



TANF Works!

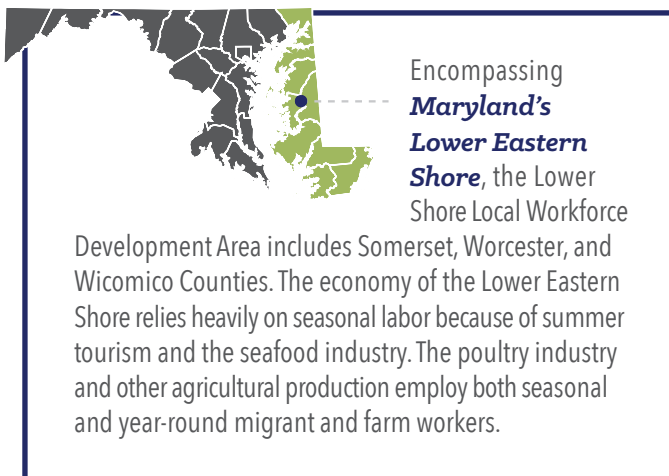
TANF/WIOA
COLLABORATION SERIES
2019 - 07

Maryland's Lower Eastern Shore

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.

FIGURE 1: Map of Lower Eastern Shore



This brief highlights emerging TANF and WIOA agency collaboration practices among TANF agencies and American Job Centers on Maryland's Lower Eastern Shore in the following areas:



Joint Service Delivery

through TANF staff promoting WIOA services, common assessment tools, streamlined referrals to WIOA, and a mobile job center



Resource Sharing

through co-location and a resource sharing agreement



Shared Learning

through cross-training of staff and information exchanges



Managing Collaborative Activities

through cross-program management meetings and committee representation

Local Services Overview

The Lower Shore Workforce Alliance (a division of the Tri-County Council for the Lower Eastern Shore of Maryland) operates the American Job Center in Salisbury, Maryland (in Wicomico County). This job center location serves a tri-county region that includes Wicomico, Worcester, and Somerset counties. In addition to the staff of the Lower Shore Workforce Alliance, which delivers Title I Adult and Dislocated Worker Services, the WIOA providers that are housed within the job center include:

WIOA PROVIDER	FUNCTION
<i>Maryland Department of Labor, Licensing, and Regulation (DLLR)</i>	Delivering Wagner-Peyser Employment Services, Trade Adjustment Assistance activities, Jobs for Veterans State Grants, and unemployment compensation
<i>Maryland Department of Education Division of Rehabilitation Services</i>	Delivering Vocational Rehabilitation services
<i>Telamon Corporation</i>	Delivering WIOA Title I Youth services and migrant and seasonal farmworker services
<i>Wor-Wic Community College</i>	Operating largely off-site, but delivering WIOA Adult Education services, the job center's computer lab services, and most of the Lower Shore's WIOA-funded occupational skills training

A mobile job center, built inside a large bus, delivers selected WIOA services within the other two counties in the region. A WIOA affiliate office in Somerset County also provides Employment Service (Wagner-Peyser) job search services. WIOA Title I Adult, Youth and Dislocated Worker services are provided at the main job center location in Salisbury.

Maryland Department of Human Services (DSS) staff in each county determine initial and continuing eligibility for TANF Temporary Cash Assistance (TCA) benefits. Customers may apply for TCA and receive individual job counseling services (including monitoring for compliance with work requirements) at DSS offices located within each county. TCA recipients can also receive both eligibility and TANF employment services at the Salisbury job center, where the Wicomico County DSS job counseling staff are housed. These DSS staff members deliver employment services to TCA recipients. In addition, an on-site regional retention specialist offers supports such as transportation assistance to individuals who have left TCA cash assistance due to employment.

TANF staff promoting WIOA services. During initial TANF customer orientations and individual case management sessions, DSS staff highlight job center resources and WIOA-funded opportunities. For example, DSS staff identify customers who may benefit from WIOA-funded Adult Education or from particular WIOA occupational skills training tracks. TANF staff refer customers to (Wagner-Peyser) Employment Services for one-on-one help.

Using common assessment tools. All WIOA partners use the same assessment instruments: CASAS Reading Life and Work Series and CASAS Math Life Skills Series. Job centers customers only need to take one set of assessments that can be shared with all job center service providers.

Streamlining referrals to WIOA. Using a grant from Maryland DLLR, the Lower Shore job center designed new enrollment procedures for WIOA Adult and Dislocated Worker training services. An independent consultant trained LSWA staff in using a "lean process" approach to assess current enrollment processes and identify ways to streamline them. The staff aimed to improve the customer experience by reducing the length of time it takes to begin services and the number of in-person visits to the job center. Implementing these new procedures in Spring 2018, the job center now offers immediate access to a WIOA counselor (eliminating job center orientations) and less paperwork. Front-line TANF staff cite these changes as enabling them to connect their customers more rapidly with WIOA staff.



JOINT SERVICE DELIVERY

Lower Shore job center partners streamline their assessment and referral processes for TANF and WIOA services, and offer cross-program access to employment services.

Cross-program access to job leads, business services, and employer initiatives. Wicomico County DSS employs a regional job developer who focuses primarily on identifying employment opportunities that match TCA recipients' skills and experience. This TANF job developer is also part of the job center's Business Services Team, led by WIOA staff. The job developer compiles a weekly newsletter to share employment and training opportunities with customers, TANF staff, and partners.

Collaborating to implement a "reverse job fair." The job center partners have piloted boot-camp workshops, where customers participate in a "reverse job fair." Job seekers set up tables with posters about themselves, while employers approach them and can conduct on-the-spot interviews. To prepare for the initial pilot, job center partners helped job seekers refine their resumes, prepare for interviews, and create a display board to showcase their skills and abilities. Job seekers registered in Maryland Workforce Exchange, the primary job search database used by WIOA partners. Both WIOA and TANF staff took part in planning and preparing for the event, and recruited their customers to participate.

Providing supports for TANF clients in rural, disperse areas. Some TANF clients live or work in areas without public transit options, such as newly employed hospitality workers with erratic shift schedules. TANF staff have arranged a cost-effective subsidy of their end-of-shift commutes, using pre-arrangements with on-call taxi cabs to connect workers to public bus stops. Also, because this three-county region hosts only one comprehensive job center plus one affiliate job center, the local workforce board funded the creation of its mobile job center to deliver Wagner-Peyser Employment Service to customers including TANF recipients throughout the region.

“ It used to be that you had to sign up for an orientation [at the Job Center], and it was a lengthy process. Now, anyone can come in, whether they're our customer or not, and go to the front desk and say 'I want to talk to someone about the employment classes,' and they'll call a case manager to come down and talk to them right here — which is something we weren't able to do before.

- A TANF TEAM MEMBER



RESOURCE SHARING

Job center partners share spaces, staff, and services to meet the needs of customers on site.

Co-location. The Wicomico County DSS has been co-located within the Lower Shore job center since 2002. Wicomico DSS staff may provide TCA intake and other TANF services to residents of any county in Maryland.

Sharing financial resources. In 2017 the partners finalized a Resource Sharing Agreement that outlines how each partner contributes resources to building operations, including direct funding, leveraged funding, and in-kind support. The Lower Shore Workforce Alliance (LSWA) provides certain staff services to all job center partners, using WIOA funds. These include a facilities coordinator and a receptionist. Adult Education providers that are not located in the job center may use classroom space within the job center at no direct cost.

Other services available to any customers participating in an on-site activity include child care and language services. Wicomico County DSS funds and staffs a drop-in daycare service at the job center for both TANF and non-TANF participants. Telamon Corporation, also located at the job center, employs multi-lingual staff who can assist limited-English speakers with their needs within the building. Spanish and Haitian-Creole are the primary languages available for interpretation. Additionally, TANF customers at the job center can enroll in an on-site food service training program that is operated by Telamon alongside its WIOA services.



SHARED LEARNING

Formal events, newsletter updates, and regular meetings promote information-sharing among all staff and agencies within the job center.

Establishing connections. The job center holds formal events to increase its partners' knowledge about their respective programs, services, and staff roles. The center previously held a Partner Meet and Greet event so that all building staff could get to know each other. A follow-on event was structured like a service fair, where job center partners set up tables and shared details about specific programs with building employees.

Exchanging information about available services. A quarterly newsletter, emailed by the job center operator to all agencies and staff within the center, includes information about scheduled workshops, training classes, and other events. "News blast" notices provide additional information, such as updates about changes to partners' core program services and activities, between quarterly newsletters.

The job center's Business Service Team also meets quarterly. This cross-program group includes staff from any job center partner agency with business-facing responsibilities in the three-county region. Meeting topics include sharing information about employment opportunities in the community and planning employer engagement activities. Job center partners' leaders and managers participate in job-center-hosted meetings that engage a broader set of external partners, such as Shore Transit.

Oversight of local WIOA implementation. Currently the director of the Wicomico County DSS serves on the Lower Shore Workforce Development Board (LSWDB). Directors of the other two county DSS agencies rotate in to serve every two years. The Wicomico County DSS retention specialist recently was appointed to a Youth Standing Advisory Committee, which assists the LSWDB's Youth Standing Committee in coordinating youth policies, ensuring quality services, leveraging financial and programmatic resources, and recommending eligible youth service providers.

Cross-program management meetings. DSS staff from all three counties participate in the job center's leadership group, which meets quarterly and includes directors and supervisors from each job center partner. Members of the group share information about recent or upcoming administrative and service-delivery developments within each agency, and discuss job center facilities issues. The leadership team also periodically convenes task-focused work groups. In the past, the leadership team and its work groups focused on topics such as the development of the local WIOA plan, partner MOUs, cross-training needs, and referral protocols.

“ For a long time everyone worked in their own silos – one provider is here, another is over there, yet another is down there...and everyone kind of stayed in their lane. This wasn't a good way to work. We were pretty much just neighbors in the same community.

- A TANF TEAM MEMBER



MANAGING COLLABORATIVE ACTIVITIES

Job center operations are managed by the state, local committees, and cross-program leadership.

TANF agency involvement in local WIOA plan development. The Lower Shore's WIOA Local Plan follows TANF-integration guidance established within the Maryland WIOA Combined State Plan. The state directed local areas, including the Lower Shore, to expand partnerships between TCA and WIOA and better align these programs at the local level. Wicomico, Somerset, and Worcester County Assistant Directors of Family Investment are part of the WIOA leadership team, and they were involved in developing the local plan.

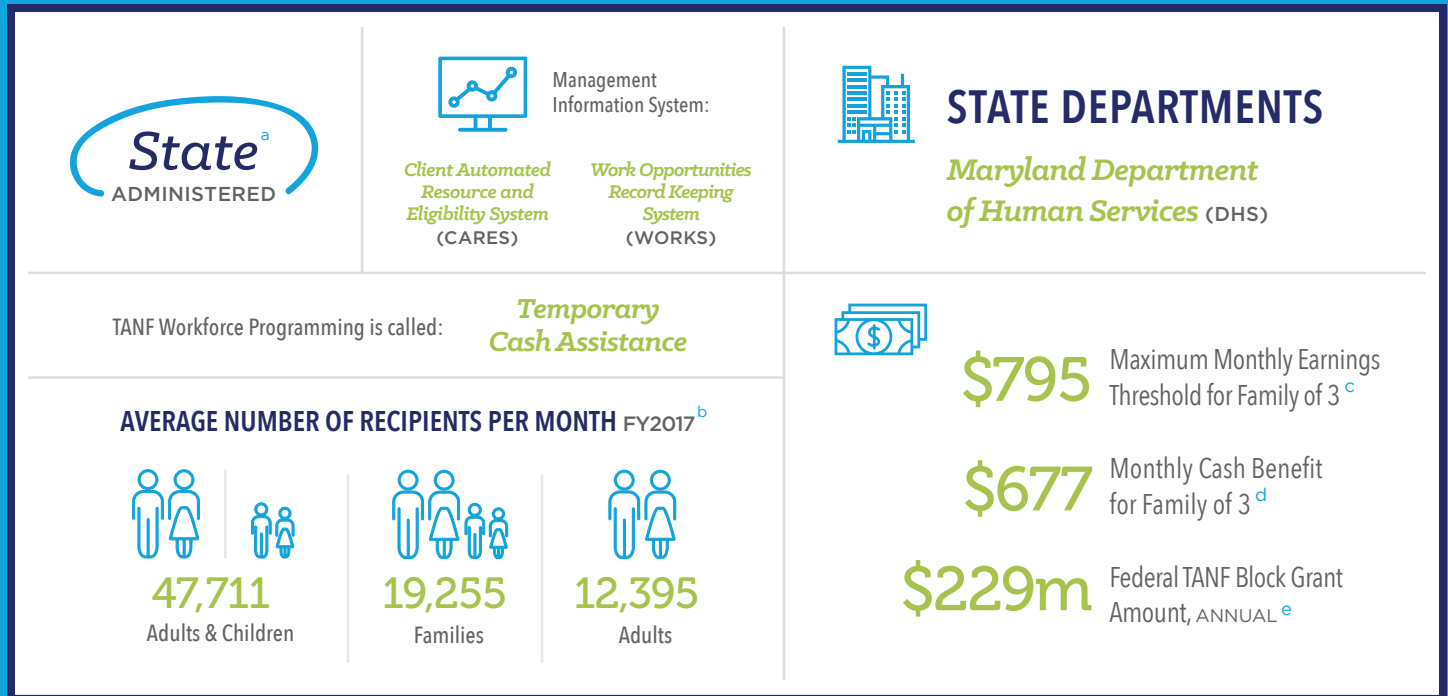


TANF and WIOA Eligibility and Services in Maryland

TANF. Maryland's TANF cash benefit program is known as Temporary Cash Assistance (TCA). TCA provides cash payments to low-income families with dependent children (SEE TABLE S.1). Work-eligible adult TCA recipients also receive employment services – including work readiness, job search assistance, short-term job training, longer-term vocational education, community work experience, on-the-job training, and subsidized employment – through the Work Opportunities Program.

TANF programming is administered by the Maryland Department of Human Services, Family Investment Administration. TANF services are delivered locally by each county's Department of Social Services (DSS). In addition to cash assistance, employed TANF recipients may request work supports such as assistance with transportation, child care, and work clothing expenses. Employment supports may also be available for up to four months after the closing of a TCA case; a TANF retention specialist coordinates the issuance of such supports. Maryland TANF funding can also be used to award grants to help families avoid enrolling (or re-enrolling) in TCA.

TABLE S.1: Maryland 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) TANF Caseload Data 2017 (<https://www.acf.hhs.gov/ofa/resource/tanf-caseload-data-2017>); (c) 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); (d) Maryland DHS Family Investment Administration, Action Transmittal dated November 6, 2017 (<https://dhr.maryland.gov/documents/FIA/Action%20Transmittals/AT2018/18-09%20AT%20TCA%20Benefit%20Increase%202018.doc>); (e) Reduced to \$228 Million in federal fiscal years 2017 and 2018. Overview of the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families Program In Maryland (<http://dls.maryland.gov/pubs/prod/HHS/Overview-of-the-Temporary-Assistance-for-Needy-Families-Program-in-Maryland.pdf>)

WIOA. The principal WIOA services offered to job center customers include labor-exchange/job search assistance, individualized career services, work readiness preparation, adult basic education, and occupational skills training (SEE TABLE S.2). 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.

Maryland’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, twelve local workforce areas developed local WIOA implementation plans that incorporated TANF/WIOA alignment goals.

TABLE S.2: Maryland TANF Snapshot

	<p>One-Stop Job Centers: Maryland’s American Job Centers (Formerly called Maryland One-Stop Job Markets)</p>	 Management Information System: Maryland Workforce Exchange								
 State Departments^a <p>Department of Labor, Licensing, and Regulation Division of Workforce Development & Adult Learning: Adult, Youth, and Dislocated Worker (Title I); Adult Education and Family Literacy (Title II); and Employment Service/Wagner-Peyser (Title III)</p> <p>Maryland State Department of Education, Division of Rehabilitation Services: Vocational Rehabilitation (as amended by Title IV)</p>	 2017 ALLOTMENTS^c <table border="0"> <tr> <td>\$12.2m</td> <td>Employment Service (Wagner-Peyser) Federal Appropriation</td> </tr> <tr> <td>\$12.4m</td> <td>WIOA Adult Federal Appropriation</td> </tr> <tr> <td>\$13.4m</td> <td>WIOA Youth Federal Appropriation</td> </tr> <tr> <td>\$16.6m</td> <td>WIOA Dislocated Worker Federal Appropriation</td> </tr> </table>		\$12.2m	Employment Service (Wagner-Peyser) Federal Appropriation	\$12.4m	WIOA Adult Federal Appropriation	\$13.4m	WIOA Youth Federal Appropriation	\$16.6m	WIOA Dislocated Worker Federal Appropriation
\$12.2m	Employment Service (Wagner-Peyser) Federal Appropriation									
\$12.4m	WIOA Adult Federal Appropriation									
\$13.4m	WIOA Youth Federal Appropriation									
\$16.6m	WIOA Dislocated Worker Federal Appropriation									

SOURCES: (a) WIOA State Plan for The State of Maryland (<http://www.dlir.maryland.gov/wdplan/wdstateplan.pdf>); (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 with WIOA and TANF administrators associated with the tri-county region of Wicomico, Somerset, and Worcester Counties and with leadership and staff at an American Job Center located in Salisbury, Maryland (Wicomico County). For more information about the content in this brief, contact Susan Hill (Susan.Hill@maryland.gov) or Becca Webster (rwebster@tcclesmd.org). Michelle Manno (MDRC) and Katherine Cooper (Public Strategies) were the IIEESS site visit team members.

Suggested Citation: MDRC and Public Strategies (2019). “Maryland’s Lower Eastern Shore: 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.