

Session 2: Preparing to Engage TANF Participants in Program Decisions

From the TANF and Child Support Moving Forward: Further Incorporating Family Input Project

July 9th, 2024



What do we hope to accomplish during this session?

- Describe the ways programs may seek family input to inform program improvement
- Discuss the benefits of family input in program improvement efforts
- Discuss the role trust plays in gathering family input
- Help you feel more confident engaging families





Why does family input matter?

Grounds program improvement in the needs of families you serve

Staff may find it rewarding to interact with families in this new way

Can help programs save time and avoid costly missteps

Can help families build confidence, develop social capital, and access professional development opportunities





Why else might it matter to give families voice in how to improve TANF programs?



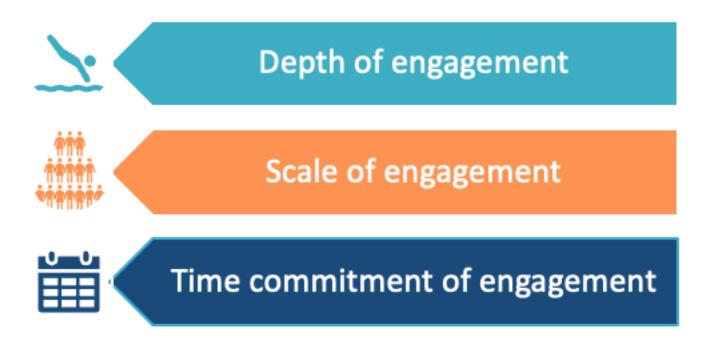
What does it mean to collect and use family input?

- Includes both the process of gathering and the process of using the ideas and feedback that families share
- Includes individuals who are, were, or could be directly served by programs





How can engagement vary to meet program goals?





Building trust can maximize impact of family input

- Increasing honest feedback about families' experiences in programs
- Increasing the pool of families who are prepared and willing to provide input and feedback in the future





Setting the foundation for trust

	Acknowledge and address harm		Understand the cultures & contexts of families you serve		
Engage families early		Adapt practices and commit resources to prepare		Set and communicate clear expectations for engagement	
Approach with hu		Commit to closing the feedback loop		Align your words and actions	



Readiness for gathering and using family input

Building trust with families

- Important for ensuring honest feedback and engagement in the process
- Critically reflect on current level of trust and take proactive steps to build trust

Preparing for organizational change

- Effectively gathering and using family input may require culture and process changes for your organization
- Assess readiness for change and build buy-in at all levels





Reflect on the degree of trust families have in your program. What steps might you need to take to build trust?





What can gathering and using family input look like?







What does **consulting** with families look like?

One-way communication of feedback using:

- Surveys
- Individual or family interviews
- Focus groups/group interviews
- Listening sessions
- Direct feedback/advocacy to decision makers
- Visual or other nonwritten feedback





Consulting with families in practice

Heidi Widmer (Kansas DCF) gathered feedback from participants about the orientation day





Which of the consulting techniques have you or your program used with participants to gather their feedback?



What does **involving** families look like?

Two-way communication of feedback where families are asked for feedback and can share their ideas and feedback about proposed changes. This often happens in the context of:

- Workgroups or committees
- Advisory councils



How has your program practiced two-way communication with participants?



What does collaborating look like?

Engagement with families where power is shared, including:

- Jointly identifying the areas of inquiry; families may also guide areas for improvement
- Families lead discussions
- Co-creating terms of interaction
- Responsive to families' needs
- Directly influences program improvement decisionmaking





Collaborating with families in practice

Program highlight: Colorado Family Voice Council





What aspect of your program would benefit from increased family input?



Group Activity

Work together to identify next steps for your family input scenario!





Share about your family input scenario

What did you learn about planning for gathering and using family input?







Elevating Family Input in TANF and Child Support Programs:

Resources for Program Staff, Leaders, and Families

FINAL PRE-PILOT VERSION

March 2023

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OPRE Brief 2023-024

Access the toolkit!



