

**Urban Partnerships for Welfare  
Reform: National Academy**

*Getting to Full Engagement through  
Integrated Case Management*

**Houston**

# Pay for Performance

(Implemented September 03)

- **Work First** - Immediate attachment to the workforce.
- Families receive first month of benefits up front. Families are only entitled to receive subsequent benefits if they cooperate with **all** program requirements.
- Benefits are not restored until the family complies with **all** program requirements.
- Two consecutive months of noncompliance results in denial of the TANF case. Family must reapply and demonstrate cooperation for one month to restore benefits.

# Gulf Coast Region (Houston)

- 13 County Region – 4.5 million residents (1.9 million in Houston)
- Local Workforce Board – 63 members
- TANF Caseloads – approx. 8,000
- Federal TANF Participation Rate:  
Apr'06=57.62%; YTD= 51.88%

# System Wide Change

- Workforce Board – strategic plan
- Core Values, Mission, and Vision
- Business Service Model – meet needs of Business
- Resources – doing more with less
- Change affected our work with all customers including TANF recipients

# Changes We Made

- Language – more like business
- Office Design – better customer flow
- Service – customer lead, value added
- Created 3 Levels of Service: Basic, Expanded and Financial Aid
- Organization of Staff - by job function not program
- Accountability – customers, staff, management

# Changes for TANF

- Recruitment – 100% of TANF applicants and recipients
- Workforce Orientation – 30 minutes, one-on-one, Mon-Fri, 8am-5pm
- Brochure – required info for TANF Apps
- Assess job readiness – on first visit
- Provide support on first visit – childcare and transportation to TANF applicants and recipients

# Changes for TANF cont.

- TANF Applicants begin participating immediately – voluntarily until certified to receive TANF benefits
- Counseling and tracking functions separated
- Sanction Process – tightened up
- Goals for staff – you get what you measure

# Implementation

- Workgroup developed standards and guidelines
- Transition Team made presentations to 32 one-stop offices
- Incorporated feedback from staff
- Followed-up implementation progress
- Created new tools: brochures, desk aids



# Challenges

- Usual resistance to change
- Staff letting go of “programs” and adopting “service” concept
- Staff competencies
- Data systems – limiting, driving what we do

# TANF Production Workgroup

- Group of Subject Matter Experts of mostly front-line staff from career offices
- Meets twice monthly to tweak process, share knowledge
- Immediate results: TANF Participation Rate increased from 44% to 57.85% over 3 months

# Successes Realized

- Better Customer Service
- Developing Professional Staff skills
- Reduced Caseloads
  - From 14,000 in 2003 to 9,000 in 2005
- Increased Eligible Customers Served
  - From 80% in 2004 to 94% in 2005
- Increased Participation Rates
  - From 30% in 2003 to 50% in 2005

# What we would do differently

- Set-up TANF Production Workgroup from the beginning to tweak process and share knowledge
- Add more tracking staff earlier
- Meet with HHSC earlier – to work out sanction and appeal issues

# What's Next?

- National Workforce Institute
  - Continued customized training for staff
  - Staff Development
  - Staff Professional Certification
- Creative solutions for customers with more barriers
- Staff who think “Yes!” and have the knowledge and resources to make it happen

# For more information

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