



TANF Works!

TANF/WIOA
COLLABORATION SERIES
2019 - 02

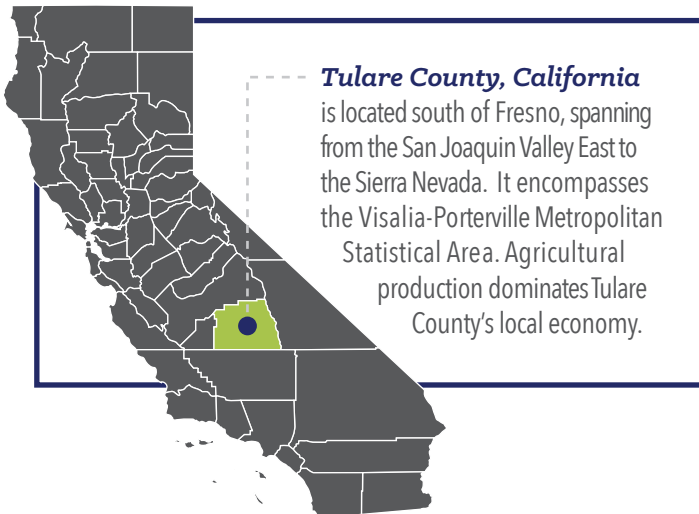
Tulare County, California

TANF/WIOA COLLABORATION

Since the passage of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) in 2014, many state Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) and workforce system leaders have focused efforts to coordinate client services serving low-income or vulnerable populations. WIOA makes TANF a mandatory partner unless the Governor opted out. Coordination efforts are meant to improve service delivery and reduce duplication.

This brief highlights emerging TANF and WIOA agency collaboration practices among TANF and the American Job Centers in Tulare County, California in the following areas:

FIGURE 1: Map of Tulare County



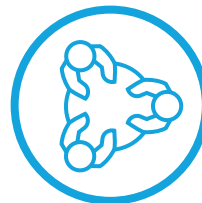
Joint Service Delivery

through co-enrollment and referrals from WIOA job center staff to TANF supportive services



Resource Sharing

through co-location and resource-sharing agreements



Shared Learning

through cross-training, meetings, and data sharing



Managing Collaborative Activities

through joint review of performance outcomes and remediation as needed

Local Services Overview

CalWORKS and Welfare-to-Work. Under the umbrella of TulareWORKs, the Tulare County Health & Human Services Agency (HHS) provides employment services to both CalWORKS (California's TANF program) and SNAP Employment & Training participants. HHS case workers determine initial and continuing eligibility for CalWORKS benefits. Work-eligible individuals who apply for CalWORKS are required to participate in the Welfare-to-Work (WTW) program, which offers employment and training services to help participants achieve self-sufficiency through employment. Participation in the approved WTW activity is monitored by a case worker at one of five HHS offices located throughout the county. The HHS case worker delivers services to participants, including barrier removal assistance, life skills development, work experience opportunities, job readiness and job search assistance.

TulareWORKs participants can request to receive employment and training services at one of the job centers (described below). For WTW participants, the case worker submits the referral to the provider for the job search activity. Non-WTW participants can seek services on their own. The job search program provides case management, job readiness workshops that cover basic job seeking and interviewing skills, and connection to job training opportunities with the subsidized employment activity. WTW participants can choose to participate in the Expanded Subsidized Employment (ESE) activity, which connects them with meaningful job placements as a stepping stone to unsubsidized employment.

Employment Connection Centers. The Workforce Investment Board of Tulare County (WIB) administers two comprehensive Employment Connection job centers (offering WIOA basic and individualized career services and training) and two affiliate centers. A local community action agency operates the Employment Connection centers as part of the America's Job Centers of California network.



JOINT SERVICE DELIVERY

Co-enrollment gives TANF participants access to WIOA and partner services within the job center.

Co-enrollment in WIOA. Since 2009, the WIB has enrolled self-referred TANF participants seeking services in WIA (and now WIOA) basic and individualized career services and training through its Integrated Service Delivery (ISD) system at the Employment Connection job centers. These participants register for WIOA and meet with a career coach. Together, they complete a comprehensive assessment and an action plan that provides resources and services that lead to education and/or employment. The participant is highly encouraged to develop a resume, learn interviewing skills, and attend employer meet-and-greet sessions. TANF participants may also receive WIOA training such as transitional job, on-the-job, or occupational skills training. Most of these co-enrollments are into WIOA Adult or Dislocated Worker programs. Participants can also enroll in Migrant and Seasonal Farmworker services if they have experience with agricultural work.

Co-enrollment in ESE. As of 2018, the HHS refers approximately 500-600 CalWORKs WTW participants annually to the ESE transitional employment program. Of these referrals, approximately 300 enroll in ESE for subsidized employment, and about one-third of these 300 cases transition to unsubsidized employment. Most job-ready TANF participants are now served

through ESE. HHS contracts ESE services from the local workforce board, which in turn contracts out to the same two providers that operate the job centers and affiliate sites.

The partners also co-enroll TANF participants in WIOA Title III, providing ESE participants access to job search workshops, the computer lab, and the center's resource room. Participants may also apply for WIOA on-the-job training or occupational skills training based on their needs. The Employment Connection service providers may refer and/or enroll participants in other workforce-system funded programs, including Dislocated Worker services, apprenticeships, and sector training initiatives.

Referrals to request TANF supportive services for eligible WTW participants. Job center career coaches can refer participants to a TulareWORKs case worker to request supportive services such as childcare, transportation, clothing, or car repairs. The case worker will determine if the WTW participants are eligible for additional services and identify resources that may be available to assist their participation in the approved WTW activity. To make referrals in either direction, Tulare HHS staff and Employment Connection staff use an email protocol, with a designated email address and a set of forms created for this purpose. The job center staff first completes a change in circumstance form; another form is used to provide updates on the WTW participant throughout program participation.

To support the ongoing coordination of services, each Tulare WORKs office assigns a staff liaison (plus at least one back-up liaison) for communicating with the job center providers. This liaison keeps track of email messages for the TANF case workers and distributes messages to the appropriate worker. This role is especially important with last-minute requests or issues that may arise for a co-enrolled participant. If either partner has a question or a concern about a shared participant, the front-line staff member will bring the concern to their contact person (Employment Connection or TulareWORKs), who will reach out to the other partner to connect the workers who are interacting directly with the participant.

Services adapted to rural area. The local workforce development board selected service providers that are also Community Action agencies, and local job center programs can be customized for English language learners and for migrant and seasonal agricultural workers. One of the operators has a mobile employment center within a specially equipped 36-foot vehicle, which is used to deliver Wagner-Peyser Employment Services to customers including TANF participants throughout the region.

“ If TulareWORKS-referred participants were not co-enrolled in WIOA and working with Employment Connection staff, they would not be exposed to some of the resources that are available to them.

- A WIOA TEAM MEMBER



SHARED LEARNING

Cross-training, work groups, and shared databases help staff gather and exchange information about clients.

Cross-training staff. Because the ESE program is operated within the Employment Connection system, TANF participants benefit from receiving services from co-located staff who are trained across programs to provide WIOA services.

Participating in work groups. Staff of the WIB, service providers, and HHSA serve on Employment Connection Committee work groups to develop referral processes and cross-training for co-located staff and agency partners located off-site. In addition, through an ESE Peer-to-Peer work group, staff share best practices with their counterparts in partner agencies. Topics include methods to increase job retention, meeting work participation rates, maintaining contact with participants, and recruiting employers to provide job sites for participants. In spring 2018, HHSA TulareWORKs and the job center providers coordinated a Meet and Greet event to enhance collaboration among the partners and to identify opportunities to strengthen service coordination. During the event, providers presented an overview of their programs and participant flow processes to front-line staff.

Data sharing. During the 2015-2016 WIOA program year, the Employment Connection system transitioned its TANF-ESE program participation tracking from paper files to an online management information system (MIS), EmploymentConnect.org. TANF participants are now co-enrolled in WIOA by creating a case file in the same system as WIOA participants. These records are uploaded to the Employment Development Department (EDD) MIS, capturing WIOA performance for TANF participants through EDD wage records. These outcomes are shared with TulareWORKs staff and managers. This “virtual one-stop” is also a portal to the state’s CalJOBS MIS, and allows the job center operators to assign funding codes to ESE and WIOA co-enrollments.



RESOURCE SHARING

Shared spaces and resource agreements help partners coordinate the delivery of employment services.

Co-location of some TANF employment services. The WIB’s service providers are contracted to provide several types of employment services to TANF participants, including a weeklong job search program and the ESE program. These activities supplement employment and training services that are provided directly by TANF (TulareWORKs) case workers who are located at HHSA offices.

Resource-sharing agreements. Although most CalWORKs services are not co-located at the comprehensive Employment Connection centers, the partners have a resource-sharing agreement that outlines how TANF funding from Tulare HHSA contributes resources to the job center’s operations, as required by WIOA.



We use information that we collect to leverage outcomes and expectations, and to let us see where we are. We discuss both parties' goals and look at the numbers together.

- A TANF TEAM MEMBER



MANAGING COLLABORATIVE ACTIVITIES

Cross-program meetings allow partners to regularly assess and improve their service delivery.

Quarterly reviews of performance data. Staff at the Employment Connection Centers, affiliate sites, and TulareWORKs have formal quarterly meetings to review joint program performance data. They work together to resolve service-coordination and service-delivery challenges for their shared TANF participants. These joint meetings allow the partners to design course corrections as needed, and to communicate with their management teams.

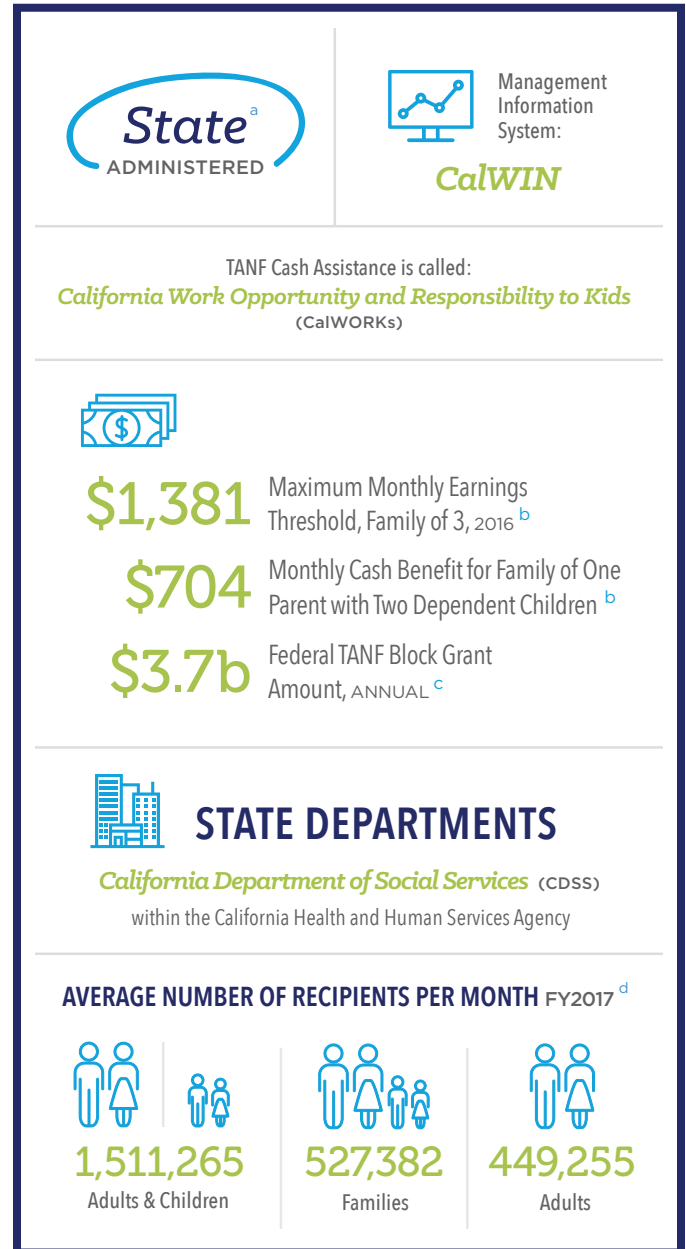
TANF and WIOA Eligibility and Services in California

TANF. California's TANF cash benefit is known as California Work Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids (CalWORKs). CalWORKs provides cash payments for up to 48 months to low-income families with dependent children. In addition, work-eligible adult CalWORKs participants are required to participate in the CalWORKs Welfare-to-Work (WTW) program, which offers employment and training services including job readiness, job search assistance, short-term job training, longer-term vocational education, adult basic education, unpaid work experience or community work experience, subsidized employment, unsubsidized employment, or on-the-job training. A CalWORKs diversion program offers an alternative to eligible CalWORKs applicants by providing a one-time lump sum payment to meet a specific need.

All TANF programming is administered by the California Health and Human Services Agency. TANF services are delivered locally by each county's Social/Human Services Agency. In addition to CalWORKs benefits, eligible WTW participants receive supportive services to participate in approved WTW activities. Supportive services include transportation costs, child care, and

ancillary expenses which include clothing specifically required for employment, cost of books, tools, and other necessary costs. WTW participants may be eligible for Post Aid Supportive Services for up to 12 months after their CalWORKs case is closed due to earnings and/or employment.

TABLE S.1: California TANF Snapshot



SOURCES: (a) A Descriptive Study of County- versus State-Administered Temporary Assistance for Needy Families Programs (https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/opre/county_tanf_final_report_submitted_to_acf_b508.pdf); (b) State TANF Policies: A Graphical Overview of State TANF Policies as of July 2016 (https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/opre/wrd_2016_databook_companion_piece_05_15_18_508.pdf); (c) Analysis of the Human Services Budget, 2017-18. Legislative Analyst's Office (<https://lao.ca.gov/Publications/Report/3576/1>); (d) TANF Caseload Data 2017 (<https://www.acf.hhs.gov/ofa/resource/tanf-caseload-data-2017>)

WIOA. California’s WIOA implementation began in 2015, building on a state-level planning process that incorporated efforts to align TANF and workforce services. Following the state’s lead, 46 local workforce areas developed local WIOA implementation plans that incorporated TANF/WIOA alignment goals. The principal WIOA services offered to job center customers include labor-exchange/job search assistance, individualized career services, job readiness preparation,

adult basic education, and occupational skills training. Some WIOA-funded programs also offer supportive services such as child care, transportation, tools and equipment, and uniforms. Most WIOA-funded services are available to individuals regardless of income, but many programs prioritize serving low-income individuals or those having one or more barriers to employment, such as recipients of CalWORKs cash assistance or other public benefits.

TABLE S.2: California WIOA Snapshot



SOURCES: (a) WIOA State Plan for The State of California (https://cwdb.ca.gov/plans_policies/wioa_unified_strategic_workforce_development_plan/); (b) Program Year (PY) 2017 Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Allotments; PY 2017 Wagner-Peyser Act Final Allotments and PY 2017 Workforce Information Grants (<https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2017/06/15/2017-12336/program-year-py-2017-workforce-innovation-and-opportunity-act-wioa-allotments-py-2017-wagner-peyser>)

Resources

- **Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Overview:**
<https://www.doleta.gov/WIOA/Overview.cfm>
- **USDHHS OFA PeerTA TANF/WIOA Resource Hub:**
<https://peerta.acf.hhs.gov/ofa-initiative/426>
- **USDOL TA Hub:**
<https://ion.workforcegps.org/>

This brief is based primarily on conversations conducted in spring-summer 2018 with WIOA and TANF program staff in Tulare County. For more information about the content in this brief, contact Roxanna Cruz, Health & Human Services Employment Services Unit Manager (RCruz@tularehhsa.org) or Mary Rodarte, Workforce Services Analyst, Workforce Investment Board of Tulare County (MRodarte@tularewb.org). Christine Johnston and Mallory Undestad (MDRC) and Audrey Hathorn (Public Strategies) were the IIEESS site visit team members.

Suggested Citation: MDRC and Public Strategies (2019). “Tulare County, California: TANF/WIOA Collaboration.” In TANF Works! TANF/WIOA Collaboration. Washington, DC: Office of Family Assistance, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

The Integrating Innovative Employment and Economic Stability Strategies (IIEESS) initiative of the Office of Family Assistance (OFA), under contract number HHSP23337005T, publishes briefs and materials that document the collaboration between Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) and public workforce systems under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). This material is intended to encourage peer learning among state and local actors so that low-income individuals can effectively access employment and family support services.