



North Dakota/Career Options Roundtable  
Bismarck, North Dakota  
May 5-6, 2009  
Summary Report

Prepared for the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services  
Administration for Children and Families  
Office of Family Assistance





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## Table of Contents

Background .....	2
Welcome and Opening Remarks, Participant and Faculty Introductions .....	2
Overview of TANF, JOBS and Tribal Employment and Training Programs in North Dakota .....	3
Overview of Career Options Employment Programs .....	3
<i>Tracy Horob – Employment Program Director – Regions I &amp; II</i> .....	4
<i>Connie Biby – Employment Program Director – Regions III &amp; VI</i> .....	4
<i>Penny Lasky – Employment Program Director – Regions IV &amp; V</i> .....	5
<i>Bobby Jo Sollie – Employment Program Director – Regions VII &amp; VIII</i> .....	5
Working Lunch .....	6
Site Visit to Fort Yates Office on the Standing Rock Reservation .....	6
Breakout Workshops on the Career Options Model .....	7
<i>Vocational Skills Workshops</i> .....	7
<i>Database Management</i> .....	7
<i>Intake and Employment Plan Development</i> .....	8
<i>Job Development</i> .....	8
<i>Job Shadowing, Job Coaching and Situational Assessment</i> .....	9
Capturing the Learning and Wrap-Up .....	10
Appendix A: Roundtable Agenda .....	12
Appendix B: Participant List .....	14
Appendix C: Evaluation Summary .....	17
Appendix D: Wrap Up Activity .....	22
Appendix E: Additional OWRA Information .....	24

## Background

In recognition of the needs of rural communities and TANF agencies, the Office of Family Assistance (OFA), Administration for Children and Families (ACF), U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) is sponsoring the Rural Communities Initiative. The Rural Communities Initiative provides States, Tribes, and local TANF agencies in 16 nominated rural sites from across the United States the opportunity to share information and promising practices on critical issues affecting the rural areas including barriers to employment such as education, job skills, transportation, and child care. Beginning with the Rural Communities Academy which occurred in Kansas City, Missouri in September 3-5, 2008, this Initiative is providing a variety of technical assistance to rural sites.

During the Rural Communities Academy, Career Options, Inc., a North Dakota based contractor for the North Dakota Department of Human Services, presented on their individualized, strengths-based approach to TANF case management strategy. Based on this presentation, a number of Initiative sites requested follow-up on certain aspects of the programmatic work taking place at the organization. Specifically, sites expressed interest in Career Options' organizational development model, child care and education programs, and case management strategies for hard-to-serve participants.

With these requests in mind, the **North Dakota Department of Human Services/Career Options Roundtable** was held in Bismarck, North Dakota from May 5-6, 2009.<sup>1</sup> Attendees included representatives from seven Rural Communities Initiative sites<sup>2</sup> as well as administrators and case management staff from Career Options, Inc. The Roundtable was designed to include a series of in-depth breakout sessions that focused on the unique tools and case management approaches utilized at Career Options. In addition, as a way to show the diversity of Career Options' caseload, Roundtable attendees participated in a site visit to the Standing Rock Reservation where they visited with case management staff and toured the Reservation. During the close-out session, attendees discussed their next steps for taking strategies from this Roundtable and replicating them in their local areas.

## Welcome and Opening Remarks, Participant and Faculty Introductions

On the morning of May 5, 2009, the first day of the Roundtable, site representatives from the seven Rural Communities Initiative sites, content faculty, Rural Communities Initiative staff, and Federal staff convened at the Bismarck Radisson Hotel. Lisa Washington-Thomas, from the Office of Family Assistance, welcomed all attendees and provided an overview of the Roundtable agenda. Janet Feil, Children and Families Program Specialist from the Administration for Children and Families, Region 8 Office and Carol Cartledge, Director of Public Assistance for the North Dakota Department of Human Services then proceeded to welcome attendees and spoke about the importance of peer learning. Following the welcome and opening remarks, the participants/attendees introduced themselves. Attendees also discussed their expectations for this Roundtable such as “how to use the Career Options' individualized approach to help manage workflow,” and “new approaches for managing participants.”

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<sup>1</sup> The Roundtable agenda and participant lists are included in Appendix A and Appendix B respectively.

<sup>2</sup> Hoopa Valley Reservation (California); Montana; New York; North Dakota; South Carolina; Texas; and Vermont.

## Overview of TANF, JOBS and Tribal Employment and Training Programs in North Dakota

During this session, Brenda Peterson, Administrator for North Dakota's DHS's TANF/JOBS and Interfaces Program, provided an overview of the employment programs currently operating in North Dakota. After briefly describing the implementation and funding history of North Dakota's TANF block grant, Ms. Peterson outlined the functionality and management of the state's 53 county administered TANF system. While the TANF program in North Dakota is similar in many ways to other states, the program also has several distinct components that include:

1. Four Native American Reservations within the state account for 63 percent of their total TANF population. North Dakota operates four Tribal Native Employment Works (NEW) programs which serves, on average, around 400 participants per month;
2. The average benefit for a family on TANF is \$331.29 – considered quite low by many of the other state representatives in the Roundtable;
3. As a way to expand the options for placement of children who in the care of social services, North Dakota operates a TANF Kinship Care Supportive Service program. The Kinship Care program provides reimbursements for any fees spent on behalf of a child that is part of a program approved by the Department of Human Services; and
4. North Dakota has four Job Opportunities and Basic Skills (JOBS) Program contractors:
  - a. *Community Options for Residential and Employment Services – Career Options*: manages the state's approximately 600 “hard-to-serve” TANF participants;
  - b. *Job Service North Dakota*: works with approximately 550 TANF participants who are employed;
  - c. *Spirit Lake Employment and Training Program*: operates a “culturally unique program” that serves almost 60 TANF participants on the Spirit Lake Reservation; and
  - d. *Tribal Employment and Training Program*: works with up to 100 TANF participants among which are Tribal members in need of paid employment or work experience, GED support, and soft skills training.

Ms. Peterson concluded her presentation by sharing some “success stories” submitted by participants in one of the state's Job Opportunities and Basic Skills programs. As an example, one participant commented that “the program gave me very good supportive services, such as transportation and information for day care, that I needed to obtain employment and the courage to face the barriers that held me back.”

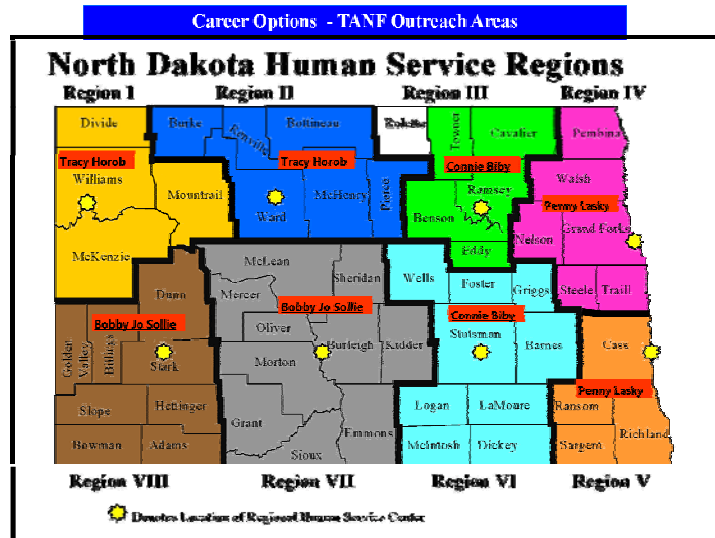
## Overview of Career Options Employment Programs

This session highlighted some of the services and approaches used by Career Options in the management of their JOBS and Vocational Development Programs. Trina Gress, Chief Operations Officer for Career Options, began the presentation with information on their TANF statistics including the total number of families served (5,112) and geographic orientation (most participants live on reservations or in large cities). Ms. Gress then outlined the “person centered approach” utilized by the agency. Career Options' service area is divided into eight regions. Each region has a human service center that serves as the local Career Options headquarters. Representing Career Options' local leadership in Regions 1 through 8, each Project Director from

the Regions also provided a brief overview of their program and highlighted the “special projects” in their respective locations.

*Tracy Horob – Employment Program Director – Regions I & II*

Regions 1 and 2 include 12 counties and serve approximately 130-160 JOBS participants each month. This area is distinct in North Dakota as the presence of oil and gas industries had initially resulted in record real estate prices, a rapid growth in population, and an increase in job opportunities. However, the recent downturn in economy and the decline in oil boom have resulted in decreasing wages and a decline in population.



Currently, as the region is experiencing a lack of affordable housing, support systems, child care, transportation options, as well as rising high school drop-out rates (20 percent), Career Options’ Regions 1 and 2 offices are implementing a number of “special projects” meant to address these unique challenges.

One such “special project” is the Recycle Rewards Program. This program was created to help participants learn how to become involved in environmentally-friendly activities while also earning extra income. Participants are shown the proper ways to dispose of recyclable materials and the local Career Options’ office serves as a recycling center complete with bins for recycling glass, aluminum, and paper. The money raised from the recycled items is subsequently used to provide incentives, such as gift cards, to participants who are successfully meeting their JOBS program work hour requirements.

It must be noted that these special projects are in addition to providing TANF participants the usual support with job coaching and marketing, child care, and transportation.

*Connie Biby – Employment Program Director – Regions III & VI*

Connie Biby, Employment Program Director for Regions 3 and 6 provided an overview of the TANF participant demographics and counties served in these regions. In addition to TANF participants, Regions 3 and 6 also manage caseloads for vocational development participants and extended developmentally disabled individuals. In conjunction with an intensive, strengths-based case management approach that includes assessment, job search, job shadow, and on the job training, Regions 3 and 6 also provide a number of tailored transportation support for their participants. This includes:

1. Subsidizing participant’s vehicle expenses by providing .45 cents per mile for each mile driven for employment related reasons.;

2. Paying fees or fines which can prevent an individual from operating a vehicle – including reinstatement fees on suspended licenses, registration fees for DUI seminars, driver’s license exam fee, vehicle insurance, titles, etc; and
3. Operating the “Ticket” program which provides TANF participants unlimited rides for one month on trips made for employment reasons. Under this program, a partnership has established between Career Options and a local taxi company. This partnership allows TANF participants the option of purchasing an unlimited monthly taxi ticket of 125 dollars. This is, however, the maximum monthly amount of funding available for transportation supportive services.

According to Ms. Biby, this package of transportation support has assisted a large number of TANF participants overcome child care, employment retention, and legal barriers.

*Penny Lasky – Employment Program Director – Regions IV & V*

In her overview of Career Options’ programs in Regions 4 and 5, Ms. Lasky drew attention to the high rate of poverty in this service area (15.5 percent of resident live at or below the poverty line, compared to 11.8 percent for the rest of the state). According to Ms. Lasky, some of the common barriers to employment in Regions 4 and 5 include a lack of qualified and flexible child care providers, low rates of higher education, and few transportation options available to rural residents. Ms. Lasky also noted that even though there are a few public transit supports available; many TANF participants are not knowledgeable about utilizing these transportation systems. Regions 4 and 5 are also characterized by large numbers of migrant workers whose presence creates numerous language barriers for welfare-to-work staff.

One of the “special projects” these regions have implemented to address the challenges of foreign language barriers is the “Picture Perfect” program. Picture Perfect is a picture book intended to train hotel cleaners and help them communicate with hotel management despite not sharing a common language. The book is a series of photos covering all the daily activities associated with cleaning a hotel room. If language is preventing hotel cleaning staff from communicating, they can point to activities in the photo book and communicate with their managers.

*Bobby Jo Sollie – Employment Program Director – Regions VII & VIII*

Regions 7 and 8 include the areas of Bismarck, Dickinson, and Fort Yates (Standing Rock Reservation). According to Ms. Sollie, Employment Program Director of Regions 7 and 8, residents in these areas are currently experiencing a decline in, income, employment, wages while simultaneously coping with relatively high costs of living, decreasing housing options and rising unemployment. Not surprisingly, these economic factors impact many of the pre-existing barriers to employment in these two regions – barriers such as a lack of education, lack of transportation and driver’s license, minimal daycare providers, a large shortage of affordable housing, and limited social support systems are persistent barriers to TANF participants reaching for self-sufficiency.

Similar to other TANF participants in North Dakota served by Career Options, participants in Regions 7 and 8 are eligible to receive support services such as job coaching, vocational skills workshops, job marketing within the community, intensive case management, and assistance setting up transportation. In addition to these supports, Career Options’ staff in Regions 7 and 8

have also implemented a number of “special projects” to meet the entrepreneurial, child care, and work participation requirement needs of their participants.

One example of these “special projects” is taking place on the Standing Rock Reservation in southern North Dakota. To help meet the JOBS work participation requirements of their participants and as a way to help participants make positive contributions to their community, Career Options has created “Clean-Up Days” to assist in the beautification of the reservation. As part of this initiative, case managers have partnered with two local pastors to get TANF participants involved in the cleaning up of local parishes and nature camps for children in their community. The hope is that, this volunteer effort will turn into part-time employment at the nature camp sites for some TANF participants.

### Working Lunch

A working lunch was held at which four current and former Career Options participants spoke and shared their stories with the Roundtable participants. Case managers from the Bismarck office were also present to introduce and support the participants. The participants explained their struggles and successes and how the Career Options program and staff have provided support and guidance. The theme that emerged as participants spoke was that the positive relationship with a caseworker was a key element in their success.

### Site Visit to Fort Yates Office on the Standing Rock Reservation

After the working lunch, participants boarded a bus to head south to Fort Yates, on the Standing Rock Reservation. Career Options has had presence in Fort Yates for a couple of years and recently opened up their new office space there. Bobby Jo Sollie, the current manager of the program in Fort Yates, gave participants a brief overview of their office and services. The two other staff at the office are caseworkers and were also present to answer questions.



Ms. Sollie showed participants photos of one of the site’s special projects: clean up of the local cemetery. The local cemetery had become overgrown with weeds and littered with trash. As part of their work activities, TANF participants cut down the overgrowth and collected the trash, making the cemetery more pleasant to visit.

One of the caseworkers shared with the group that as part of his outreach work and special projects within the communities, he was able to connect with a local priest who had opportunities available for TANF participants. Participants would help clean up his summer camp and then possibly stay on as staff for the summer season. He stressed the importance of leaving the office and getting out into the community to find out what kinds of opportunities may be available for TANF participants.



After leaving the Career Options office, Roundtable participants took a bus ride around the reservation, seeing the government buildings as well as Tribal monuments.

## **Breakout Workshops on the Career Options Model**

To begin Day 2 of the Roundtable, participants had the option of attending five separate breakout sessions, each with a different focus on the Career Options model. The topics were developed based on participant's initial learning requests during the Rural Communities Academy and following contacts with their technical assistance coordinators.

### *Vocational Skills Workshops*

During this workshop, Tanja Gromala discussed the different types of vocational skills workshops that Career Options provides, and talked about the philosophy behind their methods. She encouraged Roundtable participants to keep the class size small so that TANF participants receive individualized attention, and each course could be tailored to meet the needs of the participants of the class. She also suggested when trainers develop the curriculum, they could use quality and competent sources, such as University Career Centers, Department of Labor and Statistics, Work Force and Job Services Web sites to present current information with a person-centered perspective.

One of the ideas Ms. Gromala reiterated over and over again was to focus on hope and success with TANF participants. She said it is important to set realistic expectations and to focus on positive outcomes for the future. The overall goal for participants is to have a productive career, not just a job for today. Any job placement should be something sustainable where the participant can gain skills and progress towards life-long growth.

Ms. Gromala encouraged class sessions to be no longer than one hour, as most people have difficulty sitting for longer than that. Breaks are important, especially since it can be a time for participants to network and start to build a support system. She also encouraged instructors to be flexible, and to focus on the needs of the group.

At the end of the workshop, some of the questions that were raised included how to implement and how to schedule vocational skills workshops. The discussion that followed allowed everyone at the table to discuss what they are doing in their areas for these kinds of workshops. Some sites are working with community colleges to provide skills training while others have their own on-site vocational training centers.

As an additional resource, Ms. Gromala encouraged those at the break out session to look into the employment, training, and job development curriculum authored by Denise Bissonnette, as she and others at Career Options have found it helpful in creating trainings on vocational skills.

### *Database Management*

The database that Career Options uses on a daily basis and which was developed by a local business was presented by Trina Gress. The database is used by all Career Options staff and each staff member has different level of access based on their role. Case managers have a level 3 access which allows them to see and manage their individual caseload. Directors have level 2 access which allows them to see all the cases in their region. Administrators have level 1 access which allows them to see and manage all the cases in Career Option's system.

Case managers enter client information into the system which then keeps a case record. The client information entered includes demographic information, medical history, psychological history, employment information, child care information, transportation and legal issues. The system allows users to enter information in templates for intake, assessment, and employment plans. It also allows users to input hours, shows a client's monthly benefits as well as any relevant job placements and case notes.

North Dakota is currently piloting the Online Work Readiness Assessment (OWRA) tool for the Office of Family Assistance. Ms. Gress reported that once the tool is completed and available to states, Career Options will integrate into their current system. See **Appendix E** for more information on OWRA.

### *Intake and Employment Plan Development*

This workshop was presented by Bobby Jo Sollie and Tracy Horob. They started by explaining the online intake form that Career Options staff uses. From the information entered during the intake phase, the case manager then develops an employment plan with the client. Both short and long term goals are identified for the participant. There can often be a large number of goals, so the case manager typically assigns only one or two goals with a few responsibilities each week. This ensures that the client does not become overwhelmed with everything they need to accomplish within a specific time period. After the barriers to participation and the goals and responsibilities have been identified, the necessary steps to eliminate barriers are established. Support services that are needed to address the barriers and obtain work are also listed followed by the approved work activity for the period of time that the employment plan covers. After the employment plan is completed, the client signs it and is given a copy to keep for their reference. Bobby Jo Sollie explained that this employment plan is in fact dynamic and is updated often as clients achieve their goals and work towards self-sufficiency.

If a client does not comply with their employment plan they are required to complete a Proof of Performance (POP) before their full TANF benefits are restored. The POP can be very detailed, listing every activity the client must comply with during the time period the POP is in place. Once the client successfully completes their POP, their full TANF benefits are reinstated.



### *Job Development*

Penny Lasky began her workshop on job development by asking everyone around the table to share what their first job was and what they remember most about it. First jobs ranged from making creative desserts at Dairy Queen to being a receptionist at a dentist office to teaching children how to swim. Ms. Lasky had everyone think about how many jobs everyone has had since then and used the exercise as a way to remind participants that the first job is just a building block to creating a career.

This was followed by a discussion on networking with potential employers. Ms. Lasky stressed the importance of face-to-face contact in order to build relationships with employers in the community. Using participants in the workshop, she role-played different scenarios she has found herself in while developing these relationships and gave everyone a good idea of what some of the conversations they may have in the future might sound like. Some of the points she covered included visiting businesses at a time that is least intrusive for them, keeping the initial discussion short, no longer than 5 to 15 minutes, and to be sure to clarify your presence in the community so that employers truly understand who you are.

An example she gave of how to give an overview of services is: *“We assist individuals in their career development who have sought out our services. We do anything from helping individuals with their resumes, cover letters, job searching, job developing, finding childcare, transportation, etc. We are often reaching out to potential employers to inform them of our Career Options program and hope to have the opportunity to work together in the future. We get to know the individuals we work with rather well in regards to their career goals, work experience, job skills, areas of growth needed, etc. We can often help match potential employees up with potential employers, without the cost of advertising, extensive interviewing, etc. We have assisted many employers with training new employees, completing hire paperwork, and we also educate employers on the Work Opportunity Tax Credit.”*

As with many of the other Career Options presentations, Ms. Lasky’s presentation also reiterated the importance of personalized attention for the TANF participant and how caseworkers can walk with them as they work towards attaining self-sufficiency. Sometimes TANF participants need to be explained the ways to interact with future employers, ways to go and inquire about job openings and request an application, as well as what constitutes appropriate behavior in such situations.

Ms. Lasky encouraged the workshop participants to “think outside the box” and to work on creative solutions for getting their TANF participants employed and while working with potential employers. She said it is important to be creative sometimes with work activities. For example, when there was a lot of flooding in Fargo a couple of months ago, caseworkers had TANF participants going out as volunteers to help with sand bagging and other needs in the community. She also talked about unpaid work experience and how it was an important part of helping participants find where their interests are in order to be successful in future employment.

### *Job Shadowing, Job Coaching and Situational Assessment*

Connie Biby presented on assisting clients in employment placements by using job shadowing, job coaching and situation assessments. First, Ms. Biby discussed situation assessments, which is the opportunity for a client to perform work in a real work environment for a short period of time to help the client determine if the job is a fit for them. It determines client work preferences as well as their social skills and abilities. The employment specialist or caseworker will go on the job site with a client to do the assessment and work side-by-side with the client to determine if the job is a good match. Career Options sees this tool a key supportive service in securing employment for their clients.

Job shadowing happens when a client is able to connect with a professional who has knowledge about an occupation that the client has interest in and the client then shadows the daily activities. During this time, the client has the opportunity to ask questions about job tasks to help determine if the occupation or career is something they would like to pursue. Professionals and employers are often likely to participate in a job shadowing program because most people enjoy talking about their jobs.

A job coach has two roles: to present the client to employers as a valuable asset while also facilitating the necessary support the client needs to remain employed. The job coach finds employment for the clients while offering the employer the benefit of lowering their turnover rate. The job coach saves the employer time and money by finding an employee for them and by providing the needed support services to the TANF participant the job coach ensures that that turnover is less likely. The job coach can also contribute to job creation by engaging employers and asking about their needs. An example of this would be for a law firm to hire an employee to take care of the conference rooms so that paralegals can devote their time to fully billable work. A job coach would be able to raise a similar issue like this with a potential employer to try and create a job for a client. Ms. Biby emphasized that the key to job creation is mutual benefit. It is therefore easier to meet an employers needs than to try and have the employer “buy what you are selling.”

### Capturing the Learning and Wrap-Up

During the final session of the Roundtable, the six participating Rural Communities Initiative sites took time to reflect on what they had learned over the past day and a half. Participants were asked to write down useful strategies learned, new ideas that could be implemented when participants returned home, and whether there was any subject in which they needed additional information. See Appendix D for the listing of participant’s answers and thoughts.

After participants had discussed lessons learned, Mr. Brent Orrell, Rural Communities Initiative staff member, made some concluding remarks. He reflected on the events of the past day and a half and highlighted the time with Career Option’s clients to point out that relationships are



what help clients move to self-sufficiency. He also reflected on rural poverty versus urban poverty and the increased complication of the lack of resources in rural areas as evidenced by the site visit to the Standing Rock Reservation.

Mr. Orrell also encouraged participants to continue to seek out partnerships with other systems, especially the workforce system. He highlighted that the recent Recovery

Act appropriated \$4 billion in new monies for Adult, Youth, Dislocated Worker and Green Jobs programs. Mr. Orrell addressed the difficulty that the TANF system sometimes has in working with the workforce system and referenced Training and Employment Guidance Letter (TEGL) published in early 2009 as a potential resource for participants. The TEGL encourages local

Workforce Investment Boards that are focusing on hard-to-serve populations like TANF recipients and ex-offenders to renegotiate performance targets to reduce disincentives for serving these populations. A copy of this TEGl can be found at <http://wdr.doleta.gov/directives/attach/TEGL/TEGL09-08.pdf> with the specific materials beginning on page 6.

Following Mr. Orrell's remarks, Lisa Washington-Thomas closed the Roundtable by thanking participants, speakers, and Rural Communities Initiative staff. Ms. Washington-Thomas wished everyone safe travels as they returned to their home states and asked site representatives to complete the Roundtable evaluation.

In their evaluation of the Roundtable, participants in general reported a high to moderate rate of satisfaction with the design and content of the Roundtable. Participants particularly reported the highest rate of satisfaction with the Breakout Sessions and felt that they learned useful strategies that they could implement at their state. Most participants felt that the visit to the Fort Yates Office on the Standing Rock Reservation was worthwhile and educational.

## Appendix A: Roundtable Agenda

### May 5, 2009

- 8:30 a.m. - 8:45 a.m.**      **WELCOME AND OPENING REMARKS (Radisson Hotel)**  
*Lisa Washington-Thomas/Regional Representative, Federal Project Officer, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Office of Family Assistance*  
*Janet Feil, ACF Region VIII, Children and Families Program Specialist*  
*Carol Cartledge, Director of Public Assistance, North Dakota Department of Human Services (DHS)*
- 8:45 a.m. - 9:10 a.m.**      **PARTICIPANT AND NORTH DAKOTA/CAREER OPTIONS STAFF INTRODUCTIONS & OUTLINE OF THE ROUNDTABLE (Radisson Hotel)**  
During this session, sites will discuss what they hope to learn from this Roundtable and they will also outline some of the pressing needs in their state around TANF case management and assessment.  
  
*Facilitator: Patrick Heiman, Senior Associate, ICF International*
- 9:10 a.m. – 9:35 a.m.**      **OVERVIEW OF THE TANF, JOBS AND TRIBAL EMPLOYMENT, AND TRAINING PROGRAMS IN NORTH DAKOTA (Radisson Hotel)**  
This session will provide a quick overview of the employment programs currently active in North Dakota. Presenters will describe the successes and challenges these programs have encountered while moving low-income families towards higher levels of self-sufficiency.  
  
*Brenda Peterson, Administrator, TANF/JOBS and Interfaces, North Dakota Department of Human Services (DHS)*
- 9:35 a.m. – 9:45 a.m.**      **Break**
- 9:45 a.m. – 11:45 a.m.**      **OVERVIEW OF THE CAREER OPTIONS EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM (Radisson Hotel)**  
This session will provide participants with an in-depth understanding of the services and approaches used by Career Options in the management of the JOBS and Vocational Development Programs. Special emphasis will be placed on Career Options' individualized case management strategies, issues and solutions under the JOBS program, and special projects.  
  
*Trina Gress, Chief Operations Officer, Career Options*  
*Tracy Horob, Region One and Two Employment Program Director*  
*Connie Biby, Region Three and Six Employment Program Director*  
*Penny Lasky, Region Four and Five Employment Program Director*  
*Bobby Jo Sollie, Region Seven and Eight Employment Program Director*

Noon – 1:00 p.m.                    **WORKING LUNCH** (Radisson Hotel – boxed lunch)  
Roundtable participants will meet Career Options participants and hear their stories.

*Facilitator: Trina Gress, Chief Operations Officer, Career Options*

1:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.            **ON-SITE VISIT TO FORT YATES OFFICE/STANDING ROCK RESERVATION**  
This session will give participants the opportunity to visit Career Options staff in Fort Yates, part of the Standing Rock Reservation, approximately one hour by car. This session will also introduce the cultural diversity of the program and discuss issues and solutions.

May 6, 2009

8:45 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.            **BREAKOUT WORKSHOPS ON THE CAREER OPTIONS MODEL**  
(Radisson Hotel Breakout Rooms)  
This session will give participants the opportunity to learn more in-depth about certain aspects of the Career Options model. Participants will have the opportunity to work one-on-one with Career Options staff during two of the following breakout sessions:

- Job Shadow/Situational Assessment/On site Job Coaching
- Intake and Employment Plan Development
- Job Development
- Overview of Database
- Vocational Skills Workshops

*Facilitator: Trina Gress, Chief Operations Officer*

12:15 p.m. – 1:15 p.m.            **CAPTURING THE LEARNING** (working lunch at the Radisson Hotel)  
Participants will work in a facilitated session in order to highlight and summarize the key strategies, tools, and ideas that emerged during their Roundtable experience. This session will lay the groundwork for sites to integrate existing case management plans with new ideas and strategies.

*Brent Orrell, Expert Consultant, ICF International*  
*Alison Hathaway, Associate, ICF International*

1:15 p.m. – 1:30 p.m.            **WRAP-UP AND EVALUATION** (Radisson Hotel)

## Appendix B: Participant List

**U.S. Department of Health and Human  
Services  
Administration for Children &  
Families  
Office of Family Assistance**

**Lisa Washington-Thomas**  
Technical Assistance Branch Chief  
Administration for Children and Families,  
Office of Family Assistance  
370 L'Enfant Promenade, SW  
5th Floor- East  
Washington, D.C. 20447  
202-401-5141  
[lwashington-thomas@acf.hhs.gov](mailto:lwashington-thomas@acf.hhs.gov)

**ICF International Staff**

**Brent Orrell**  
Senior Fellow  
ICF International  
10530 Rosehaven Street, Suite 400  
Fairfax, Virginia 22030  
703-220-9949  
[borrell@icfi.com](mailto:borrell@icfi.com)

**Katie Caldwell**  
Associate  
ICF International  
10530 Rosehaven Street, Suite 400  
Fairfax, Virginia 22130  
703-279-6282  
[kcaldwell@icfi.com](mailto:kcaldwell@icfi.com)

**Alison Hathaway**  
Associate  
ICF International  
10530 Rosehaven Street, Suite 400  
Fairfax, Virginia 22030  
703-383-3303  
[ahathaway@icfi.com](mailto:ahathaway@icfi.com)

**Patrick Heiman**  
Senior Associate  
ICF International  
10530 Rosehaven Street, Suite 400  
Fairfax, Virginia 22030  
703-383-3326  
[pheiman@icfi.com](mailto:pheiman@icfi.com)

**North Dakota**

**Connie Biby**  
Community Options, Inc. – Career Options  
501 3rd Street NE  
Suite 2  
Devils Lake, North Dakota 58301  
701-662-2763  
[conniecoi@gondtc.com](mailto:conniecoi@gondtc.com)

**Carol Cartledge**  
ND Department of Human Services  
600 E. Boulevard Avenue  
Bismarck, North Dakota 58505  
701-328-4008  
[ccartledge@nd.gov](mailto:ccartledge@nd.gov)

**Trina Gress**  
Community Options, Inc. – Career Options  
1003 Interstate Avenue  
Suite 1  
Bismarck, North Dakota 58503  
701-391-8523  
[chief@careeroptionsnd.com](mailto:chief@careeroptionsnd.com)

**Tracy Horob**  
Community Options, Inc. – Career Options  
2321 2nd Avenue West  
Suite 3  
Williston, North Dakota 58801  
701-774-2354  
[Wtn\\_director@nemont.net](mailto:Wtn_director@nemont.net)

**Penny Lasky**  
Community Options, Inc. – Career Options  
202 N 3rd Street  
Suite 3  
Grand Forks, North Dakota 58203  
707-772-1715  
[gfdirector@qwestoffice.net](mailto:gfdirector@qwestoffice.net)



**Brenda Peterson**

TANF/JOBS and Interfaces  
ND Department of Human Services  
600 E Boulevard Avenue  
Bismarck, North Dakota 58505  
701-328-2167  
[bpeterson@nd.gov](mailto:bpeterson@nd.gov)

**Bobby Jo Sollie**

Community Options, Inc. – Career Options  
1003 Interstate Ave.  
Suite 1  
Bismarck, North Dakota 58503  
707-751-1406  
[Pd3@careeroptionsnd.com](mailto:Pd3@careeroptionsnd.com)

**Hoopa Valley**

**Julia Hostler**

Employment Development Program  
Coordinator  
Hoopa Tribal TANF  
P.O. Box 728, 300 Willow Street  
Hoopa, California 95546  
530-625-5319  
[jhostler@hoopa-nsn.gov](mailto:jhostler@hoopa-nsn.gov)

**Leslie Colegrove**

Project Coordinator  
Hoopa Valley Positive Indian Family Network  
P.O. Box 728, 300 Willow Street  
Hoopa, California 95546  
530-625-4816  
[lesliecolegrove@netzero.com](mailto:lesliecolegrove@netzero.com)

**Montana**

**Wilma “Billie” Brownlee**

DLI  
PO Box 12  
Poplar, Montana 59255  
406-768-3136  
[bbrownlee@mt.gov](mailto:bbrownlee@mt.gov)

**Lorrie Cofer**

DPHHS/Public Assistance  
48 2nd Avenue, Ste 200  
Havre, Montana 59501  
406-265-5196  
[lcofer@mt.gov](mailto:lcofer@mt.gov)

**Sarah Three Stars**

Montana State Tribal New Program  
Box 286  
Poplar, Montana 59255  
406-768-7772  
[Sunee\\_smith@yahoo.com](mailto:Sunee_smith@yahoo.com)

**New York**

**Fran DelGaudio**

Greene County Deptment of Social Services  
PO Box 528  
411 Main Street  
Catskill, New York 12414  
518-719-3703  
[Fran.delgaudio@dfa.state.ny.us](mailto:Fran.delgaudio@dfa.state.ny.us)

**Michele Wilk**

Employment and Advancement Services Bureau  
New York Office of Temporary and Disability  
Assistance  
40 N. Pearl Street, 11C  
Albany, New York 12243  
518-473-0440  
[Michele.wilk@otda.state.ny.us](mailto:Michele.wilk@otda.state.ny.us)

**South Carolina**

**Marian Wicker**

Program Coordinator I in the Family Assistance  
Unit  
South Carolina Department of Social Services  
803-898-7390  
[marian.wicker@dss.sc.gov](mailto:marian.wicker@dss.sc.gov)

**Alice Wright**

Hampton County Department of Social Services  
Economic Services Program Coordinator  
102 Ginn Altman Avenue Suite A  
Hampton, South Carolina 29924  
803-914-1638  
[Alice.Wright@dss.sc.gov](mailto:Alice.Wright@dss.sc.gov)

**Texas**

**Julie Craig**

Workforce Solutions Texoma Board  
5904 Texoma Parkway  
Sherman, Texas 75090  
903-957-7408  
[julie.craig@twc.state.tx.us](mailto:julie.craig@twc.state.tx.us)

**Kristin McEntyre**

Texas Workforce Commission  
101 East 15th Street  
Austin, Texas 78778  
512-936-5867

[Kristin.mcentyre@twc.state.tx.us](mailto:Kristin.mcentyre@twc.state.tx.us)

**Vermont**

**Diana Carminati**

Welfare-to-Work Director  
Economic Services Division  
Vermont Department for Children and Families  
103 South Main St.  
Waterbury, Vermont 03671-1201  
802-241-2853

[Diana.Carminati@ahs.state.vt.us](mailto:Diana.Carminati@ahs.state.vt.us)

**Kelly Greaves**

Reach Up Supervisor  
Economic Services Division  
Vermont Department for Children and Families  
67 Eastern Ave., Suite 7  
St. Johnsbury, Vermont 05843  
802-748-7149

[Kelly.greaves@ahs.state.vt.us](mailto:Kelly.greaves@ahs.state.vt.us)

**Kathy Lantagne**

Reach Up Supervisor  
Economic Services Division  
Vermont Department for Children and Families  
100 Main St, Suite 240  
Newport, Vermont 05855  
802-334-6504

[Kathy.Lantagne@ahs.state.vt.us](mailto:Kathy.Lantagne@ahs.state.vt.us)

## Appendix C: Evaluation Summary

In general, in their evaluation of the Roundtable, participants reported a high to moderate rate of satisfaction with the design and content of the Roundtable. Participants particularly reported the highest rate of satisfaction with the Breakout Sessions and felt that they learned useful strategies to take back to their states. Though only some of the participants serve Native Americans, many still felt that the visit to the Fort Yates Office on the Standing Rock Reservation was worthwhile and educational.

### Tuesday, May 5th, 2009

#### OVERVIEW OF THE TANF, JOBS AND TRIBAL EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING PROGRAMS IN NORTH DAKOTA

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	N/A
Information presented was relevant and valuable. N= 12	50% N=6	25% N=3	25% N=3	0% N=0	0% N=0	0% N=0
Strategies and programs presented will be useful and relevant to our work and programs. N= 12	33% N=4	33% N=4	17% N=2	17% N=2	0% N=0	0% N=0
Material was presented in a logical and understandable manner. N=12	58% N=7	25% N=3	17% N=2	0% N=0	0% N=0	0% N=0

Comments:

- Presenters were very knowledgeable on their topics.
- This program would not be applicable in a “work first” state where JRT must be entered into for the first activity. The workforce system is vastly different from ND.
- It was great! Meeting the clients, hearing their stories-wonderful.
- This area (ND) and the reservation information.
- I was kind of confused because of the different programs.

OVERVIEW OF THE CAREER OPTIONS EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	N/A
Information presented was relevant and valuable. N=12	42% N=5	33% N=4	25% N=3	0% N=0	0% N=0	0% N=0
Information presented and shared will be useful towards meeting our program goals. N=12	50% N=6	17% N=2	8% N=1	25% N=3	0% N=0	0% N=0
Material was presented in a logical and understandable manner. N=12	50% N=6	25% N=3	17% N=2	0% N=0	0% N=0	0% N=0

Comments:

- It has been an eye-opener, as I see how different states handle the same program. It seems that we are more strict with expectations and acceptance of verified participation hours. The intensive case management seems beneficial to North Dakota TANF recipients; however in our state, it is not feasible due to the larger TANF numbers and cost effectiveness.
- As a CRP the transfer or use of an intensive case management approach appear to work for the TANF clients; however it would not be cost effective in our state with a much higher TANF caseload. There is no close connection with the one-stop partners for another resource and for stimulus funding programs.
- Career Options staff were excellent! Gained so much from them.
- Loved the program- can't wait to model program at our site.

**SITE VISIT: FORT YATES OFFICE/STANDING ROCK RESERVATION**

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	N/A
Information presented was relevant and valuable to our work. N=12	33% N=4	17% N=2	42% N=5	0% N=0	0% N=0	0% N=0
Information presented during the site visit will be useful in our work. N=12	33% N=4	17% N=2	25% N=3	17% N=2	0% N=0	0% N=0
Material was presented in a logical and understandable manner. N=12	42% N=5	33% N=4	17% N=2	0% N=0	0% N=0	0% N=0

Comments:

- It was nice to get to see the region’s office space that they use-smaller groups with the time to talk to the case managers about the tools they would use would have been great.
- With a 100% employee turnover rate at the Indian casino, mainly due to lack of child care and transportation. Career Options has not discussed with this employer how to solve this problem better.
- Although not working with tribes this can be used with any population.
- It seemed like a long trip for such a short visit; however I appreciated the opportunity to see the local rural site that was served. Also, viewing the tribe was an eye opener too. The tribal building was beautiful and it shared volumes without saying a word. It seems that North Dakota (and the Federal government) “bend” a lot to help satisfy tribal leadership, so you’re in a tough spot!
- Invaluable experience.
- Could really identify with their service population. Loved the special projects.

Wednesday, May 6th, 2009

**BREAKOUT WORKSHOPS**

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	N/A
Content discussed remained relevant to the discussion topics. N=12	67% N=8	25% N=3	8% N=1	0% N=0	0% N=0	0% N=0
The information presented was valuable to our work. N=12	58% N=7	25% N=3	17% N=2	0% N=0	0% N=0	0% N=0
Participants had sufficient time to speak. N=12	42% N=5	25% N=3	17% N=2	8% N=1	0% N=0	8% N=1

Comments:

- Each workshop was a good overview of the topic. More time to get more in-depth information with details would have been great.
- This was very informative.
- The break-out sessions could have been a bit longer- maybe 15-20 minutes more. I did appreciate the material presented in the break-out sessions. Penny Lasky is a good presenter and seems to know her material!
- I really enjoyed the discussion regarding training workers.
- Interesting.

### Additional Participant Insight

1. What did you find useful about attending this Roundtable (i.e., any immediate or long-term benefits to you/your staff that you anticipate as a result of attending this Roundtable)?

- Ideally we would like to upscale our employment program to model Career Options! We need more workers to coach, encourage clients to go to work.
- This model “going to North Dakota” should be done again.
- All the ideas that were mentioned in the last session.
- Participants speaking about their successes and struggles.
- More creative and innovative ideas. (Picture Perfect Employment)
- Finding out the differences among states was beneficial.
- Incorporating the same techniques and intensive case management used for serving clients with disabilities to the TANF population.

2. On which aspect or topic would you like to receive further technical assistance?

- Database, assessment and tracking effective.
- Assessment, online intake, Career Options contracts.

3. What issues would you have liked to have discussed in more detail at the Roundtable?

- How TANF clients use the tribal program for college, GED, work, etc.
- I want more info on Pilot Project for dual-diagnosed clients. I want every aspect and part of the program.
- Other state’s processes, example: sanctions in different states. Overview of information was wonderful, the presentation of the Career Options out sourcing at the reservation was very eye-opening.
- More differences on tribal vs. non-tribal hours (participation and documentation) and what difference there are in North Dakota itself.

## Appendix D: Wrap Up Activity

### Useful Strategies, Tools and Ideas

- Job development in hardship communities, ideas for new approaches.
- Use parts of the database for work experience and community service placements. Adapt it to the one we already have.
- Develop database for employment and self-sufficiency plan.
- Wish list: online intake, online assessment.
- Reporting hours- creativity?
- Job development strategies- how to approach an employer who was previously “burned” by a placement.
- A contact that I know who does some work on Indian reservation.
- Picture book technique for non English or low literacy levels.
- Implement more case management approaches.
- Utilizing some of the special projects such as “Picture Perfect”, negotiating the \$125 monthly cab fee, etc. Using these guides to develop our own special projects.
- Utilizing situational assessment, job coaching, job shadowing.
- Stay positive- encourage clients.
- Positive case management, baby steps, thank you letters monthly to WEP sites, contractors.
- Create employment model like Career Options.
- Concrete format for developing a self-sufficiency plan.
- Work on what a client can do- not what they can’t do.
- Baby steps.

### More Info Needed

- How states differ in sanction process: amounts, requirements to lift the sanction, good cause reasons.
- More info on Career Options pilot program for dual diagnosed clients.
- We would like to see North Dakota’s TANF work verification plan.
- More info on OWRA.
- Exact funding source that pays Career Options.
- Summary of how Career Options is funded.
- Would like to see Career Option’s contract.
- Copy of the medical report form.
- Are supportive service dollars included in contract dollars?
- Medical forms used to determine activities they can do.
- Medical form copy.
- Copy of work comp. paper.
- Would like copy of form/timesheets.
- Emails of all PowerPoints and info sheets.
- Form on case status and referral form from Career Options.
- Staffing model and job descriptions for Career Options.



### Taking Back to Implement

- Immediate referral to employment and seen within 5 days.
- Develop employment to include Career Options like job shadowing.
- Assessment ideas.
- Supportive services: reinstatement fee, rent, deposits.
- Special projects.
- Employment- create self-sufficiency plan.
- Tools- picture book technique.
- More positive case management.
- Thank you letters.
- Phone call to remind clients of appointments.
- Thank you notes.

## Appendix E: Additional OWRA Information

### WHAT IS OWRA?

The Online Work Readiness Assessment (OWRA) Tool is a specialized, Web-based suite of resources, tools, and assessments that help State, Tribal, and county Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) agency staff make informed decisions about a customer's readiness to successfully secure employment and meet work participation target rates. With OWRA, TANF professionals can identify barriers to employment in a consistent manner, and select and implement education, training, and core and non-core work activities in TANF participant's self-sufficiency plan. OWRA can help states meet the Deficit Reduction Act (DRA) of 2005 requirements by generating plans that include appropriate core and non-core work activities mandated by legislation. OWRA will be a free tool available for State, Tribal, and local TANF agency use.

OWRA was developed in 2003 as a collaborative effort between the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Administration for Children and Families Office of Family Assistance (OFA), the Maryland Department of Human Resources (DHR) Family Investment Administration (FIA), and the University of Maryland School of Social Work in response to the need expressed by the Maryland DHR that TANF participants needed to be placed into work activities faster than they currently were and the need for caseworker assistance in completing TANF participant assessments.



The tool is designed to assist caseworkers while interviewing TANF participants and learn about their individual needs. It relies on the interviewing skills of the caseworker while assisting them in identifying potential barriers. Questions and answers are weighted to produce a summary at the end of the assessment that is tailored to each individual area employing the tool.

### FEATURES AND FUNCTIONS

OWRA is organized into four related modules that allow TANF caseworkers to proceed in identifying TANF participants' barriers to work, determining participants' work skills and work readiness, linking participants to pertinent development and work activities, and tracking and monitoring participant activities.

*Module 1* is a customizable TANF intake form that captures fundamental information for case decision-making and family independence. Data is collected on demographics, employment, and education.

*Module 2* uses the information collected in Module 1 to develop a comprehensive assessment of an individual TANF participant's strengths and barriers. Module 2 assesses TANF participants' strengths and barriers in education, work experience history, work skills and interests, substance abuse, mental health, learning disabilities, domestic violence, housing, transportation, and child care. After a caseworker completes the assessment, they are provided with two resources: 1) a summary of the questionnaire with an individual TANF participant's answers into an electronic or paper based summary; and 2) an assessment document that provides tailored recommendations to the caseworker in regards to using a participant's identified strengths and barriers to place them into work activities, training, and providing crucial work supports such as child care, housing, and transportation.

*Module 3* will help State, local and Tribal agencies to better assess TANF participants' work readiness and suitability of their employment placement. By consolidating information from Module 1 and Module 2, Module 3 will create a personalized self-sufficiency plan that will serve as a guide for determining the TANF participant's readiness for work and will aid the case manager in making appropriate recommendations for training, employment, and education. Additionally, Module 3 will include local market information that will identify employer and workforce needs. These tools will be critical for the assessment on employment, skills, and training levels. TANF agencies can help TANF participants determine a career ladder to ensure that participants are not just placed in temporary low entry job placements, but are on a path to self-sufficiency.

*Module 4* will focus on monitoring and tracking data on TANF participants' engagement in activities that have been previously identified in Module 3. This module will feature a "dashboard" that will assist in data tracking enabling the case manager to monitor performance and revise activities in real time.