

A Sample of State Experiences: Implementation of Subsidized Employment Programs using TANF Emergency Funds

East Coast TANF Directors' Meeting: Regions I, II, III, IV

October 19-21, 2010

Melissa Young

myoung@heartlandalliance.org



www.transitionaljobs.net

Background

- ❑ **Interviews with State TANF Directors** and staff to capture their experiences running subsidized employment programs with TANF Emergency Funds
- ❑ **Interview Timing:** September, 2010
- ❑ **States interviewed:** CA, TX, IL, WI, KY, TN, and FL
- ❑ **Information/Materials Gathered:** NY, MS, MD, PA, GA
- ❑ **Questions** focused on program goals, challenges, innovation and state benefits, employer experiences, program structures, lessons learned and future plans for subsidized employment programs

State Experiences: Shared Program Goals Across States

- ❑ **Goal:** Employing as many people as possible – as quickly as possible
- ❑ **Goal:** Opportunity for participants to gain work experience
- ❑ **Goal:** Meet state TANF work requirements
- ❑ **Goal:** supporting employers and communities to stimulate local economies

State Experiences: Varying Scale, Population Participation Targets, & Length of Subsidy

- ❑ **Length of subsidized job varied:** 4-5 months to 9-12 months
- ❑ **Program size differed:** 2,500 to 36,000 people served
- ❑ **Geographies Varied:** Rural and Urban communities targeted
- ❑ **Population targets included:**
 - ❑ Families on **cash assistance** or at risk of being on cash assistance
 - ❑ **Low-income youth** – summer jobs programs
 - ❑ People with **criminal records**
 - ❑ Families with incomes up to **200 percent of poverty**
 - ❑ People **exhausting UI benefits**

State Experiences: Program Adaptation & Flexibility to Participant Needs

- ❑ **Direct Employer Subsidy:** Varying subsidy levels 50 percent up to 100 percent
- ❑ Graduated subsidy levels over subsidy period – MS
- ❑ Programs with **graduated degrees of job responsibility** based on employability - coupled supportive services and robust case management with employers in non-profit systems or highly supportive private employer system
- ❑ In some areas highly supported and more direct employer subsidy structures working collaboratively – CA, IL

State Experiences: Common Implementation Challenges

- ❑ Lack of resources for upfront **planning and development**
- ❑ Identifying **20 percent** “match”
- ❑ Delays in **guidance** – length of time to get program approved
- ❑ **Ramp-up time** – recruitment, partners, employers, marketing, matching participants to employers
- ❑ Differing rules, regulations and goals of **WIA system**
- ❑ **Lack of experience** running programs – or running them at scale

State Gains: Subsidized Employment Infrastructure Strengthened

- ❑ **Payroll processing systems** for temporary employees
- ❑ Greater sophistication **in marketing and recruitment strategies** –in reaching participants and employers
- ❑ Development/partnership in utilizing centralized **state data bases**
- ❑ **Human capital gains** - state program, policy, and fiscal staff expertise strengthened

State Gains: Workforce Relationships and Placement Sites Deepened and Broadened

- ❑ Strengthened and new **collaborations with WIB systems**
 - leveraged new relationships between private employers
- ❑ Explored **in-house placements with public entities** such as local TANF offices
- ❑ **Converted un-paid work experience to paid work experience**
- ❑ Utilized **non-profit placements**

State Gains: **New Partnerships**

Strengthened and new partnerships with community support services, community colleges and utilization of training programs:

- Head Start, homeless prevention, food and clothing banks
- Working alongside community college work-study programs
- Placements within sector-training programs such as health care, green jobs, and high-growth weatherization programs

State Lessons: Observations of Participants

Participants had:

- ❑ High motivation to work
- ❑ Greater participation in work activities
- ❑ Greater self-esteem, confidence, and outlook on future opportunities
- ❑ Experienced a positive “multiplier” effect on family members

State Lessons: **Keys to Success**

- ❑ Flexible program designs – CA, IL and WI
- ❑ Integrated WIA and TANF systems
- ❑ Advisory Committee – planning, implementation
- ❑ Simple/shared forms and processes
- ❑ Marketing support & infrastructure – getting the word out early and quickly
- ❑ Peer-learning and document/form sharing – CA
- ❑ Communication
- ❑ Screening tool for other service needs
- ❑ Program evaluation – IL

Looking Forward: The Role of Subsidized Employment in the Future

- ❑ State interest in running subsidized employment program in the future is high
- ❑ Without guarantee of Emergency Fund, States reported that programs are likely to:
 - ❑ Be significantly scaled back – geographies served, numbers served
 - ❑ Have more defined target populations
 - ❑ 50 % employer wage subsidy instead of 100 %
 - ❑ Strength of WIA system partnerships uncertain

NTJN Role & Services

The NTJN exists to influence audiences to ensure that policies account for the hard-to-employ, that the public understands the need to invest in these services, that programs are able to effectively serve as many individuals as possible, and that best practices and technical assistance are widely shared and implemented throughout the network.

-
- ❑ **Technical Assistance**
 - ❑ **Federal Policy Advocacy**
 - ❑ **Monthly Newsletters** - *sign up at: www.transitionaljobs.net*
 - ❑ **National Conference**