



**WELFARE PEER TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE NETWORK
IDENTIFYING AND ADDRESSING LEARNING DISABILITIES
IN THE PUERTO RICAN TANF POPULATION
San Juan, Puerto Rico
June 7 & 8, 2007**



DAY ONE – THURSDAY, JUNE 7, 2007

8:00 – 8:30 AM Registration and Networking Session

8:30 – 8:45 AM Welcome and Opening Remarks

Olga Bernardy, Auxiliary Administrator, TANF Program, Puerto Rico Department of the Family

Lisa Washington-Thomas, Federal Project Officer, Welfare Peer TA Network

Frank Ceruto, Program Specialist, ACF, Region II

8:45 – 10:30 AM Understanding Learning Disabilities Part 1: Myths, Biases and Co-occurrence

Moderator: Nancie Payne - President and CEO, Payne Associates

Molly Vera – BSW, CDC – Erie County Medical Center

Jess Porras – Learning Disabilities Specialist, San Diego State University

Martha Chavis – Executive Director, Camden Community Connections

This presentation will focus on building a common understanding about what is a learning disability, how learning disabilities affect individuals and families, how myths and biases impede diagnoses and response, and the extent of co-occurrence with other challenges to self-sufficiency.

10:30 – 10:45 AM Break

10:45 – 11:30 AM Understanding Learning Disabilities Part II: Identifying Key Attributes and Characteristics – Agency to Agency Collaboration

Moderator: Martha Chavis – Executive Director, Camden Community Connections

Nancie Payne – President and CEO, Payne Associates

Speaker – Department of Vocational Rehabilitation

This presentation focuses attention on the logistics related to accommodating the special needs of people with learning disabilities. The intent of this session is to begin to reinforce the goal of agencies working together for the common goal.

Nancie Payne will discuss tools designed to identify learning disabilities, engaging those

clients who may have slipped through the cracks and why, current methods for agency to agency collaboration to serve this population effectively and how to obtain their buy-in for treatment options.

The Vocational Rehabilitation representative will discuss how they currently work with learning disabled individuals, to include assessments, collaboration of services, and long term prognosis and follow-up.

Department of the Family staff are given the opportunity to ask questions to clarify their understanding of this session's materials.

Research and resource material will be provided that will aid all of the participants in addressing the disability with the client.

11:30 – 12:45 PM **Serving Clients with Learning Disabilities: The Puerto Rico Caseworker Perspective**

Moderator: Olga Bernardy – Auxiliary Administrator, Development of the Family

Norma Santiago – Program Coordinator, Camden Area Health Education Center

This session will address specific outreach and training techniques for caseworkers. They will receive skill building techniques designed to identify behaviors that signal potential learning disabilities. Special emphasis will be placed upon avoiding labeling and stereotyping clients when certain behaviors are observed.

12:45 – 2:30 PM **Screening for Learning Disabilities**

Facilitator: Martha Chavis – Executive Director, Camden Community Connections
Speaker - Department of Vocational Rehabilitation

Respondent Panel:

Jess Porras – Learning Disabilities Specialist, San Diego State University

Molly Vera - BSW, CDC – Erie County Medical Center

Nancie Payne – President & CEO Payne and Associates

This session will begin by a discussion of the trials and tribulations currently faced by case managers in attempting to work with the hard to serve TANF/C population. Case managers require a more definitive method of determining: 1) if they are addressing a learning disabled individual, 2) what screening tools are available to pinpoint a disability, and 3) how to partner with agencies with the specific knowledge to help the client address the learning disability.

The session will also provide an overview of available screening methods and techniques.

2:30 – 2:45 PM **BREAK**

2:45 – 4:45 PM

After the Assessment: Strategies for Responding to Learning Disability Screenings

Molly Vera – BSW, CDC – Erie County Medical Center.

Nancie Payne – President & CEO Payne and Associates

Martha Chavis – Executive Director, Camden Community Connections

Daylan Beamon – Business Development Manager, Business Access

Respondent Panel:

Speaker – Department of Vocational Rehabilitation

Olga Bernardy – Auxiliary Administrator - Department of the Family

What assessment tools are currently used or have been developed to identify learning disabilities? What are the steps taken when a person is formally diagnosed with a learning disability? How are labeling and stereotyping addressed, while still encouraging clients to accept help for the identified disability? How does the learning disability affect the client's ability to get a job? What is the level of interaction the case manager should display toward the client if a learning disability is suspected? What is the role of Vocational Rehabilitation in responding to the case manager's request for assistance?

This session also features a web presentation from Business Access that will showcase the benefits of an in-home learning system tool designed to enhance TANF/C participation for those with learning disabilities.

An in-depth discussion of disability documentation and service coordination will wrap up this session. A clarification of agency roles will assist the individual to address the disability and how the disability impacts the client's ability to seek employment to satisfy WorkFirst requirements.

4:45 – 5:00 PM

Day 1 Wrap-up & Day 2 Preview

Welfare Peer TA Network Staff

Lisa Washington-Thomas, Federal Project Officer, Welfare Peer TA Network

This session will conclude Day 1 and introduce the activities for Day 2. Action planning exercises will be introduced. Participants are encouraged to consider the questions posed on the action planning materials as they listen to the presentations of Day 2.

DAY TWO –FRIDAY, JUNE 8, 2007

8:30 – 9:00 AM Networking Session

9:00 – 10:45 AM Working with Learning Disability Partners

*Speaker - Department of Vocational Rehabilitation
Olga Bernardy – Auxiliary Administrator, Department of the Family*

*Respondent Panel:
Molly Vera, Director – BSW. CDC – Erie County Medical Center
Nancie Payne – President & CEO Payne and Associates*

*Martha Chavis – Executive Director, Camden Community Connections
Jess Porras – Learning Disabilities Specialist, San Diego State University*

This session begins with a discussion of the relationship building efforts of the Department of Vocational Rehabilitation and the Department of the Family, to include current responsibilities and the need for additional collaborative efforts to assist the learning disabled population.

The panel will discuss strategies to include relationship building, the development of Memoranda of Understanding, sharing appropriate information, referral and follow-up techniques, staff training, WorkFirst activities, and other collaborative efforts.

**10:45 – 12:00
PM Peer-to-Peer Exchange**

Moderator: Norma Santiago, Program Coordinator, Camden Area Health Education Center

10:45 – 11:05 Participants will break into groups of 10. Each group should determine 3 clarifying questions/comments/concerns to address to the panel in the next section of this session. Questions should not be repeated, allowing for the most comprehensive responses in the following session.

11:05 – 12:00 The clarifying questions developed during the Peer-to-Peer session will be presented to the panel for discussion.

*Respondent Panel:
Speaker - Department of Vocational Rehabilitation
Olga Bernardy – Auxiliary Administrator, Department of the Family
Nancie Payne – President & CEO Payne and Associates
Martha Chavis – Executive Director, Camden Community Connections
Jess Porras – Learning Disabilities Specialist, San Diego State University*

12:15 – 2:30 PM Action Planning

Moderator – Molly Vera, BSW, CDC – Erie County Medical Center

The Action Planning session will focus on the peer-to-peer exchange, panel discussion to assist the Department of the Family with specific implementation goals. In addition, this session will focus on identifying and reaching out to a broad array of potential partners – including those not present at the Roundtable. This session will also provide an overview of how the Welfare Peer TA Website can provide ongoing support for action planning and to identify additional resources to address and/or respond to Learning Disabilities in the TANF/C population.

2:30 – 2:45 PM Closing Remarks & Evaluation

*Lisa Washington-Thomas, Federal Project Officer, Welfare Peer TA Network
Jacqueline Thomas, Project Director, Welfare Peer TA Network*