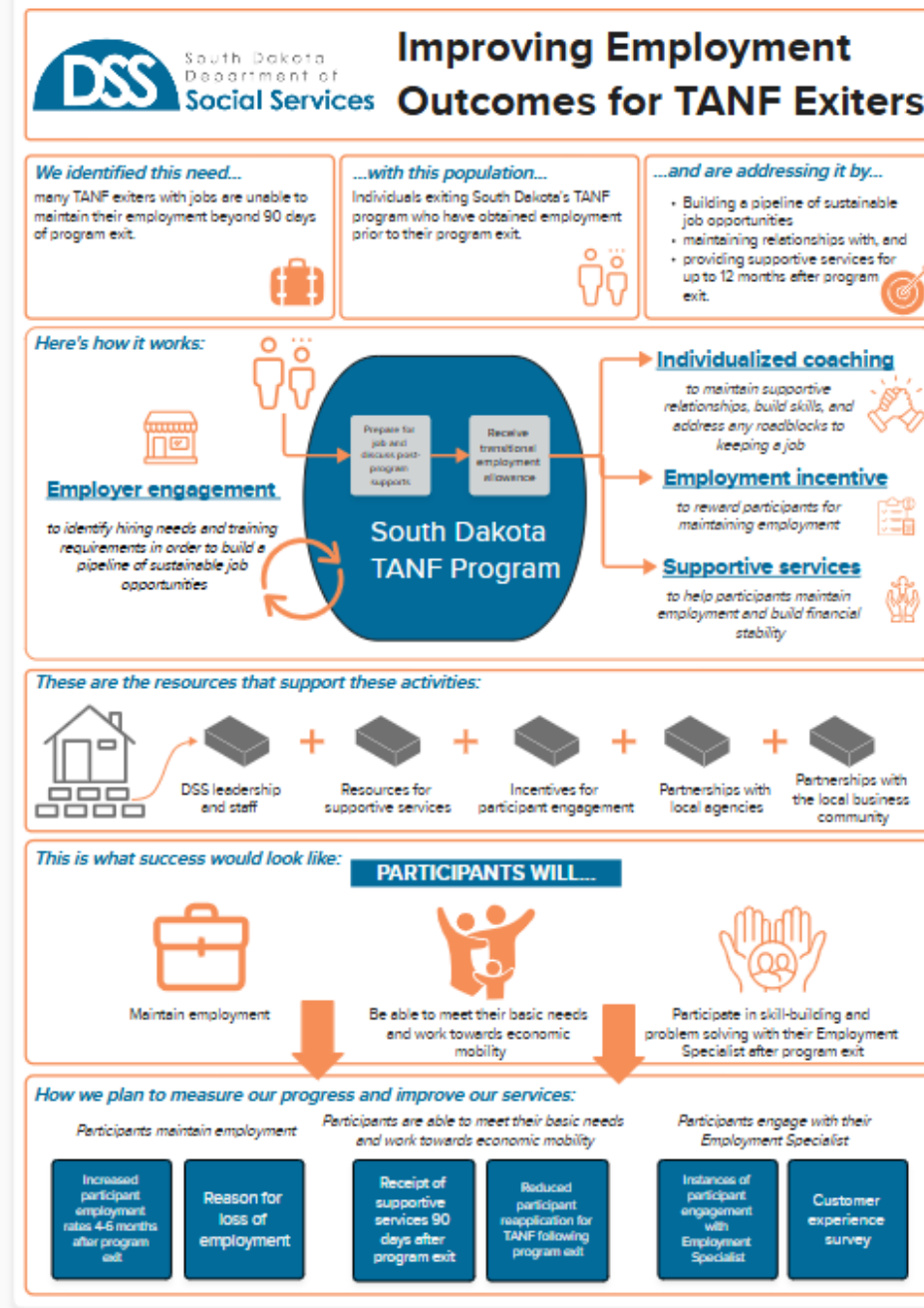
- Does it meet the purpose(s)? How will you use the data?

/ **Feasibility**

- Can you collect the information within reasonable time and costs?

Product from our working sessions: South Dakota team

Social Impact Poster (draft)



Their initiative



South Dakota
Department of
Social Services

Improving Employment Outcomes for TANF Exiters

We identified this need...

many TANF exiters with jobs are unable to maintain their employment beyond 90 days of program exit.



...with this population...

individuals exiting South Dakota's TANF program who have obtained employment prior to their program exit.

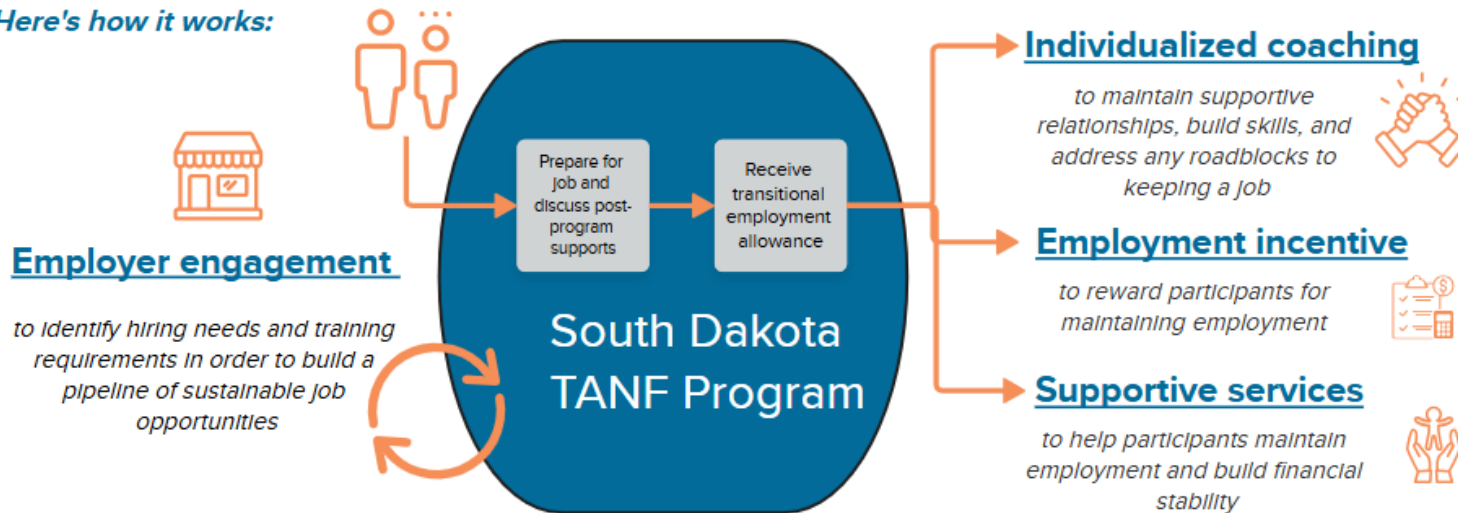


...and are addressing it by...

- Building a pipeline of sustainable job opportunities
- maintaining relationships with, and
- providing supportive services for up to 12 months after program exit.



Here's how it works:



How they plan to measure success

Exercise in defining data and reporting

This is what success would look like:

PARTICIPANTS WILL...



Maintain employment



Be able to meet their basic needs
and work towards economic
mobility



Participate in skill-building and
problem solving with their Employment
Specialist after program exit

How we plan to measure our progress and improve our services:

Participants maintain employment

Increased
participant
employment
rates 4-6 months
after program
exit

Reason for
loss of
employment

*Participants are able to meet their basic needs
and work towards economic mobility*

Receipt of
supportive
services 90
days after
program exit

Reduced
participant
reapplication for
TANF following
program exit

*Participants engage with their
Employment Specialist*

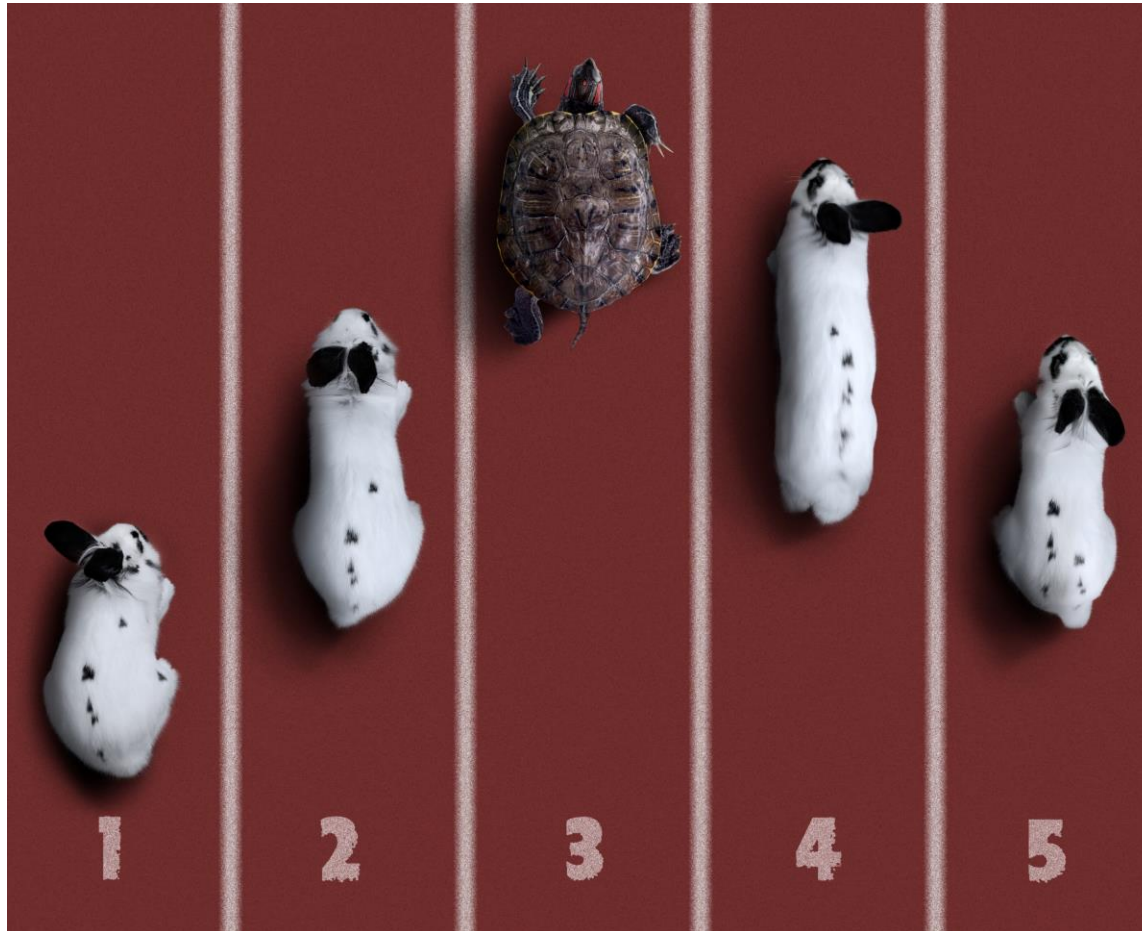
Instances of
participant
engagement
with
Employment
Specialist

Customer
experience
survey



What we learned from states

States are in different places with their data and reporting



Limited capacities, lots of uncertainty

/ States who participated in the collaborative had limited data capacities.

- Data systems were clunky and outdated (one state still on black and green screens).
- Staff had limited capacity to use data for program improvement.

/ States expressed uncertainty about how the FRA requirements would influence how they capture and report data.

States were interested in

- / Using data more efficiently and effectively to make policy and program decisions.**
- / Collecting and organizing their data.**
- / Using their data to show program successes.**
- / Meeting federal reporting requirements.**
- / Capturing educational outcomes.**

The rock STAR team

For more information, contact [Steve McLaine](#) and [Damon Waters](#)

