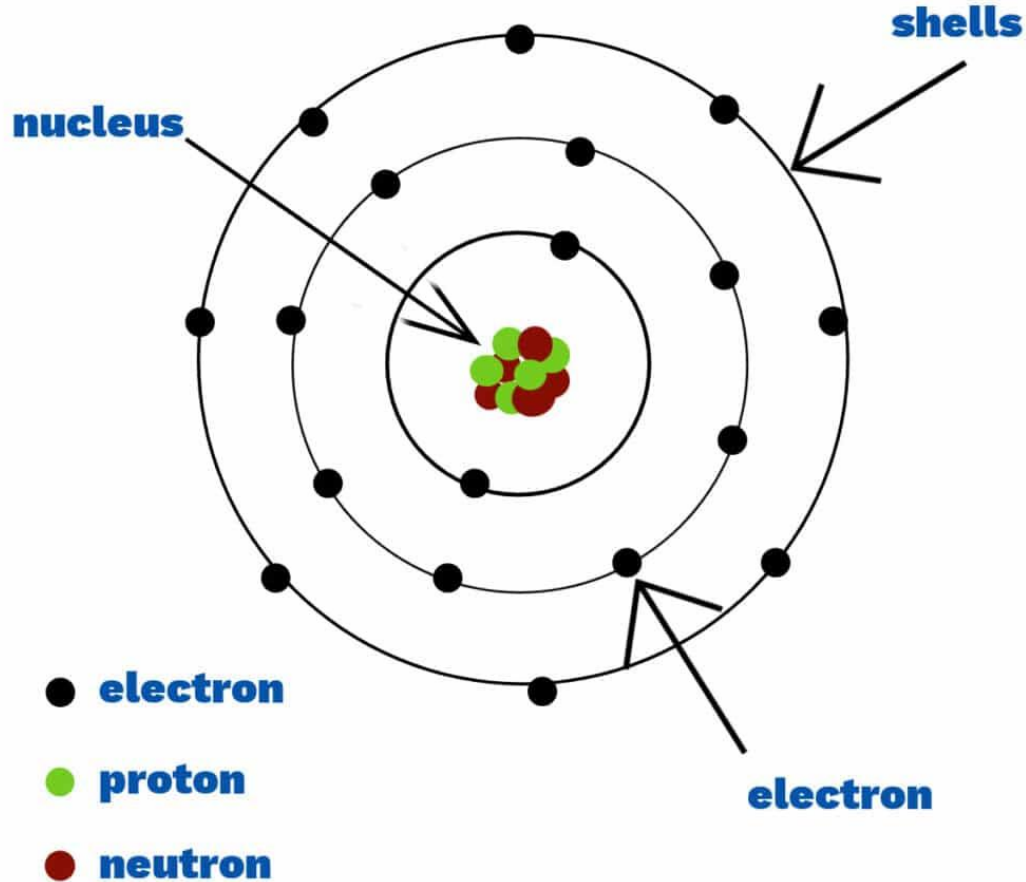# Addressing Equity in TANF
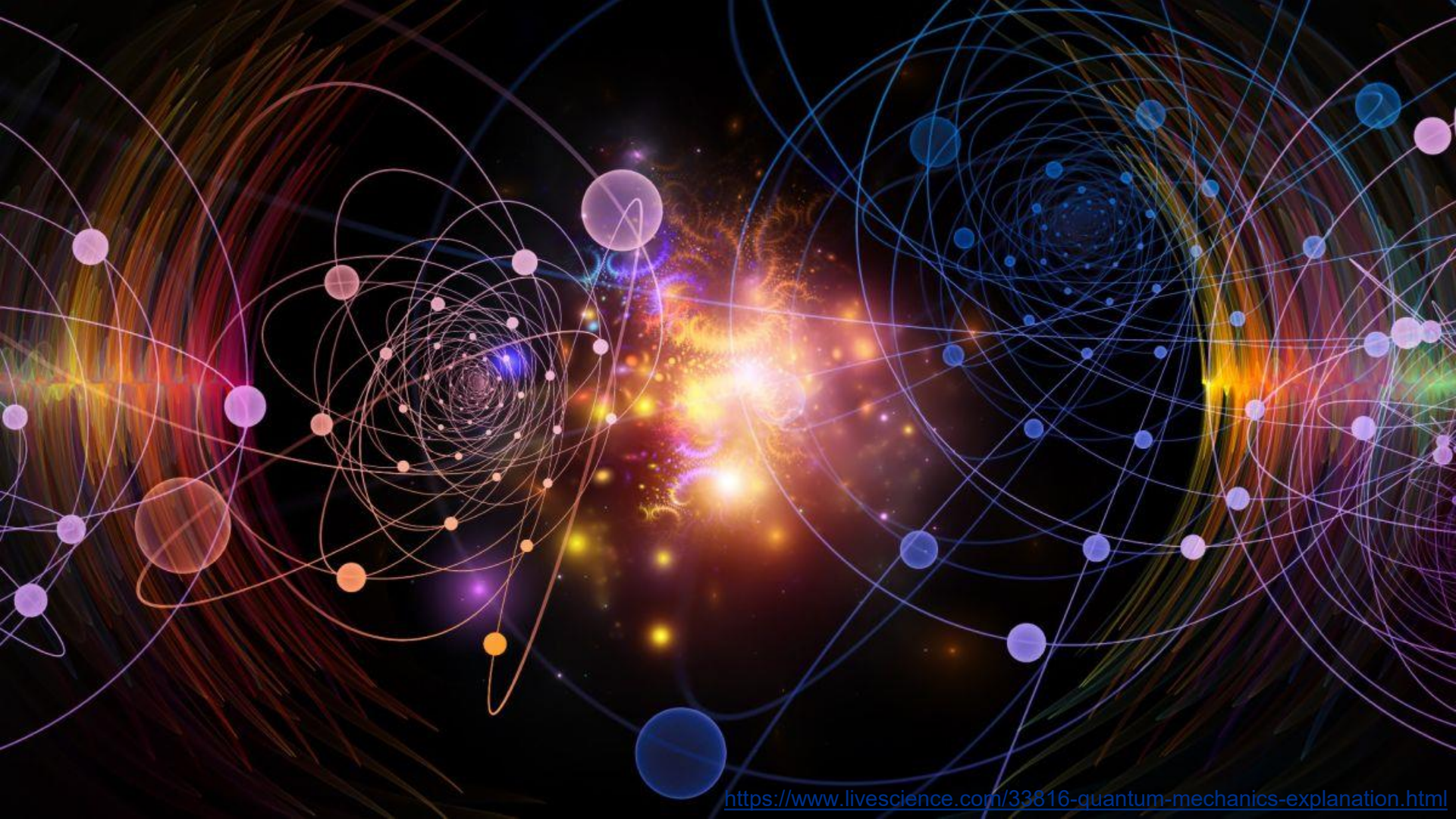
Those who say it can't be done are usually interrupted by others doing it.
— James Baldwin, *Notes of a Native Son*

8/31/2023

Model of the Atom

Addressing Equity in TANF

1 Defining Equity

2 Policy Levers to Advance Equity in TANF
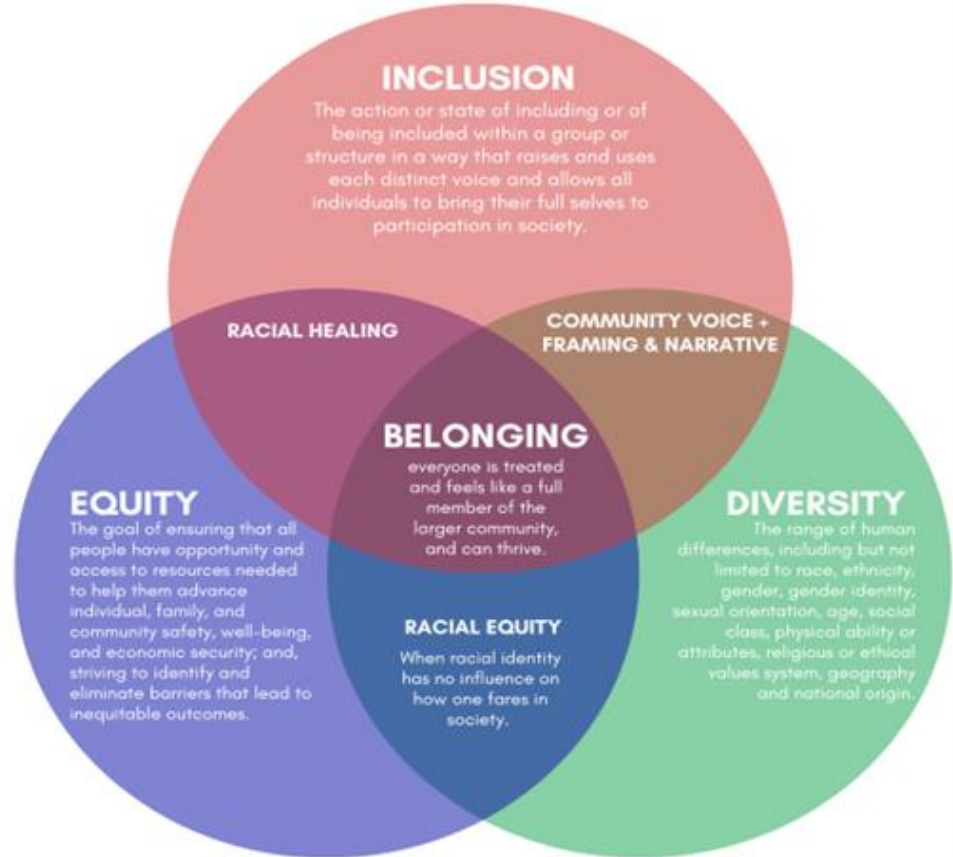
3 Practical Tools To Get Started

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How do we define equity?

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Speak the Same Language

NATALIE WILLIAMS
Chief Equity, Diversity, Inclusion
and Belonging (EDIB) Officer

INCLUSION
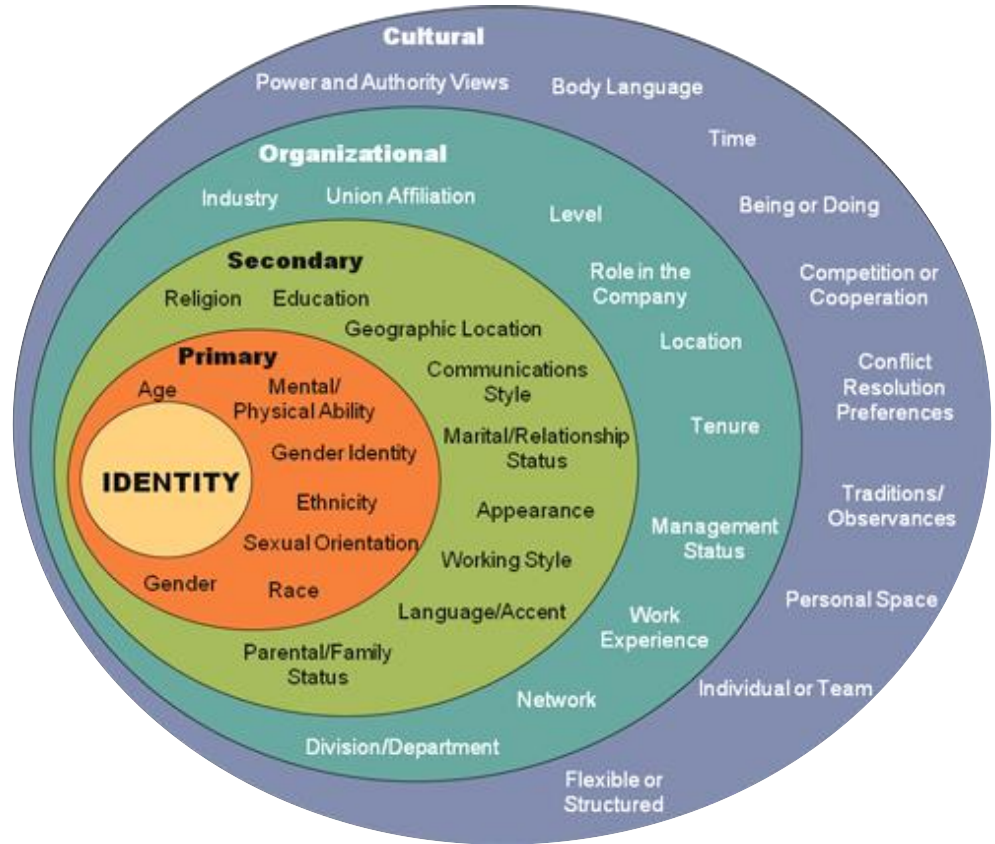The action or state of including or of being included within a group or structure in a way that raises and uses each distinct voice and allows all individuals to bring their full selves to participation in society.

RACIAL HEALING

COMMUNITY VOICE + FRAMING & NARRATIVE

BELONGING
everyone is treated and feels like a full member of the larger community, and can thrive.

EQUITY
The goal of ensuring that all people have opportunity and access to resources needed to help them advance individual, family, and community safety, well-being, and economic security; and, striving to identify and eliminate barriers that lead to inequitable outcomes.

RACIAL EQUITY
When racial identity has no influence on how one fares in society.

DIVERSITY
The range of human differences, including but not limited to race, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, social class, physical ability or attributes, religious or ethical values system, geography and national origin.

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Speak the Same Language

Diversity	The range of human differences.
Equity	The goal of ensuring all people have opportunity and access to resources needed to help them advance individual, family, and community safety, well-being, and economic security.
Inclusion	The action or state of including or of being included within a group or structure in a way that raises and uses each distinct voice and allows all individuals to bring their full selves to participation in society.
Belonging	Everyone is treated and feels like a full member of the larger community and can thrive.
Racial Equity	When racial identity has no influence on how one fares in society.

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Acknowledge Differences

Before equity, diversity

- Characteristics

- Experiences

- Professional

- Community/Cultural

- Era

Cultural
Power and Authority Views — Body Language — Time — Being or Doing
Organizational
Industry — Union Affiliation — Level
Secondary
Religion — Education — Geographic Location
Primary
Age — Mental/Physical Ability — Communications Style
Gender Identity — Marital/Relationship Status
IDENTITY — Ethnicity — Appearance
Sexual Orientation — Working Style
Gender — Race — Language/Accent
Parental/Family Status
Role in the Company — Location — Competition or Cooperation
Tenure — Conflict Resolution Preferences
Management Status — Traditions/Observances
Work Experience — Personal Space
Network — Individual or Team
Division/Department — Flexible or Structured

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Speak the Same Language

Diversity	The range of human differences.
Equity	The goal of ensuring all people have opportunity and access to resources needed to help them advance individual, family, and community safety, well-being, and economic security.
Inclusion	The action or state of including or of being included within a group or structure in a way that raises and uses each distinct voice and allows all individuals to bring their full selves to participation in society.
Belonging	Everyone is treated and feels like a full member of the larger community and can thrive.
Racial Equity	When racial identity has no influence on how one fares in society.

Everyone benefits from racial equity.

"Data in the National Equity Atlas show that our national GDP could be 14 percent or $2 trillion higher, if the wage disparity between White employees and employees of color was eliminated."

- The Competitive Advantage of Racial Equity

How do we achieve equity?

Requires three components:	
1	Valuing all individuals and populations equally—that is, there are no invisible, undervalued, or disposable people.
2	Recognizing and rectifying historical injustices.
3	Providing resources according to need—not equally, but according to need.

This 75-minute video of Dr. Camara Phyllis Jones is well worth your time.

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Addressing Equity in TANF

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How can we distribute TANF dollars equitably?

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Who is burdened?
Who benefits?

TANF
Check your data for disparities:

State Policy Lever	How might each of these impact disparities?
Cash assistance allotments	Income thresholds for eligibility
Eligibility determination steps	Resources needed to apply
Work requirements	Resources needed to comply with work requirements
Non-assistance uses of TANF	*How might your state assess who benefits from these funds?*
Child support enforcement	Granting good cause; pass-through policies
Sanctions	Full-family sanction; only a portion of the benefit designated for adult
Time limits	12-month? 24-month? 60-month? Who receives extensions?
Child-only TANF	Income thresholds; benefit amounts; application processes
Service referrals	*Has trust been established between the participant and the referrer?*

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Inequities within TANF

State TANF policies are significantly related to race: all else equal, states with larger African American populations have less generous and more restrictive TANF policies.

Heather Hahn *et al.*, 2017.
Parolin, 2021

FIGURE 2

State-by-State Changes in the TANF-to-Poverty Ratio, 1996–2014
Ratio of state TANF cases to families in poverty in the state

- Alaska (124)
- Vermont (83) → Vermont (78)
- United States (64)
- Louisiana (42)
- Oregon (36) → Oregon (46)
- Alaska (29)
- United States (24)
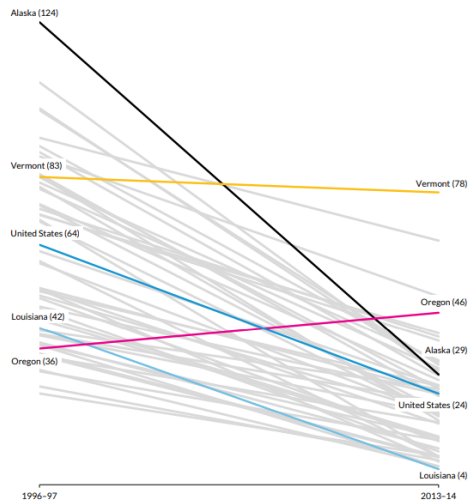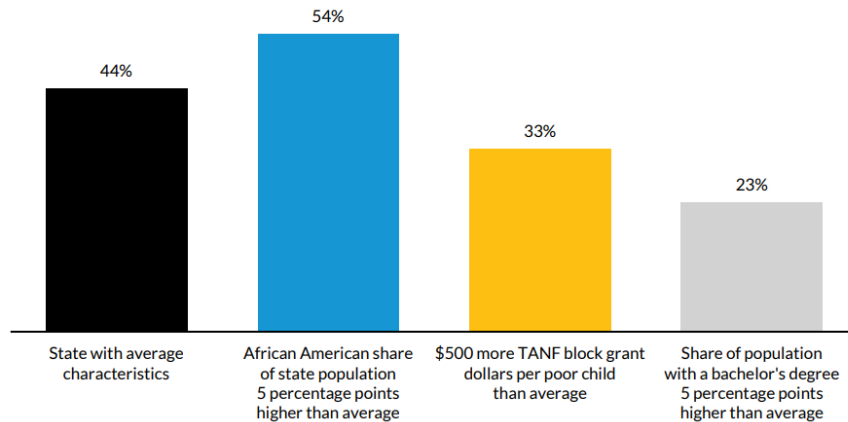- Louisiana (4)

1996–97 ———— 2013–14

FIGURE 12

Racial Composition, TANF Block Grant Dollars per Child Living in Poverty, and Educational Attainment Are Related to the Harshness of a State's Initial Sanction
Likelihood of terminating benefits or closing a case as an initial sanction

State with average characteristics	44%
African American share of state population 5 percentage points higher than average	54%
$500 more TANF block grant dollars per poor child than average	33%
Share of population with a bachelor's degree 5 percentage points higher than average	23%

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How can [my state] distribute [our] TANF dollars equitably?

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Race Equity – TANF: Learning Cohorts

Emerging Themes From States and Counties

Using Data to Understand Disproportionalities in TANF Programs

Examining the Race Equity Implications of Proposed Policy and Practice Decisions in TANF

Using Staff Training and Development to Promote Race Equity

Integrating Stakeholder Engagement in TANF Policy and Practice

Leveraging Economic Mobility to Close the Racial Wealth Gap

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Example: Analyzing Disparity Data

Washington's Disparities in Time Limits Extension

⚙ These disparities led to using the Multidimensional Equity Analysis Tool (MDEA), students completing in training in diversity, equity and inclusion designed the tool

Coordinated Case Review	Equity Analysis	Staff Training
• Split data into time limit closure data and sanction closure data • Did thorough analysis of disproportionate cases and identified root causes	• Interpersonal equity • Instructional equity • Institutional equity	• Reviewed and adapted existing trainings • Discovered staff had limited access to implicit bias trainings and need for coaching • Identified foundational training topics: active listening, intergenerational approaches

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Example: Establishing Common Language

San Franciso Human Services Agency Race Equity Action Plan

| Agency Assessments via GARE | Community Assessments via GARE | Conducted Staff Focus Groups | Conducted Strategic Partner Interviews | San Francisco is committed to establishing common language for shared dialogue on race equity. |

TOOLKIT

Racial Equity Toolkit
An Opportunity to Operationalize Equity

LOCAL AND REGIONAL
GOVERNMENT ALLIANCE ON
RACE & EQUITY
RACIALEQUITYALLIANCE.ORG

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What equity issue would you like to better understand within your states' TANF block grant?

Where will your strategic focus have the most impact?

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TANF
Check your data for disparities:

State Policy Lever	How might each of these impact disparities?
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www.aphsa.org