

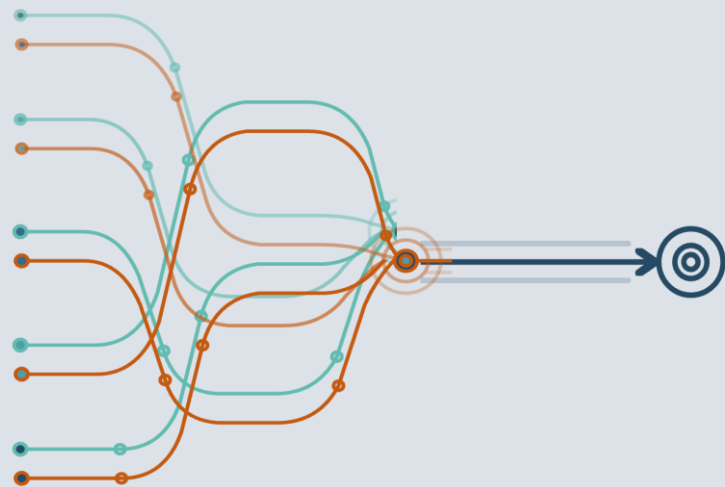
Cross-Agency Data Partnerships

TANF Program Integrity Office Hours

How States Can Build the Infrastructure to Share Data,
Strengthen Provider Oversight, and Make Better Spending Decisions

May 7, 2026

*As you join, please share in the chat:
Your name, state, and title*



WELCOME



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Project STAR
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WHY THIS MATTERS

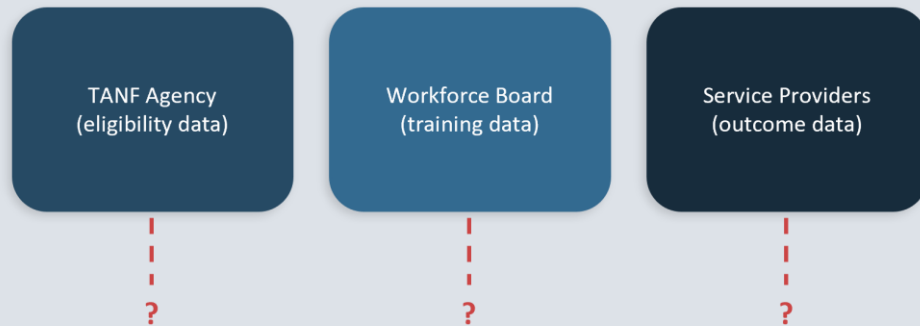
The Data Fragmentation Problem

TANF non-assistance funds flow through workforce boards, E&T contractors, community organizations — but data about service delivery lives in separate systems.

Without consistent cross-agency data, states struggle to assess provider performance, identify service gaps, or connect spending to participant outcomes.

GAO has flagged this as a core program integrity challenge: states lacking data infrastructure are limited in their ability to oversee non-assistance spending.

Without Cross-Agency Data Sharing



With Cross-Agency Data Partnerships



WHAT STRONG CROSS-AGENCY DATA PARTNERSHIPS LOOK LIKE

01

Formalize the Agreement



Establish a legal & operational foundation for data exchange — even if the scope starts modest.

02

Build a Meeting Cadence



Structured recurring touchpoints at different levels — operational, coordination, and policy.

03

Create Feedback Mechanisms



Give partners and providers explicit channels to share what the data can't capture.

04

Connect Data to Decisions



Use data and partner input together — and document the connection to decisions made.

WHAT STRONG CROSS-AGENCY DATA PARTNERSHIPS LOOK LIKE (continued-1)



01 Formalize the Agreement First

Legal & operational foundation.

- A data sharing agreement establishes what gets shared, at what frequency, under what conditions, and with what safeguards.

Start modest, build from there.

- An agreement doesn't need to be comprehensive on day one — but it needs to exist. Formal structures are easier to expand than informal ones.

Make it standard practice.

- Some states formalize all data exchanges regardless of partner, which normalizes the step and reduces friction.



02 Build a Tiered Meeting Cadence

Data systems don't produce insight - people do.

Structured recurring touchpoints create space to interpret data, surface gaps, and make decisions together.

Frequency should match function.

Frequent operational calls handle day-to-day problem-solving; less frequent workgroups tackle policy and longer-term needs.

Avoid the all-purpose meeting trap.

Mixing operational and policy conversations in one meeting keeps both unfocused. Separate them intentionally.



WHAT STRONG CROSS-AGENCY DATA PARTNERSHIPS LOOK LIKE

(continued-2)



03 Create Channels for Partner Feedback

Data captures what it's designed to capture.

Front-line providers often know things that never enter a database — shifts in participant circumstances, service gaps, cost pressures.

Build explicit feedback opportunities.

Regular forums where providers can raise concerns or flag needs give administrators a fuller picture than data alone.

Make it structured, not ad hoc.

Informal check-ins depend on relationships. Formalized forums — like quarterly convenings — build institutional knowledge.



04 Use Data and Feedback to Make Decisions

The measure of success is whether they shape decisions.

A cross-agency data partnership is only working if the data and insight it generates actually shapes program choices.

Be explicit — and document it.

When data and partner input inform a program or budget decision, name the connection. It builds accountability and creates a learning record.

Document for multiple audiences.

A decision trail demonstrates stewardship to oversight bodies, builds the case for infrastructure investment, and helps other administrators learn.



State in Focus: Michigan

Building a Cross-agency Data Infrastructure That Shapes Program Decisions

Ashley Soper, Family Independence Manager, Economic Stability Administration

Kent Schulze, State Administrative Manager over TANF

Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS)

SETTING THE STAGE: MICHIGAN'S PATH TO CROSS-AGENCY DATA PARTNERSHIPS

Michigan's cross-agency data infrastructure began taking shape around 2010 — and a more recent system change gave us an opportunity to formalize and build on what we'd started.

A Challenge Demanded Action

WPR struggles around 2010 made cross-agency coordination a compliance priority

- Michigan's Work Participation Rate was struggling — a by-product of low participant retention — and the state was at risk of potential penalties
- Part of the problem: Michigan DHHS wasn't regularly meeting with the Dept. of Labor and Economic Opportunity's (LEO) staff, and participant wrap-around supports weren't connecting across agencies
- Improving WPR required improving service delivery to support retention
- Improving service delivery required working across agencies — and that meant building a real coordination structure, not just ad hoc contact

A Window Opened

A system change in 2024 created an opportunity to rebuild the partnership

- LEO's employment system, OSMIS, was due for a system update — and Michigan's Bridges eligibility system would need to change too
- Data sharing agreements had existed for years but hadn't been revisited — the system change created a natural moment to update them
- Compliance divisions across MDHHS and LEO worked together to identify what a revised partnership needed to include

WHAT MICHIGAN BUILT IN RESPONSE

- Updated data sharing agreements
- Regular meeting cadences across all levels
- Staff-to-staff coordination between MDHHS and LEO





THE RESULTS

- WPR improved
- Service gaps became visible and addressable

MICHIGAN'S MEETING CADENCE — LAYERED BY PURPOSE

Different conversations happen at the right level — operational, coordination, and policy/advisory.

Takeaway: Each tier serves a different function. Together they ensure operational, strategic, and policy conversations occur consistently and inform one another.

BIWEEKLY 	MDHHS + LEO <i>Relationship maintenance and operational problem-solving</i>	Day-to-day data issues, flagging emerging cases, keeping the relationship warm between quarterly meetings
MONTHLY 	MDHHS + LEO + Michigan Poverty Task Force (MPTF) <i>Broader coordination and information exchange</i>	Cross-cutting coordination on shared populations, sharing program updates, surfacing issues that need multi-agency attention
QUARTERLY 	MDHHS + LEO + MWAs <i>MWAs share needs, concerns, and questions directly with state leadership</i>	Local service providers speak directly to MDHHS and LEO leadership — a structured channel for frontline feedback to reach decision-makers
QUARTERLY 	MPTF Subgroup <i>Policy ideas and suggested legislative or regulatory changes</i>	Dedicated space for longer-horizon policy discussions — surfacing ideas for legislative or regulatory changes that emerge from program experience

MICHIGAN'S CROSS-AGENCY DATA PARTNERSHIP STRUCTURE

Michigan DHHS (MDHHS), the Department of Labor & Economic Opportunity (LEO), and MichiganWorks! Agencies (MWAs)



WHAT EACH GROUP GETS FROM THE PARTNERSHIP

MDHHS uses LEO/OSMIS data to:

- Support TANF compliance monitoring
- Informs wrap-around services for participants
- Tracks work participation data

LEO uses Bridges (MDHHS) data to:

- Better understand participant needs
- Tailor TANF program design
- Coordinate with MDHHS on cases

MWAs use combined data to:

- Raise local service needs with state leadership
- Flag emerging service gaps
- Inform provider resource requests

DISCUSSION



Does this model resonate with how your state is set up — or how you'd like to be set up?



What are the biggest barriers to formalizing data agreements in your state?



How do you currently get feedback from providers or local partners to supplement your data?



What decisions could you make differently with better cross-agency data?



THANK YOU!

Resources & Next Steps

Companion product and session recording available on the STAR website

Peer consultation: STAR is available to support 1:1 follow-up for states interested in developing or strengthening cross-agency data partnerships

Next session —

Session 2: Provider Contracts And Data Collection | June 18, 2026

Contact & Resources

Email: STARinfo@blhtech.com

STAR Website: peerta.acf.hhs.gov

Program Integrity Office Hours Webpage:

peerta.acf.hhs.gov/program-integrity-office-hours



Program Integrity Office Hours – Session 1 Recap and Takeaways

Building a Cross-agency Data Infrastructure That Shapes Program Decisions



RECAP: CROSS-AGENCY DATA TO STRENGTHEN PROGRAM INTEGRITY

CHALLENGES



- Limited cross-agency communication and coordination
- Misaligned wraparound supports
- Different workforce participation requirements

STRATEGIES



- Leadership engagement
- Cross-agency collaboration
- Formal Data Sharing Agreements (DSAs)
- Ongoing communication and trust-building

RESULTS



- Improved workforce participation support
- Increase vehicle repair assistance
- Better coordination for TANF participants
- Stronger long-term program integrity

Strong program integrity depends on strong collaboration.

KEY DISCUSSION THEMES AND LESSONS LEARNED

Collaboration Practices

- Participate in regular meetings between workforce and human services agencies
- Include policy staff to address implementation questions early

Data & Systems

- Review shared data systems with frontline staff
- Use data dictionaries to clarify useful data elements

Feedback Loops

- Survey participants directly
- Improve real-time communication across agencies

Long-Term Impact

- Reduce barriers for families
- Improve service coordination
- Strengthen communication and accountability
- Support stronger program integrity outcomes

A place to start. A resource to come back to.

Program Integrity Office Hours Session 1 Companion Resource



Cross-Agency Data Partnerships

Building the Infrastructure to Share Data, Facilitate Knowledge Exchange, and Improve Service Delivery

TANF Program Integrity Office Hours | Session 1 Companion Product

This companion product accompanies Session 1 of the [TANF Program Integrity Office Hours](#) series, a peer learning initiative for state TANF program administrators and related agency staff. You may review the recording on the TANF [Program Integrity Office Hours](#) webpage now. This resource summarizes key takeaways from the session and offers tools for assessing and strengthening your agency's cross-agency data partnerships.

WHY IT MATTERS

TANF non-assistance funds flow through workforce boards, employment program providers, and community partners—but data about service delivery often lives in separate systems. The Government Accountability Office (GAO) has identified this as a core program integrity challenge: without cross-agency data infrastructure, TANF agencies struggle to assess provider performance, identify service gaps, and connect spending to participant outcomes.

WHAT STRONG CROSS-AGENCY DATA PARTNERSHIPS LOOK LIKE

These are common features among TANF agencies with strong cross-agency data partnerships:

01 FORMALIZE THE AGREEMENT^{iv}

A data sharing agreement establishes what gets shared, at what frequency, under what conditions, and with what safeguards. It doesn't need to be comprehensive on day one—but it needs to exist. Formal structures are easier to expand than informal ones.

03 MAKE THE CHANNELS FORMAL AND CONSISTENT^{iv}

Data systems don't produce insight—people do. Structured recurring data-focused touchpoints at different organizational levels create space to interpret data, surface gaps, and make decisions together. Match frequency to function: frequent operational calls for day-to-day problem-solving; less frequent workgroups for policy needs. Avoid mixing both in one meeting.

02 CREATE CHANNELS FOR PARTNER FEEDBACK^{iv}

Front-line providers often know things that never enter a database—shifts in participant circumstances, service gaps, cost pressures. Forums where providers can raise concerns give administrators a fuller picture than data alone and help build institutional knowledge.

04 CONNECT DATA TO DECISIONS—AND DOCUMENT IT^{v,vi}

A cross-agency data partnership only works if the insight it generates shapes program choices. When data and partner input inform a program or budget decision, name the connection. A decision trail demonstrates stewardship to oversight bodies and builds the case for continued infrastructure investment.

Michigan: From WPR Pressure to Cross-Agency Infrastructure

Around 2010, Michigan's Work Participation Rate (WPR) was struggling—in part because participant wrap-around supports weren't connecting across agencies. Improving WPR required improving service delivery, which required more structured coordination and knowledge sharing between the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) and the Department of Labor and Economic Opportunity (LEO): consistent meeting cadences, shared data, and formalized feedback loops.

In the years that followed, Michigan worked to build cross-agency coordination capacity incrementally—strengthening relationships between MDHHS and LEO and developing the feedback channels that would eventually support a more formalized system.

A 2024 update to LEO's OSMS employment system created a natural moment to revisit and formalize what the state had already started building. Rather than restoring the status quo, Michigan used it as an opportunity to strengthen the partnership structure itself.

YOUR COMPANION PRODUCT: WHAT IT COVERS

01 WHY IT MATTERS

Frames the program integrity challenge for this topic — grounding the session in the GAO findings that motivated it and explaining why cross-agency data partnerships are a priority for TANF today.

02 WHAT STRONG PARTNERSHIPS LOOK LIKE

Four features of effective cross-agency data infrastructure — formalizing agreements, creating feedback channels, structuring communication, and connecting data to documented decisions.



Cross-Agency Data Partnerships

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Download the companion product at peerta.acf.hhs.gov/program-integrity-office-hours

YOUR COMPANION PRODUCT: WHAT IT COVERS (continued-1)

03 STATE IN FOCUS

Michigan built its cross-agency data infrastructure incrementally — starting with a Work Participation Rate challenge and ending with formalized data sharing agreements, biweekly operational calls, and quarterly provider convenings.

The state example is summarized in full in the companion product, including short- and long-term results and a key takeaway on creating your own moments for change.

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WHAT THEY BUILT: Not just improved data infrastructure, but also formalized communications and coordination structures—updated data sharing agreements with nightly/daily data syncs between Bridges (MDHHS eligibility) and OSMIS (LEO employment system); biweekly operational calls between MDHHS and LEO; monthly cross-agency coordination with the Michigan Poverty Task Force; and quarterly convenings with MichiganWorks! Agencies to raise local service needs directly with state leadership.

TAKEAWAY: *A compliance challenge can be the impetus for real cross-agency data sharing infrastructure, but so can a system update, a new interagency relationship, or a shift in leadership priorities. You don't need to wait for the perfect moment—be ready to pursue formal, consistent data and knowledge exchange arrangements at any opportunity, and sometimes you can create that opportunity yourself.*

Short-term results

- Updated data sharing agreements formalized; cross-system data exchanged daily
- Service gaps became visible and addressable
- Formalized provider feedback channel through quarterly convenings

Long-term results

- WPR improved

Download the companion product at peerta.acf.hhs.gov/program-integrity-office-hours

YOUR COMPANION PRODUCT: WHAT IT COVERS (continued-2)

04 WHERE TO START

Not sure where to begin? The companion product includes a five-stage self-assessment tool to help you identify where your agency is right now.

Each stage includes a reflective question and a concrete first step.

Use it independently or as a team.

WHERE TO START

Where is your agency in building cross-agency data partnerships? Use these questions to identify your starting point and find your next step:

Stage	Ask yourself...	If your answer is "no"...
1. Getting started	Do we know what data is needed to monitor subrecipient performance and participant outcomes—and which agencies or partners hold it?	Start by listing every agency or provider that touches your TANF participants — then note which ones you currently receive data from and which you don't.
2. Building the foundation	Do we have a formal, written data sharing agreement with the right partners that specifies what gets shared, at what frequency, and with what safeguards?	Start by identifying partner agencies most ready to formalize an agreement then meet to discuss what data and sharing terms best support shared goals.
3. Adding structure	Do we have consistent, recurring touchpoints with our partners? Are they structured to separate day-to-day problem-solving from longer-term coordination?	Start by scheduling one recurring call with your primary data partner. Before the first meeting, agree on the agenda format, attendees, and frequency.
4. Deepening the partnership	Do we have a formal channel for frontline providers to share what the data doesn't capture? Does this input regularly reach state leadership?	Start by identifying which providers should be in the room. Pilot a quarterly convening — even informally — to hear frontline insights on participant experience.
5. Using it	Do we regularly use data or partner feedback in our program and funding decisions? If so, do we document what information was used and how?	Start by bringing data or partner feedback into one upcoming program or budget decision. Formally document what was used and why.

Download the companion product at peerta.acf.hhs.gov/program-integrity-office-hours

YOUR COMPANION PRODUCT: WHAT IT COVERS (continued-3)

05 LEARN MORE

A curated resource table includes:

- 1) GAO reports that anchor the program integrity framing for this session
- 2) Practitioner resources that support each stage of the Where to Start self-assessment

Resources are mapped to the stages where they are most useful.

Click the links within the product to access the resources.

LEARN MORE

GAO REPORTS	PRACTITIONER RESOURCES
<p>HHS Could Facilitate Information Sharing to Improve States' Use of Data on Job Training and Other Services <i>United States GAO, 2025</i></p> <p>Examines how states use data on job training and other TANF-funded services—and how HHS can support better information sharing across agencies.</p>	<p>AISP Network Toolkit: Guidance on Data Governance, Legal Frameworks, and Agreement Templates <i>Actionable Intelligence for Social Policy, University of Pennsylvania, 2025</i></p> <p>Practical tools for integrated data systems, including legal frameworks and agreement templates. Supports Stages 1–2.</p>
<p>Enhanced Reporting Could Improve HHS Oversight of State Spending <i>United States GAO, 2025</i></p> <p>Reviews how ACF-196R spending data is collected and used, with recommendations for improving federal oversight of non-assistance expenditures.</p>	<p>Implementing Cross-Agency Collaboration in Government <i>IBM Center for The Business of Government, 2013</i></p> <p>Practical guidance for government managers to develop and sustain the trust, networks, and communication processes necessary for effective cross-agency collaboration. Supports Stages 3-4.</p>
<p>Leading Practices to Enhance Interagency Collaboration and Address Crosscutting Challenges <i>United States GAO, 2023</i></p> <p>Identifies eight leading practices for effective interagency collaboration, including formalizing agreements and building feedback mechanisms.</p>	<p>Expanding TANF Program Insights: A Toolkit for State and Local Agencies on How to Access, Link, and Analyze Unemployment Insurance Wage Data <i>MDRC, ACF, 2022</i></p> <p>Concrete strategies and practitioner-tested tools for accessing and linking UI wage data for program monitoring, reporting, and evaluation. Supports Stage 5.</p>

Download the companion product at peerta.acf.hhs.gov/program-integrity-office-hours

WHAT'S COMING NEXT AND HOW TO GET SUPPORT

Upcoming Sessions in the Series

Session 2 – JUNE 18, 2026

Provider Contracts for Accountability and Data Collection

How contract structures can build in data collection, performance standards, and accountability mechanisms.

Session 3 – JULY 2026, DATE TBD

TANF Spending Oversight Capacity-Building

Tools and approaches for strengthening internal capacity to monitor and document non-assistance expenditures.

Session 4 – AUGUST 2026, DATE TBD

Data-Informed Program Decision-Making

How agencies can move from collecting data to actively using it in program and budget decisions.

Get Support

Program Integrity Resource Library

Practitioner resources on program integrity are available at peerta.acf.hhs.gov. Subscribe to the STAR Learning Loop for updates on new resources and upcoming sessions in this series.

Request TA

States and Tribes can request individualized technical assistance through the STAR project at peerta.acf.hhs.gov.

Contact Us

Questions about the session or companion product? Reach us at STARinfo@blhtech.com