



2014 Region VIII TANF Directors Meeting
September 18-19, 2014

Summary Report



This technical assistance activity was funded by the
United States Department of Health and Human Services,
Administration for Children and Families,
Office of Family Assistance Region VIII
and managed by ICF International

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This Technical Assistance (TA) activity was funded by the United States Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Office of Family Assistance, and managed by ICF International for Contract No. HHSP2332009563WC, Task Order HHSP2337018T “TANF Training and Technical Assistance.”

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Introduction

On September 18-19th, 2014, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Administration for Children and Families (ACF) Office of Family Assistance (OFA) Region VIII convened the *2014 TANF Directors Meeting: Collaboration and Innovation: Keys to Engaging TANF Customers* in Denver, Colorado. This meeting brought together Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program directors and staff from six States to learn strategies, engage in strategic dialogue, and build linkages with peers to improve program outcomes and promote economic and social independence for individuals, children, and families. During the meeting, State representatives had opportunities to share promising practices in collaborating with State, local, and community agencies to successfully serve TANF participants. There was also a State of the States Panel Discussion with ACF/OFA leadership.

Specific sessions held during the meeting included:

- State of the States Discussion with ACF/OFA Leadership
- Improving Program Performance By Strengthening TANF Responsiveness, Part 1 and 2
- Improving Employment Outcomes: Job Sector Training, Workforce Planning, and Career Pathways Strategies
- Improving Child and Family Outcomes by Strengthening Kinship Care Support Programs and Home Visiting Programs
- Creating Strong Partnerships and Implementing Effective Programming to Promote Housing Stability
- Spotlight on Refugee Resettlement and How TANF Can Assist in the Process
- Strategies for Assisting Victims/Survivors of Human Trafficking
- Employment Engagement Strategies in Rural Communities

This report summarizes key highlights from the 2014 Region VIII TANF Directors Meeting.

Day One – September 18, 2014

Welcome and Opening Remarks

Ms. Kisha Russell, Region VIII TANF Program Manager, Office of Family Assistance, Administration for Children and Families, opened the meeting by welcoming all participants and giving a brief overview of the content planned for the two day meeting, encouraging participants to share ideas and collaborate with each other. Ms. Russell introduced Region VIII team members, Ms. Marjorie Hudspeth, Ms. Janelle Jones, and Ms. Vicki Herring, TANF Program Specialists, as well as Mr. Thomas Sullivan, Regional Administrator for the Administration for Children and Families, who gave opening remarks for the meeting.

Mr. Sullivan thanked Ms. Russell for the introduction, and spoke a little bit about his professional history. He has worked for many years in Region VIII, in a variety of capacities supporting needy populations across Colorado, Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, Utah, and Wyoming. He has worked to prevent child abuse and improve the level of services to the abused. He has also worked in the area of adoption and foster care, engaging faith and community based organizations to develop adoption and foster care initiatives as well as mentoring programs for children of prisoners. Mr. Sullivan thanked Region VIII for the invitation to provide opening remarks at the meeting and acknowledged the hard work that everyone does every day to reduce the poverty rate in Region VIII, and across the country. Mr. Sullivan also shared the newest poverty rates, which were recently released. He concluded that “the only satisfactory poverty rate is zero, and that should be our goal.” He went on by stating that any progress in the

reduction of the poverty rate is great, and although we may never reach our goal of zero, unless we set goals far beyond our reach, we will never succeed in greatness. He closed by thanking the group again for their hard work in this region.

State of the States Discussion with ACF and OFA Leadership

Ms. Susan Golonka, Acting Director of the Office of Family Assistance, began the session by encouraging attendees to listen and learn about where innovations are occurring across the Region. She expressed excitement at hearing from Ms. Levetta Love, Director of the Office of Economic Security with the Colorado Department of Human Services, spoke about the “Colorado Works” program, and then introduced Ms. Love for further remarks.

Ms. Levetta Love began by discussing the basics of her program. Her program is called “Colorado Works,” and is housed within the Office of Economic Security. Colorado Works uses a State supervised, county administered model in 64 counties. Ms. Love discussed that the vision for the Colorado Works program includes a strategic plan that aligns with State plans. Also included in this plan is what she refers to as “Wildly Important Priorities,” (Figure One). Ms. Love acknowledged that the success of her program now is due in part to the redesign process she and her team went through. In this process, policies, procedures, and rules were re-written to focus on the best interest of the customer. This process was long and difficult but the outcome was well worth the struggle. Some major changes in this overhaul included eliminating work that was not value-added, aligning rules and eligibility requirements with other assistance programs, and updating certification periods. Ms. Love went on to discuss challenges faced by her team in the redesign process. She mentioned how they overcame difficulty getting buy-in from all counties, and the need for an organization-wide culture shift.

Figure One

Our Wildly Important Priorities

Overarching Priorities for CDHS that are shared among all parts of our organization, are aligned with our mission, vision and values, and bring alive our strategies and tactics.

- Choice to live and thrive in their own communities
- Achieve economic security through meaningful work
- Prepared to achieve educational success throughout their lives

Next, Ms. Love gave an overview of Colorado Works’ performance management changes. She discussed the realization that the current ways they were measuring success, and the overall reporting system, did not easily reflect the progress participants were making. Their new focus needed to be on meaningful employment, and timely processing. Ms. Love shared that initially, there was a 45-day allowance for caseworkers to process cases, which can negatively impact the individual or family needing assistance. Today, 90 percent of cases are processed within seven days—a strategy referred to as “in time, on time.” The next part of Ms. Love’s presentation centered on the fundamentals of the Colorado Works program. She outlined several essentials including the new focus on *meaningful* employment, individualized service delivery, family-centered practice by engaging customer in decision making, two-generation approaches, executive functioning, and individual responsibility contracts.

Ms. Love wrapped up her presentation by talking about Colorado Work’s plans for the future. She discussed how they are continuing to improve their program. They are working on changing data tracking to create accountability as well as new exemptions suited to meet customer needs.

Q: Sisifo Taatiti from Utah asked, "How long did it take you to implement the changes you talked about? Have you seen a difference in your work participation rates?"

- Ms. Love responded that it took about five years. She also mentioned that it helped having Katie Greigo as the policy analyst at the State at the time. She also stated that she hasn't looked at work participation rates in several months, because to them, they don't tell the story of what they are trying to communicate.
- Ms. Golonka also pointed out that it is important to track not only federal requirement information, but other information that helps you tell your entire story.
- Stephanie Wilkins added that her team is in the process of strategic planning and have the first four initial meetings. She also requested that Katie Greigo help her team look at policy alignment, which is something they are currently struggling with.
- Angela Lansing gave praise and credit to Levetta, Katie, and her team. She stated that it is really refreshing to hear the new perspective on work participation rates. She stated that it is difficult to have a blanket rule, but she likes the idea of aligning values with practices and procedures.

At this time, Ms. Golonka asked the group to go around the room and mention the biggest challenge they are currently working through within their programs. The following themes were mentioned:

- Finding meaningful employment for people with disabilities;
- Working through gender wage inequalities;
- Meeting work participation rate requirements, but not sure if we're meeting needs of families in the community;
- Intergenerational poverty reduction;
- Moving from parent focus to family focus;
- Partnerships with providers who serve families living in poverty;
- Policy alignment;
- Getting integrated systems from all programs;
- Case management of work supports;
- Career pathways trajectories;
- Developing seamless systems between job readiness, internships, and moving towards long-term employment;
- Simplifying reporting processes;
- The manner in which client assessment happens; and
- Tracking systems, and updating documentation procedures.

Next, Ms. Golonka began with her discussion by reiterating that she would like to see organizations creating a new vision like Ms. Love outlined, and asked the question of the group, "How do you communicate that vision to people who impact where the strategies are going?" The next part of Ms. Golonka's presentation was an update from Washington, DC. Ms. Golonka reiterated that the U.S. House of Representatives recently passed a continuing resolution, which then funded TANF through December 11, 2014.

Next, she discussed the House passing added prohibitions to Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) transactions. The first was the EBT transaction requirement from the Middle Class Tax Relief and Job Creation Act of 2012 that requires States receiving TANF grants to maintain policies and practices that will prevent assistance provided under the program from being used in EBT transactions in any liquor store; casino, gambling casino, or gambling establishment; or at any retail establishment that provides adult-oriented entertainment in which performers disrobe

or perform in an unclothed state for entertainment.¹ ACF published a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM)² in the Federal Register on February 6, 2014 that provides instructions on how to submit comments that will help outline ACF's thoughts and decision processes of the Final Rule. ACF has received responses on the NPRM from States, EBT vendors, organizations, and advocacy groups that will inform the design of the Final Rule. Ms. Golonka reminded attendees about the quarterly financial reporting form revisions. In Fiscal Year 2015, States will be reporting via a new form with updated categories on their TANF expenditures (ACF-196R).³

Next, Ms. Golonka discussed the Workforce Innovation Opportunity Act (WIOA). WIOA was signed into law on July 22, 2014. WIOA is the fifth rendition of the Wagner-Peyser Act that was created in the 1930s to provide core, intensive, and training services, case management, stipends, on-the-job training, apprenticeships, and more. Ms. Golonka elaborated on the topic, pointing out that TANF is now considered a mandatory partner for One-Stops (American Job Centers). However, governors do have the option of opting out. Details of WIOA still need to be worked out, and there are still a lot of questions about how WIOA will play out.

Finally, Ms. Golonka announced an upcoming technical assistance initiative, a policy academy that OFA is sponsoring, in which approximately eight States will be selected for a 15-month engagement focused on improving employment outcomes. This new initiative's goal is to restore TANF's ability to serve as a safety net and a vehicle to move towards employment. More details about the initiative were forthcoming at the time of the meeting.

Improving Program Performance by Strengthening TANF Responsiveness: Part 1 and 2

Geneva Ware-Rice, Expert Consultant at ICF International began the session by introducing both of the speakers, Dr. Michelle Derr and Ms. Liz Schott. She then turned the presentation over to Dr. Derr.

Dr. Derr, Senior Researcher at Mathematica Policy Research, encouraged States to think about their strengths and challenges. TANF has faced changing demands in recent years, including a decrease in federal funding, declining value and reallocation of the TANF block grant, increase in demand for public assistance programs, high unemployment, fewer full-time jobs, and an increase in demands for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits. In order to handle these challenges, States have made explicit efforts to reduce program costs by reducing staffing, reducing the amount of the cash grant, and limiting availability of personal work supports. States have also limited TANF caseload growth and modified contracts with local employment service providers. Dr. Derr said that this gives States the perfect opportunity to change, grow, and be more thoughtful about how resources are allocated. Given the reduction in funding and some of these changes, she asked States to consider thinking about their TANF programs differently. She then requested that States share some ways they have been affected by the changes. States commented that they have seen a lot of vacancies, reduced supportive services, and reduced benefits.

Dr. Derr then helped meeting participants brainstorm opportunities for change. She said that although employment-focused TANF services are necessary, not everyone is ready for employment. States need to determine if their clients are truly work-ready by defining that term clearly. Dr. Derr then listed the following program components: case management, work requirements, performance management, and program outcomes. She presented States with an activity where they addressed the aforementioned components for "work-ready" and "work-progressing" TANF participants and the differences for each. Dr. Derr then turned the presentation over to Liz Schott, Senior Fellow with the Family Income Support team at the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities.

¹ The Middle Class Tax Relief and Job Creation Act of 2012 can be found at: <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/PLAW-112publ96/pdf/PLAW-112publ96.pdf>.

² The Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM) can be found at: <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2014-02-06/html/2014-02488.htm>.

³ More information and instructions on this topic can be found on the OFA PeerTA website at: https://peerta.acf.hhs.gov/uploadedFiles/revised_acf_196r_196_instructions_nh_15_md.pdf.

Ms. Schott continued the discussion by highlighting that there are fewer TANF families, despite increasing need for services. (Figure Two). She expanded on that thought, indicating that simply because the number of families on TANF is decreasing, doesn't mean families are thriving. She went on to mention that TANF serves a very small portion of poor families—nationally for every 100 poor families, 25 receive TANF cash assistance.

Q: A participant asked "Is the difference between Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) and TANF due to time limits?"

- No, caseloads are plummeting long before time limits. Issues that contribute to these plummets include full family sanctions, front end barriers, and some individuals leaving for employment, particularly in the early years.
- It feels like people who are not getting TANF are not getting it due to eligibility reasons, and other reasons unrelated to time limits.

The session concluded with group work centered on worksheets and handouts.

Improving Employment

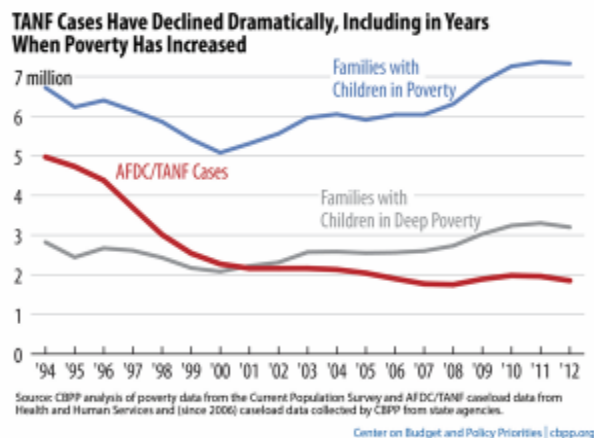
Outcomes: Job Sector Training, Workforce Planning, and Career Pathways Strategies

To open this session, Ms. Kisha Russell introduced Dr. Stan Koutstaal, Program Manager for the Health Profession Opportunity Grants (HPOG) and Ms. Amanda Abens, the Director of the Center for Training and Development at Pima Community College.

Dr. Stan Koutstaal began his presentation by focusing on the HPOG competitive grant program and how it exemplifies elements of job-driven training. Dr. Koutstaal first familiarized attendees with HPOG. HPOG, a five year program, is currently approaching the end of its fourth year. The program provides education and training to TANF participants and other low-income individuals so they have access to better jobs in healthcare. The programs are specifically targeted toward the healthcare sector because there has been a steady growth rate and much opportunity for employment in this sector. The 32 grantees include community colleges, local WIBs, State organizations, community-based organizations, and Tribal programs. Over the five year period, HPOG was projected to serve 30,000 students, Dr. Koutstaal discussed. But, at the time of the meeting, they had enrolled over 30,000 people and they had provided training in more than 50 healthcare occupations. In addition, HPOG provides supportive services such as child care and transportation to help reduce the barriers that prevent people from completing the program.

Figure Two

Fewer TANF Families, Despite Increasing Need



Dr. Koutstaal then explained the background of the key component of his presentation, the Job-Driven Training Checklist, which originated with the State of the Union Address in January 2014. After the State of the Union Address, President Obama signed a Presidential Memorandum for workers and assigned Vice President Biden a 180-day action plan to make training programs more job-driven, integrated, and effective, with the intent to provide training. This involves a strong emphasis on labor-market demand and forming partnerships, Dr. Koutstaal stressed. Therefore, in order to more clearly define what it means to be job-driven, a seven item Job-Driven Training Checklist⁴ was developed. The Job-Driven Training Checklist came into existence with the help of representatives from multiple federal Departments, including Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education. The Checklist was given from Vice President Biden to President Obama on the same day the new Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) was signed into law and many aspects of the new law work in concert with the Checklist. The Checklist includes the following items: Engaging Employers, Earn and Learn, Smart Choices, Measurement Matters, Stepping Stones, Opening Doors, and Regional Partnerships. Dr. Koutstaal then provided attendees with an overview of each of the seven elements, and used an HPOG example to illustrate each element in action.

Dr. Koutstaal concluded his presentation, and introduced Amanda Abens from Pima Community College, an HPOG grantee. Ms. Abens began by discussing the roadmap for her Center for Training and Development (CTD), and gave background information on the students they serve. Pima Community College District is the sixth largest community college in the nation. The community college serves many different purposes, and is looked at to be a type of community hub. Her program has seen significant challenges in the middle skills gap. In Tucson, the last estimated poverty rate was at 22 percent. Essentially, being an HPOG grantee has helped them work through a lot of the community barriers that they face. CTD has been around for 51 years, and it predates the year the college was established. They have a long history of partnering with employers, organizations, and providing case management to their students. A typical student at CTD is a single woman, in her 30's, living in poverty. CTD strives to serve these individuals by providing a unique employment perspective to assist them with their career goals.

Ms. Abens mentioned that their Pathways to HealthCare program has been very successful. This program's main strategy is to take the focus of employment and partnership, and expand them to other health occupations across colleges. For this particular program, CTD partnered with Pima One Stop, where they determine eligibility and provide case management. CTD then provides resume work, interview skills, remediation, and developmental education. They also provide students with individual progress reports so students and case managers know where they stand, and everyone can work as a team to help the participant be successful. Ms. Abens closed by discussing the biggest lessons learned from being an HPOG grantee.

Improving Child and Family Outcomes by Strengthening Kinships Care Support Programs and Home Visiting Programs

Ms. Geneva Ware-Rice began this session by thanking and introducing the speakers, Ms. Suzy Mackenzie, Director of the Family Tree Program, and Ms. Carla Snodgrass, National Director of Operations for Healthy Families America.

⁴ The Job-Driven Training Checklist can be found at: http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/docs/skills_report.pdf.

Ms. Suzy Mackenzie opened by thanking the team for the invitation to speak, and spoke a bit about her background. Ms. MacKenzie has been serving kinship families for over 13 years. Ms. MacKenzie then discussed what kinship families in our country look like, and the unique needs that they have. (Figure Three). Her organization, the Family Tree Program, works with housing and family stabilization, has a domestic violence shelter and program, a transitional housing program, legal services, a thrift store, and a military program. They serve the child-only TANF families in Adams County and Douglas County. Next, Ms. MacKenzie went on to describe the everyday services that go into making a family successful within their program. Her team begins with an initial home visit with each and every family in order to see what their home environment looks like. Following this initial assessment, Ms. MacKenzie described their intake and screening process. They have partnerships in the community to refer families to if they require services that the Family Tree Program cannot provide. Many times, families are in need of legal assistance, and the Family Tree Program is able to provide lawyer and paralegal services free of charge. Ms. MacKenzie wrapped up the presentation by asking the rhetorical question to the audience: "How would you feel if you were given custody of your niece, nephew, or grandchild? Now, what if your income was two-thirds of what it is now?" The point drove home the fact that kinship families have unique needs, and it is the provider's job to be aware of these needs, and serve them accordingly. Ms. Mackenzie then introduced Ms. Carla Snodgrass, the National Director of Operations for Healthy Families America.

Figure Three



Ms. Snodgrass gave a brief background on her organization, and the services they provide. Healthy Families American (HFA) is built on cultural sensitivity. HFA employs a nationally recognized evidence-based home visiting program model designed to work with overburdened families who are at-risk for adverse childhood experiences, including child maltreatment. It is the home visiting model best equipped to work with families who may have histories of trauma, intimate partner violence, mental health, and/or substance abuse issues, which many TANF families face. HFA services begin prenatally or right after the birth of a baby and are offered voluntarily, intensively, and over the long-term (three to five years after the birth of the baby).

Ms. Snodgrass reports that they use two major strategies in creating connections and successfully serving their families. The first is to do a conversational first interview in the home of the family. Her team seeks to make families feel valued and listened to, which is the foundation of a trusting relationship. The next strategy is to make allies with the parents. HFA is honest and open with the parents, explaining to them the core principles of the program, and what will be expected of them.

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Ms. Snodgrass closed her presentation with some final thoughts for the group. She shared that the model of her program is demanding, but it truly works. With HFA, families get the attention they deserve, and in turn have healthy and successful children.

Creating Strong Partnerships and Implementing Effective Programming to Promote Housing Stability

Janelle Jones began this session by introducing the speakers, Mr. Bennie Milliner, Executive Director of Denver's Road Home, and Ms. Nora Gilligan, Special Assistant to the Director of the Office of Family Assistance.

The session began with Mr. Milliner welcoming visitors to Denver, Colorado, and sharing a little bit about his background, and how he came to serve in his role at Denver's Road Home. Mr. Milliner shared that Denver's Road Home is a partnership organization that collaborates with the city and county of Denver. All parties involved are working towards connecting folks with services and housing for their particular needs. At Denver's Road Home, they believe everyone should have a safe alternative to living life on the streets. Homelessness is both a moral and imperative challenge for communities in the United States, and Denver's Road Home seeks to address these issues.

Mr. Milliner went on to discuss what the homeless population looks like in Denver. He reported that 50 percent have substance abuse issues, and 60 percent have mental health issues. Denver's Road Home characterizes someone as "chronically homeless" if they have been homeless for more than 12 months. Additionally, in Denver, the fastest growing segment of homeless individuals is families with children, and women, and seniors—particularly those who were victims of identity theft.

Understanding what the homeless landscape looks like in Denver helped Mr. Milliner create goals and strategic objectives for 2014 and 2015. He then went on to discuss these priorities. In Denver, there are fewer than 25,000 units of affordable housing, which shows a true deficit. The next priority Mr. Milliner seeks to address is the lack of supportive services available to the homeless population. If a homeless individual secures housing, but they have other issues such as substance abuse or mental health issues, they will have difficulty maintaining housing unless they have access to other wrap around supports. The next strategic priority for Denver's Road home focuses on prevention. Mr. Milliner describes the need for supports related to eviction prevention, and rental assistance. Finally, Mr. Milliner discussed the need for sustainability, which he applies to both direct services providers and non-service providers. The need for funding in this area is key, and every person involved in ending homelessness should be participating in their own sustainability efforts. Mr. Milliner wrapped up his presentation by discussing the "25 Cities Initiative," where the objective is to assist 25 communities in accelerating and aligning their existing efforts to end Veteran and chronic homelessness by 2015 – and to do this in a way that lays the foundation for ending homelessness.

Mr. Milliner turned the presentation over to Ms. Nora Gilligan. Ms. Gilligan gave a perspective of homelessness and TANF, and the linkages between the two. She reported that housing instability and homelessness are common among families served by TANF agencies. In fact, over a three year period one in four TANF participants experienced homelessness. She also mentioned that families experiencing homelessness may not be accessing TANF assistance they are eligible to receive. Ms. Gilligan shared the data from an ongoing multi-city study by the U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development. They found that 41 percent of families entering shelter report receiving TANF assistance. Ms. Gilligan then went on to describe the characteristics of family homelessness. She stated that similar to other very low-income families, they face a range of obstacles including low education level, sporadic work histories, barriers to employment, domestic violence, and health and mental health issues. Trends more prevalent in homeless families include the following: they are more likely to be young, single mothers with younger children, they have thin social network/support systems, and they show a strong correlation between

childhood adversity and being adults in families later experiencing homelessness. Domestic violence is also a common cause or contributing factor for becoming homeless.

The next portion of Ms. Gilligan's presentation focused on the "mission to end homelessness," that she is involved with. She explains that currently her team is working together within and across Federal agencies, and with partners at the state and local level to strengthen crisis response systems for homeless families. The goal is to ensure that no families are living unsheltered; shorten episodes of family homelessness by safely re-housing families experiencing homelessness within 30 days; link families to the benefits, supports and community-based services they need to achieve and maintain housing stability; and identify and implement effective prevention methods to help families avoid homelessness. Ms. Gilligan concluded by sharing her contact information should people want more information regarding her presentation.

Day Two – September 19, 2014

Spotlight on Refugee Resettlement and How TANF Can Assist in the Process

Day Two began with a welcome back by Kisha Russell, as she introduced the speakers for the first session of the day. Ms. Louisa Jones, Technical Assistance Specialist with the Office of Refugee Resettlement Technical Assistance Initiative and Principal at ICF International; Ms. Sisifo Taatiti, TANF Program Manager from the Utah Department of Workforce Services; and Ms. Dee Daniels Scriven from the Region VIII Office of Refugee Resettlement.

The session began with Ms. Jones giving an introduction on her role at ICF supporting refugee families. ICF International's BRIDGES training and technical assistance is designed to help refugee service providers develop robust relationships with federal, State, and community-based partners that result in an expanded array of supportive services for refugee clients. ICF is supporting refugee service providers in applying strategic messaging, action planning, and other techniques to make their organization's resources and operational support more sustainable.

Ms. Jones then narrowed in on specific challenges that immigrant and refugee families face when seeking employment. She listed several barriers, including limited English proficiency, their potential need to be employed quickly but not entering a career pathway, potential unfamiliarity with US workplace and culture, suffering from post-traumatic stress, lack of high school diploma or GED, lack of computer and other technology skills, and the inability to find enough low cost or free classes, programs, and work experience options. Along these lines, Ms. Jones mentioned a May 2013 report from the Migration Policy Institute which focuses on Credential Recognition in the United States for Foreign Professionals. The article states that there are overlapping, contradicting local, State, and national rules, laws, procedures and examinations that make it time-consuming and expensive for immigrants, refugees, and asylum seekers to integrate into U.S. professions.

Ms. Jones went on to discuss all of the current work being done to document knowledge and research of employment, workforce, career pathways, and adult literacy programs that are reaching refugees and asylees to support technical assistance efforts and knowledge of the field. She discussed several highlighted program and case studies including the Illinois Special Units Office which provides culturally competent and linguistically appropriate TANF services for refugee participants; The Moving Refugees Towards Self-Sufficiency Pathways in Erie County, The New York Communication, Collaboration Project, and the Refugee Organizations Provide Collective Voice for Refugees in Lansing, Michigan. Ms. Jones closed by giving information as to where participants can learn more

about this important topic, including six then-upcoming webinars that are now archived on the PeerTA website⁵. Ms. Jones then introduced the next speaker, Ms. Dee Daniels Scriven.

Ms. Scriven began by thanking Ms. Jones for her introduction, and providing background information on the Office of Refugee Resettlement. She first provided context on ORR's background. The mission of the Office of Refugee Resettlement is to assist refugees and other ORR eligible populations, who have inherent capabilities, to establish a new life that includes the dignity of obtaining economic self-sufficiency and encompasses full participation in opportunities which Americans enjoy. A refugee is a person who is outside of any country of such person's nationality; or when a person has no nationality, outside any country where that person last resided; or a person who is unable or unwilling to return to that country or unable or unwilling to avail him or herself of the protection of that country due to persecution or a well-founded fear of persecution on account of race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion. Ms. Scriven then gave some detailed statistics on U.S. refugee resettlement, including countries represented, State of arrivals, and TANF caseloads. She also described the complex process of how refugees come to the United States.

The next portion of her presentation was centered on what services refugees receive. She discussed Cash and Medical Assistance (CMA), Refugee Social Services (RSS) and Targeted Assistance Formula (TAG). CMA entitles individual refugees to receive up to eight months of cash benefits. They also may be eligible for TANF and Medicaid depending on their State's eligibility standards. Services under RSS and TAG are intended to assist refugees obtain employment within one year's participation in the program and achieve self-sufficiency. Social services under this program include employment services; employment assessment services and on-the-job training; English language instruction; vocational training; case management; and translation/interpreter services.

Ms. Scriven completed her presentation by highlighting a successful partnership structure between Colorado Works and the Colorado Refugee Services Program. Essentially, they provide cultural and linguistically appropriate services to the refugee-TANF population in Colorado using a holistic approach to serving refugees. They ensure refugees are becoming economically self-sufficient as soon as possible resulting in positive employment outcomes for clients. Ms. Scriven closed with providing additional resources and sharing opportunities for collaboration. She then introduced the final speaker, Ms. Sisifo Taatiti.

Ms. Taatiti began with sharing information on Utah's refugee population. Utah's Department of Workforce Services (DWS) was created in 1996 as a one stop service delivery system for employment and training. Between 2004 and 2007 over 2,500 refugees were settled in Utah. Ms. Taatiti then discussed the TANF/ORR partnership, which she referred to as the "Refugee's Road to Integration." This program includes:

Case Management

TANF funds two-year case management for all new refugees for their first two years in the country. Case management is contracted through refugee resettlement agencies. Case managers assess the needs of refugee families to connect them to resources based on their needs. They collaborate with Department of Workforce Services, Department of Health, the school districts, as well as other community providers.

English as a Second Language (ESL)

DWS partners with Granite Peaks Lifelong Learning Center to provide an intensive ESL/training program to prepare new refugees for employment. Refugees in the Pre-Literate Refugee Employment Skills Training (PREST) program engage in ESL for 10 hours a week as well as 10 to 20 hours a week of workplace experience training. Workplace experience training includes instruction on work habits, effective communication skills in the workplace, basic computer skills, and problem solving.

⁵ <https://peerta.acf.hhs.gov/index.cfm?event=viewTopic§ionTopicId=15&topicId=5&tabtopic=5§ionId=2&nav=5>

Training/Employment

DWS has an internal refugee employment counseling team that works with refugee families on the Family Employment Program (FEP) program. When appropriate EC's refer parents to training programs, ESL, etc. Job developers are funded and work through the Asian Association of Utah (AAU) to provide targeted job search assistance to refugee families up to the first five years in the country.

Subsidized Employment (Refugee Humanitarian Center Project)

DWS partners with the Latter-day Saints Humanitarian Center and AAU to provide subsidized employment to TANF eligible refugee families. The LDS Humanitarian Center pays 20 hours of wages for on the job training and DWS pays for 20 hours of classroom ESL instruction designed to enhance the job training and employment experience.

Housing – FEP Housing/Rapid

The refugee FEP housing program is called Temporary Rental Assistance (TRA). The purpose of TRA is to provide temporary rental assistance on a month-to-month basis for up to 18 months to eligible refugee customers enrolled in the FEP until they become self-sufficient (employed, receiving Supplemental Social Security benefits (SSI)) or transition to other subsidized housing programs.

Other services include emergency assistance, community supports and capacity building, women's mental health and domestic violence services, and other general mental health services. Ms. Taatiti reiterated how they strive to provide comprehensive services to refugees.

Strategies for Assisting Victims/Survivors of Human Trafficking

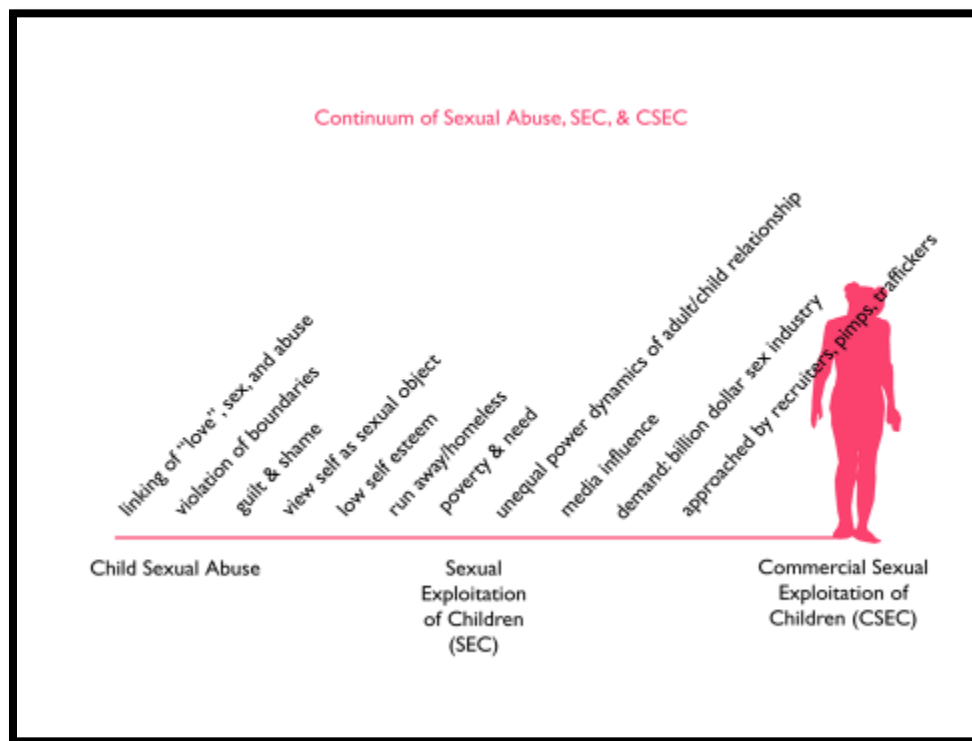
Ms. Marjorie Hudspeth introduced the speakers for this session: Ms. Candace Joice, Education Manager for iEmpathize, and Ms. Kathryn Kurtz, Deputy District Attorney for the First Judicial District Attorney's Office in Colorado. Ms. Hudspeth turned the floor to Ms. Kurtz, who began with a background on herself, and the cases she currently works on. Ms. Kurtz explained to the group that her caseload went from general crimes against children, to human trafficking cases. She discussed the differences between labor trafficking and sex trafficking, and the prevalence of each in her State. About 80 percent of cases that she sees are sex trafficking related, while 20 percent are labor trafficking. "Sex trafficking occurs when people are forced or coerced into the commercial sex trade against their will," Ms. Kurtz explained. This includes internet pornography, massage parlors, and many other forms of the crime. Typically, sex traffickers target vulnerable populations, usually going after individuals with histories of abuse or poverty.

Ms. Kurtz went on to discuss the Federal Bureau of Investigation initiatives targeted at human trafficking. First, they have their Counterdrug Technology Assessment Center, which targets all adult victims of labor and sex trafficking. In Ms. Kurtz's experience, a large portion of these investigations take place in massage parlors. The next initiative is call the Innocence Lost National Initiative, which is the child sex trafficking victims. Ms. Kurtz went on to mention that in the Rocky Mountain region they have recovered 108 victims in a two year time period. These numbers are increasing every year because there is a greater and greater awareness of the issue. However, there is still a lot of work to be done in the area of awareness. Each State has its own sex trafficking definition. Ms. Kurtz reports that most States adopt a definition that is a version of this: "The recruitment, harboring, transportation, provision, or obtaining of a person for labor or services, through the use of force, fraud or coercion for the purpose of subjection to involuntary servitude, peonage, debt bondage, or slavery. Sex trafficking in which a commercial sex act is induced by force, fraud, or coercion, or in which the person induced to perform such an act has not attained 18 years of age."

So why is sex trafficking happening? According to Ms. Kurtz, it is the second largest growing commercial enterprise—second to drug trafficking. The reason being is it can be more lucrative than drug trafficking. She states,

“You can sell a human being time and time again; your supply never runs out.” In fact, Ms. Kurtz states that in the Denver area, pimps can make about \$31,000 dollars a week. A Colorado Springs study found that the average length of a career for a prostitute is estimated at five years, and the average sexual partners is 4,300. Ms. Kurtz then discussed the continuum of Sexual Abuse, Sexual Exploitation of Children, and Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children (See Figure Four).

Figure Four



The next portion of Ms. Kurtz’s presentation was devoted to addressing the staggering issues just discussed. She proposes the “Four P’s Model,” which covers prevention, protection, prosecution, and partnerships. In the late 1990’s, the President’s Interagency Council on Women developed a policy to combat human trafficking. This policy was based on the 3 P’s of Prevention, Protection of Victims, and Prosecution of

Traffickers. In 2009, the U.S. State Department added the 4th P of Partnership. Prevention seeks to decrease the number of people being trafficked by engaging in activities such as awareness, advocacy, training, and other programs. Protection seeks to increase and support victims and survivors. Next comes Protection, which includes services such as case management, shelter, mental health and legal services for victims of trafficking. Prosecution seeks to investigate and prosecute traffickers, and strengthen laws and legal responses. Activities under this “P” include awareness and training, legislation, and a presence in partnerships such as the Non-Government Organizations/Veteran Affairs partnerships. Finally, Partnerships seek to bring together diverse experiences and leverage resources by engaging in partnerships that facilitate sustainability, communication, membership, and leadership. Ms. Kurtz concluded with the notion that we are making progress in the area of human trafficking, but there is a lot more work to be done! She then introduced Ms. Candace Joice, Education Manager from iEmpathize.

Ms. Joice started with a brief introduction on the mission of iEmpathize. They are a non-profit organization that combats crimes against children. Their mission is to eradicate child exploitation and engage culture in creative solutions. They work in prevention, intervention, aftercare, and advocacy. Ms. Joice also discussed her organization’s name. At iEmpathize, they believe a fundamental core value is empathy. Most people get stuck into feeling sympathy, which is feeling badly for the suffering of others, but feeling like there is no way to make a difference. What we want to do are move people out of that place and moving to empathy, which is engaging in the suffering of others. Most people want to be empathetic, but they don’t feel equipped.

This is where iEmpathize uses persuasive media, which is what Ms. Joice is in charge of in her role as the Education Manager. One initiative they support is called "Truckers against Trafficking." There are three million truck drivers in the United States, and they are the eyes and ears of our nation's highways. Ms. Joice explains, "One way children get exploited is at hotels, so our mission is to empower truckers and change their lens to see a victim not a prostitute." iEmpathize creates training DVDs, wallet cards, and other simple and safe tools for truckers in America. Another area that iEmpathize focuses on is small town booms. When small towns see a huge boom, it typically will be followed by a population surge, where the population is generally males who have lucrative jobs. In these towns, there is not much to entertain them, and trafficking usually follows. Ms. Joice explains that iEmpathize works to empower members of these boom towns (particularly the oil industry) to train employees to know how to recognize and respond to suspected child exploitation. A third area of focus for iEmpathize is empowering youth. They create products through a CD and action guide which they are currently piloting in five different States and will be released in 2015. Ms. Joice also showed several educational videos, which can be found on their website at <http://iempathize.org/>.

Employment Engagement Strategies in Rural Communities

The next presenters were introduced by Ms. Vicky Herring. She introduced the session by highlighting outcomes the session seeks to accomplish. Speakers included Ms. Corrine Livers, TANF Program Manager from the Wyoming Department of Family Services; Ms. Beth Ward, Statewide Director of Programs for CLIMB Wyoming; and Ms. Stephanie Wilkins, TANF Program Manager for the Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services.

The session began with Ms. Livers setting the stage for Ms. Ward and Ms. Wilkins by discussing the specific goals to address needs of rural families in Wyoming. She listed several goals including:

- Train and place participants in high growth, high demand occupations in local area.
- Wage progression.
- Decreasing dependence on government assistance.
- Provide life skills and work readiness skills, and address barriers to employment through budgeting, relationship development, anger management, parenting, nutrition, advocating for their children, community involvement, prevention strategies, goal setting, and substance abuse services.
- Provide pre-employment skills including job searching techniques, resume writing, interviewing techniques, employer/employee relationships, accepting criticism, and job retention.
- Provide group or individual counseling by a Wyoming licensed mental health professional capable of independent practice.
- Provide a case manager to provide ongoing guidance and support.
- Facilitate a group concept amongst the participants.
- Facilitate a relationship with the Wyoming Workforce Centers.

She then went on to discuss how the Wyoming Department of Family Services addresses these goals through their partnership with CLIMB Wyoming. The impact of this partnership has been extremely successful, with an estimated cost savings of \$854,367.00. Ms. Livers then turned the floor over to Beth Ward, to go into greater detail around the services they provide, the unique CLIMB Model, and the employer relationships they have established.

Ms. Ward thanked Ms. Livers for the introduction, and started with discussing CLIMB's mission, target population, mental health based model, and their employer relationships. Ms. Ward describes that their mission is to train and place low income and single moms to become self sufficient. Each site has a three person team who work with approximately ten women at a time, doing two to three programs a year. Ms. Ward explains that CLIMB's target population includes the hardest to work with. It is those that haven't been successful and are the most vulnerable, coming from generational poverty who feel hopeless and helpless, stuck and desperate. Many of them feel that

CLIMB is their last shot. Ms. Ward sees that in many of these individuals, their strongest drive is to provide for their children.

So how does CLIMB successfully serve these “hard to serve” clients? Ms. Ward explained that their program model is mental health based. It provides a safe, non-judgemental space with trusting and healthy relationships. It allows women to come and take an honest look at what has been in their way of success in the past. The model meets participants where they are, and moves them forward. It is also comprehensive, addressing all areas of their personal and professional lives. To recruit, CLIMB uses a client-focused approach. Ms. Ward explained that the goal is to build feelings of safety and trust as fast as possible. They also assess the “fit” of the industry and job type. Once the CLIMB fit is assessed, they look at program readiness. Are women ready for such intense work, personal commitment, and leaving their comfort zones? Also, are they ready to sustain the job? Do they have the core supports in place? Sometimes they’re ready for the process and commitment, but don’t have core supports in place and need some help. Ms. Ward reports, “at end of day when selecting women we don’t want to set them up for failure. We are very careful and respectful in thinking about needs, timing, and level of readiness.”

Ms. Ward went on to discuss the program set-up in detail, including training, job placement, and ongoing supports that CLIMB provides. She closed by making an important point about the structure of their program. She explained “CLIMB does things backwards, they say to themselves, how will this affect the participant? And then works from there.” CLIMB seeks to ensure participants needs are met first and foremost, resulting in a program that is truly client-focused.

The session closed out with a brief presentation by Ms. Stephanie Wilkins. She focused on the employment programs in Montana. She began by outlining the unique challenges faced by the rural TANF population, and how the subsidized employment program overcomes these challenges. Ms. Wilkins points out that Montana is in the middle of a redesign of its TANF program. They are in the beginning stages of implementing a five year strategic plan, working with a Steering Committee, and have developed a draft purpose and guiding principles using stakeholder, client and staff input.

Ms. Wilkins went on to discuss the Accelerated Employment Services Program (ESP). It was intended to have participants train in occupations in higher skill categories. It was not intended as subsidized employment of lower-skilled occupations, which require little training time. Eligible participants include those who do not already possess all the skills required to perform the job; participants who cannot secure the job without training assistance; participants who have demonstrated full participation with program activities, and participants who have resolved employment barriers by having stable health, housing, transportation and daycare. Previously, they also had a subsidized employment program, where the goal was to help work eligible people get into high demand fields. In 2011, these two programs were combined to create the Employment Services Program. Ms. Wilkins also discussed their strategies to engage employers, engage participants, and the lessons learned throughout their program. She concludes that the ultimate goal of the TANF ESP program is to help the participant find full time and sustainable employment that meets the needs of the family.

Wrap Up, Closing Remarks, and Technical Assistance Updates

Ms. Kisha Russell, TANF Region VIII Program Manager, provided closing remarks for the 2014 TANF Directors Region VIII Meeting. She briefly discussed the highlights of the last two days, reiterated the workshop’s goals, and thanked TANF representatives and other key stakeholders for attending. She then went over a few brief updates on the EBT regulations and ACF-196R. Ms. Russell encouraged the participants to stay for one-on-one time with herself and the other TANF Program Specialists. She again thanked everyone for attending, and closed the meeting.