

# GATEWAY TO OPPORTUNITY:

Improving Parental Employment  
and Family Well-Being Outcomes



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## *Gateway to Opportunity: Improving Parental Employment and Family Well-Being Outcomes*

# Summary Report

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## Overview

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), Administration for Children and Families (ACF), Office of Family Assistance (OFA), hosted the *Gateway to Opportunity: Improving Parental Employment and Family Well-Being Outcomes* national Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) convening on September 1 – September 3, 2015 at the Renaissance Washington D.C. Downtown Hotel. The convening brought together TANF program administrators and national experts to promote dialogue around topics such as job-driven and career pathways training, TANF-Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) coordination, client assessment and case management strengthening, the role of executive skills in employment outcomes, and two-generation approaches to family economic security. *Gateway to Opportunity: Improving Parental Employment and Family Well-Being Outcomes* provided attendees with opportunities to engage with their peers and experts from the field, to discuss best practices and the latest research, to converse with federal commissioners and ACF staff, as well as to plan ways to improve TANF programming for low-income families in their communities.

Over the course of the convening, attendees had opportunities to attend presentations hosted by a variety of notable experts and program administrators and participated in breakout sessions to engage with peers, attending experts, and ACF leadership. Over 200 TANF Human Services Commissioners, TANF Administrators and representatives, and federal partners from across the country attended the event.

This report summarizes highlights from the *Gateway to Opportunity: Improving Parental Employment and Family Well-Being Outcomes* convening.

## Day One – Tuesday, September 1, 2015

### Welcome and Greetings

Speaker: **Nisha Patel**, *Director, Office of Family Assistance, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.*

Ms. Nisha Patel opened the convening by welcoming participants to the three day *Gateway to Opportunity: Improving Parental Employment and Family Well-Being Outcomes*, encouraging participants to engage with presenters and one another through plenaries, Idea Labs, and breakout sessions. Ms. Patel emphasized the importance of two-generation approaches to meeting the needs of families, the implementation of the Workforce Investment and Opportunity Act (WIOA) and career pathways. To facilitate engagement, Ms. Patel encouraged participants to follow the OFA Twitter account (OFA\_ACF) and to join the conversation using #TANFGtO.

## Opening Plenary: Reflections, Resilience, and Recommendations to Improve Family Well-being

Moderator: **Dr. Sheila Katz**, *Assistant Professor of Sociology, University of Houston, Houston, Texas*

Speakers:

- **Joe Jones**, *Founder, Center for Urban Families, Baltimore, Maryland*
- **Sheknita Davis**, *Director, Middle Georgia Regional Commission, Department of Workforce Development, Macon, Georgia*
- **Chairwoman Gertrude Lynn Brown**, *Owens Valley Career Development Center, Bishop, California*

Dr. Sheila Katz, from the University of Houston, laid the groundwork for the plenary session, opening the event by recommending two books: *One Nation, Underprivileged: Why American Poverty Affects Us All* by Robert Rank and *Ain't No Trust: How Bosses, Boyfriends, and Bureaucrats Fail Low-Income Mothers and Why it Matters* by Judith Levine. In discussing these works, Dr. Katz emphasized the need for qualitative researchers to integrate into the homes and neighborhoods they are observing in order to understand the broader social fabric and the impact of public policies on these families.

Through her research, Dr. Katz' studied 45 mothers on CalWORKS (California's state TANF program). More people experienced struggles than at any other time in the past 40 years, child poverty rates soared and have not fallen since. Through her examination of career paths during the Great Recession of 2008, Dr. Katz noted that individuals with a high school education or less had a lower employment rate every month, and those hit the hardest were people without a college degree. By 2011, women had not felt the recovery after the Great Recession and consistently had less money to live on than before.

Following Dr. Katz, Joe Jones discussed the work his organization, the Center for Urban Families (CFUF), does in Baltimore, Maryland and the intersection of family stability and economic success. CFUF focuses on workforce development, responsible fatherhood, and relationship education programs for couples. In the three neighborhoods served by CFUF, more than \$200 million is owed in back child support. These neighborhoods face high unemployment and a large population re-entering society after periods of incarceration; 52% of fathers in these counties have a criminal record. CFUF provides case management and coaching support for those re-entering and seeking employment. Their goal is to get people involved in multiple programs at the Center because individuals that are fully engaged in the programs have a higher success rate than those that are only involved at the fringes. CFUF has been successful in getting most participants into entry-level jobs with starting wages in the \$11-12 range, above the Baltimore City minimum wage.

Mr. Jones challenged the group to think about how to move people forward. He encouraged the audience to "be the voice" and advocate for those without voices and for programs to:

- Engage with employers about needs and discuss co-investing to help move families to more healthy situations.
- Reach people where they are to determine what services they need.
- Stay accountable to the mission.

Mr. Jones' organization has conducted a child support pilot where they worked with 16 fathers who were \$250,000 in arrears with child support and focused on erasing a percentage of this debt. They collaborated with John Hopkins University (JHU) and social services organizations to provide internships at JHU that included benefits. These fathers were hired full-time at the completion of their internships and were able to make a reliable living wage. The program was successful but it required buy-in from employers to work. The biggest challenge was making the 16 fathers engaged in the program *believe* they deserved to work within the JHU system.

Sheknita Davis is currently the Director of the Middle Georgia Regional Commission at the Department of Workforce Development in Macon, Georgia and she is also a former TANF participant. Her presentation focused on her personal story, how she became a TANF participant and eventually a TANF caseworker and job developer. Ms. Davis came from a middle-class household, but her life took a dramatic shift when her mother and stepfather became addicted to drugs. She was pregnant at 15 and by age 22 had four kids, had dropped out of school, and was often homeless. She felt hopeless, useless, depressed, and suicidal when she first started receiving TANF; however, she had a dedicated case manager who helped her to get her General Equivalency Degree (GED) and graduate from a university with honors.

Ms. Davis' first job with benefits was in the Department of Family and Child Services as a TANF case manager and supervisor. In that role she did not see jobs available for the people she served so she identified industries with high growth and met with employers to discuss what skills they needed. She focused on identifying jobs that provided a livable wage because she knew if a job is not able to provide sustainable living wages and benefits, people quit because it is less stressful to receive aid than to stay in a job that does not adequately meet basic needs. Ms. Davis worked specifically with 28 participants to provide workforce training services and all 28 found full-time employment with total salaries of \$1.3 million. Ms. Davis believes workforce development does work, but there needs to be collaboration with other federal and state agencies as well as employers.

Chairwoman Gertrude Lynn Brown, from the Owens Valley Career Development Center, closed the opening plenary with comments about her own personal experience growing up in Oakland, California in a two-parent financially stable household where she attended private school and her parents were active in government. Then, when she was 13 years old, Chairwoman Brown's father left. It took only two months before the family was on public assistance and she was sent to the reservation to live with her grandparents. On the reservation, her life was different and there was more focus on cultural values. Her grandparents would go gather food, rather than going to the store to buy food, and they were stricter than her parents.



Chairwoman Brown's narrative focused on the prevalence of family supports, particularly in Tribal settings and the importance of two-generation approaches, as education is extremely important for both parents and children through tutoring or early education. She also spoke about the need for cultural components and understanding, especially when serving several Tribes, cultures, or populations speaking multiple languages, and the importance of alcohol and drug prevention components. Chairwoman Brown's concluding thoughts centered on the multiple family and social supports that helped guide her from being a client to being a Chairwoman on the Tribal Council and developing and providing these career education, family literacy, language and social supports through the Owens Valley Career Development Center.

## Gateway Gabs

Gateway Gabs provided the opportunity to engage in peer-to-peer dialogues and information sharing. The goal in these 30-minute discussions was to explore peer successes, lessons learned, and strategies for addressing challenges with open discussion and dialogue among peers rather than formal presentations.

### Topic #1: Staff Development: Moving the Focus from Process to Outcomes

Moderator: **Sheryl Thompson**, *Deputy Director, Field Operations, Michigan Department of Health and Human Services, Lansing, Michigan*

Participants: Stanislaus County, CA; Round Valley Indian Tribe (CA); Montana; Nevada; Washington DC; Vermont; Michigan; Washoe Tribe, Region 8, Colorado, Washington State, Georgia

This discussion centered on how practitioners can move past challenges with high caseloads and other programmatic barriers. Several participants have had success with using a staff specialization strategy (e.g., some staff focus only on intake, other staff focus only on training). The underlying concept behind staff specialization is to promote better outcomes and increase efficiency by allowing staff to become highly skilled in one area or job function. Others discussed a "unified case planning" or "unified case partners" approach so that families are not overwhelmed by multiple contacts within the system. This includes the recommendation to work with similar departments (e.g., child support and child welfare workers) to provide wrap-around services more holistically. Many believe that looking at and helping the family as a whole is more beneficial to the family and presents state and federal aid programs as a "unified front." As Colorado put it, "one family, one story, told one time." The group also discussed the importance of making sure workers at various agencies understand the scope of available resources so they can help families through different circumstances and with to access providers.

There was a consensus among participants that it is important to keep caseloads per caseworker low to provide adequate assistance to clients and not burn-out staff. Along these lines, it is important to encourage wellness in the workplace for staff so they do not forget to take care of themselves while taking care of others.

The Washoe Tribe has identified the barriers of each client and tracks caseload data quarterly, working to eliminate more and more of these barriers. Their philosophy is “what gets measured gets done.” Colorado has ongoing and varied training for their case workers called “coaching for success.” An example is “Poverty 101” for caseworkers who have never personally been in poverty to better understand their clients.

## Topic #2: TANF at the Frontline of Job Retention

Moderator: **Gilda Kennedy**, *Program Manager, Division of Employment Services, South Carolina Department of Social Services, Columbia, South Carolina*

Participants: Pennsylvania, Florida, Oregon, Tennessee, North Carolina, New Hampshire, Iowa, California

Prompted by the moderator, states discussed the services that participants need in order to remain employed. The group agreed that the two biggest issues inhibiting job retention are child care and transportation. States use different support strategies to help participants overcome these barriers and remain employed. Florida provides child care assistance for up to two years to encourage job retention; New Hampshire recently increased the number of free cars they make available through their transportation program for TANF participants; in Oregon recent legislative changes have allowed them to increase the income limits to allow working families to stay on the caseload a little longer to ease the transition to self-sufficiency. These strategies are not without challenges; Iowa noted that they recently had to suspend their free car transportation program amid an issue with a stolen vehicle identification number.

The second discussion centered on why job retention is so low. Seasonal employment and droughts have affected the availability of agricultural work in California. An Iowa representative mentioned that participants who are offered well-paying jobs are sometimes reluctant to accept because they don't want to lose their TANF support benefits. Some states also mentioned that participants' lack of interest in work has affected job retention rates.

## Topic #3: Job-Driven Training Strategies

Moderator: **Dorothy Hall**, *FEP/Clinical Program Manager, Workforce Development Division, Utah Department of Workforce Services, Salt Lake City, Utah*

Participants: Iowa; Pennsylvania; Indiana; Wisconsin; Maryland; Georgia; American Public Human Services Association (APHSA); OFA; Mississippi; Washington State; Montana; Missouri; South Carolina; California

In this session, participants gathered to discuss training strategies that are driven by job demand and career pathways. **Stan Koutstaal**, Program Manager of the Office of Family Assistance, Health Profession Opportunity Grants (HPOG) gave opening remarks to the group. On July 22, 2014, President Barack Obama signed into law, the reauthorization of national workforce programs, the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). On the same day, Vice President Joe Biden released the job-driven training

checklist to help define what it means for training to be “job-driven.” Under WIOA, there is increased emphasis on the partnership between TANF and the workforce system. It is an on-going effort to define what that relationship is going to look like and how TANF and workforce agencies can work together. WIOA codifies what is in the White House’s Job Driven Training Report through the requirements for a unified or combined state plan, the use of labor market information, and the focus on career pathway programs.

The discussion was then opened up to states, with many participants sharing that they feel daunted by the integration of WIOA; particularly of note was that the time limit for training under TANF (6 months or 12 months depending on state) and performance measurements for TANF and WIOA are not aligned. States also commented on their current use of performance-based contractors where the contract is structured to incentivize job placement, not training, so even clients that are good fit for training may be funneled into jobs rather than training opportunities. Many states are looking into moving incentive points or adding an incentive for contractors to make training placements before employment. One suggestion mentioned incentivizing employers if they hire a TANF participant, but including a higher monetary incentive if they provide at least six months of training prior to hiring.

The group also discussed apprenticeships as a job-driven training strategy to get clients off cash assistance quickly. However, some states were concerned that apprenticeship models move clients off TANF and within 30 days, they lose all of their other assistance, and many are not financially equipped to make the transition. Another suggestion was to create “transitional employers” who provide work and/or training for newly trained TANF/WIOA clients and in exchange receive free short-term labor.

Very rural states, such as Montana, have a different set of concerns. There are seven reservations in Montana, some with over 50% unemployment, but the only employers within 70 miles are the tribal government. This leaves their client base with very limited options and resources simply based on the rural nature of their state.

States believe they need to look at creative program designs for job-driven training such as “learn and earn” models and career pathway designs. Maryland shared one of their programs, the Baltimore Alliance for Careers in Healthcare (BACH): <http://nfwsolutions.org/workforce-partnerships/baltimore-alliance-careers-healthcare>. States are still working on new strategies and programmatic ideas to incorporate WIOA and to determine how it fits in with the assistance programs already in operation. California hired a consulting firm to look at TANF data and to overlay WIOA performance measurements to track longer term outcomes such as job retention rates. The consensus among states is that it is important to work with area employers to determine what they need and then find the best way to provide training to clients. One participant noted, “[t]he best way to serve employers in our counties is to give them well-trained employees who are eager to work.”

#### Topic #4: Improving Employment Outcomes and Meeting the Work Participation Rate

Moderator: **Sisifo Taatiti**, *TANF Program Manager, Workforce Development Division, Utah Department of Workforce Services, Salt Lake City, Utah*

Participants: Maryland; Utah; Colorado; Wisconsin; Rhode Island; Maine; Georgia; Washington State; Montana

Most states are not meeting work participation rate requirements. Ms. Taatiti started by mentioning that Utah work participation rates remain low but are improving with an intensive job club model implemented a couple of years ago. Clients participate in a strengths-based program tailored to meet work participation rates. The model is cohort-based and Utah has found that providing clients with a cohort has helped them develop individual relationships and increase their networking capabilities.

Unpaid internship programs were brought up by several participants as something that is helping their state with work participation rates. Maryland specifically has notably high participation in unpaid work. When asked why/how, they replied that they have a study showing how many people leave jobs due to being unprepared or unqualified for the work. Job readiness is identified early and participation in unpaid internships or community service is stressed as valuable to the client's future.

Some states noted that they have successfully placed many clients in jobs, and those remaining on the caseload are harder to serve and engage. In Rhode Island, 45% of TANF participants have reading levels below the sixth grade level. Supporting clients with low literacy, as well as clients with disabilities, presents a challenge in meeting work participation rates and moving these individuals to self-sufficiency.

Montana is currently using a strategy to phase out assistance over the first three months of employment, regardless of income (i.e., providing \$375 first month on the job, \$275 the second month, and \$175 the third month). Through phasing out assistance, participants have time to stabilize their situations once they are employed. Similarly, Georgia provides a financial incentive to their clients when they have been in their new job for 60 days to encourage them to stay at this position.

## Topic #5: Domestic Violence Assessment and Service Coordination

Moderator: **Dr. Marylouise Kelley**, *Director, Family Violence Prevention and Services Program, Family and Youth Services Bureau, Washington, DC*

Participants: California; New Jersey; Massachusetts; Northern California Tribal TANF; Delaware, Texas, Virginia

Domestic violence is very prevalent among TANF participants; up to 74% report recent domestic violence victimization versus up to 31% of the general population. Domestic violence is the third leading cause of homelessness in the U.S. Even with 2,600 local domestic violence programs, network resource centers, and national hotlines, this year, over 10,000 people do not receive services each day because of a lack of capacity and resources.

Dr. Kelley mentioned studies indicating almost 60% of participants are domestic violence survivors who want help with economic issues. In addition to being a detriment to an individual's safety and well-being, intimate partner violence is an employment issue that increases tardiness; absenteeism; leads to more mental health issues, and greater difficulty maintaining employment over time. Financial abuse

has been found to be present in most abusive relationships, meaning the abuser is purposely making the victim financially dependent.

Dr. Kelley leads the Family Violence Prevention and Services program whose goal is for every health services provider to be able to recognize domestic violence, react appropriately with trauma-informed strategies, refer victims and their children to appropriate assistance; and to prevent future violence by promoting emotional wellness and healthy relationships. The risk for domestic abuse victims is increased if they report it to an agency that does not have a plan in place to assist victims. The six key elements of domestic violence response are:

1. Creating safe opportunities to disclose.
2. Responding in appropriate and culturally relevant ways.
3. Universal education.
4. Training and capacity building.
5. Protocol development and implementation.
6. Meaningful partnership-building and engagement.

TANF does not work well for survivors of domestic abuse when the application process creates barriers, benefits are too low and delayed, screening is inconsistent, disclosures do not lead to needed help, or child support enforcement is inconsistent in addressing safety and financial concerns. Conversely, TANF works well for survivors when there is collaboration between agencies, trained responders, flexible use of funds, streamlined processes, and benefits for immigrant victims.

The top ways to make TANF a more effective safety net for domestic violence survivors are: employment services, access to affordable child care, domestic violence training for agency workers, relocation assistance, transportation resources, improved domestic violence screening, and an increase of TANF benefit levels. Of the group present for this session, only California and Massachusetts said they have domestic violence advocates and/or staff on-site. The moderator challenged the group to have domestic abuse hotline information in the desk of every staff member in every office of their agencies by the end of October.

## Topic #6: Ending Family Homelessness

Moderator: **Nora Gilligan**, *Special Assistant, Office of Family Assistance, Washington, DC*

Participants: National Alliance to End Homelessness; Region VI; HHS Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation, (ASPE) Family Working Group, Safe NY; Hawaii; Connecticut; Iowa; Kansas; Missouri; Nebraska; Minnesota; Washington State; New Hampshire; Montana; New Jersey; Massachusetts; Washington DC; Vermont; Maine; Texas; Region X

Ms. Gilligan opened the discussion with background about the increasing priority of homelessness for the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). In 2010, the United States Interagency Council on Homelessness announced federal goals on ending family, youth, and veteran homelessness initially by

2015, and later to 2017 to end chronic homelessness. TANF plays a key role in meeting these goals and is charged with how to play a support role and develop new or inventive strategies to leverage TANF funds to support homeless populations or those at risk of homelessness. Homelessness is a large issue nationwide, especially notable in large cities like New York and Seattle where there is a chronic shortage of affordable housing and issues finding employment for TANF participants. The issue is not unique to major cities though, it is evident everywhere; even Connecticut, the richest state in the nation, is seeing an increase in homeless veterans.

In examining homelessness, it is important to understand that the problems may vary by subgroup. For example, the issues and drivers of homelessness among veterans are different from those of families with children. Regional representatives noted that Seattle has a large homeless population with mental health issues and substance abuse. A related consideration is that certain populations, or portions of a sub-group, may not be interested in ending their homelessness. The primary focus in Seattle was to end family homelessness and many participants echoed this belief that breaking down the homeless into sub-groups and focusing on understanding the causes and supports needed by group is helpful and has led to some of the best results. Often this initial group is veterans, based in part on the fact that Congress gave money dedicated to ending homelessness amongst veterans. Many states mentioned youth and/or families as their second group of focus. Children fail to thrive if there is housing instability, which can include moving multiple times a year, not just actual homelessness.

Trying to end homelessness is often an uphill battle. Last year California provided \$20 million in grant funds to 20 counties to promote a rapid rehousing model and to collaborate with existing homelessness programs. Their aim was to support and stabilize individuals and families at risk for homelessness, but the counties faced difficulties in providing long-term supports for the vast number of individuals and families in California needing housing assistance. States did not think short-term solutions such as sheltering in a motel was a viable option due to the costs and the unsuitability of motel housing for families with children.

For many clients, homelessness is just one of the issues they face. It is important for organizations working with these families to be aware of the other expenses outside of housing that families living in poverty experience. Organizations should look toward creating a common intake model, but also examine where families with instability could be better connected to available aid programs. Session participants agreed that they could make a greater impact on a client's situation if they address some of the peripheral issues connected to their housing instability. The group strongly agreed that transportation is one of the most common challenges faced by homeless clients. Because housing is such a major component of family stability, when a family or individual loses housing, it affects all facets of their life. Aid programs that work with homelessness families need a coordinated approach to addressing homelessness that includes a holistic assessment of a family's needs.

Washington State noted that what is missing on this subject is a unified organization with the thought-leadership, authority, and manpower to take on the issue.

## Topic #7: Drug Testing Practices in TANF

Moderator: **Gary Allen**, *Regional Program Manager, Office of Family Assistance-Region VII, Kansas City, Missouri*

Participants: North Carolina; Missouri; Alabama; Wisconsin; Utah; Florida

States gathered to discuss the use of drug testing as a requirement for receiving TANF assistance. North Carolina and Missouri both shared their experiences. In 2013, North Carolina implemented legislatively required drug testing for TANF participants with reasonable suspicion of drug use, including those with drug convictions. Tests cover cocaine, methamphetamines, marijuana, and opium. In North Carolina, if an adult tests positive for drugs, they are ineligible to receive TANF for one year, but their children remain eligible for funds. At the time of the Summit, 33 people had been referred for drug testing and no positive drug tests had been identified.

Missouri does a two-question drug screening for TANF participants that was developed in conjunction with the Department of Mental Health. Those identified by the screening are given the option to take a drug test or waive the test and go directly to treatment. If they opt for treatment, they will still get TANF assistance. If a client tests positive, they are disqualified for benefits for three years, though their children can still receive funds. The biggest issue they face related to drug testing is clients not showing up for their tests. In 2014, 48 people tested positive for drugs, 359 tested negative, 41 opted for treatment, but 603 did not show up for the test.

## Topic #8: Integrating Career Pathways Components into TANF Programs

Moderator: **Kermit Kaleba**, *Federal Policy Director, National Skills Coalition, Washington, DC*

Participants: North Carolina; Arkansas; New Hampshire; Oklahoma; Virginia; Alabama; Maine; Pennsylvania; Rhode Island

The term “career pathways” has been around for a long time and means different things to different people; for the first time WIOA provides a federal definition of career pathways. One key area of integration between WIOA and TANF is the state unified or combined plans where at a minimum TANF is a required partner in the one-stop system. Additional WIOA and TANF partnership elements include sector partnerships, career pathways, priority of service requirements, and work-based learning.

The moderator asked the participants their opinion on how WIOA is helping, hurting, or having no impact on their programs or in their local area. North Carolina and several states talked about working more closely with their community college systems in preparation for WIOA and establishing multiple career pathways. Some states are struggling with WIOA. New Hampshire finds grants, scholarships, and loan forgiveness for clients, but in terms of WIOA, the state is not certain how a client that needs TANF is going to be able to stay in school or a career pathway program.

One state found that 63% of their clients enter the TANF program possessing college debt, more than those with credit card debt. Because even two-year colleges push student loans, clients typically incur student debt while signing document they do not fully understand prior to class registration.

One change with WIOA youth programs is that 20% of local resources must be spent on work-based learning. Historically, career pathways have been thought of as a sequence of educational services, but they can also be employment-based learning, which does not necessarily involve community colleges. One participant said their organization has been reinvigorated with the new WIOA approaches. Most of their career centers are with the Department of Commerce or community colleges; this shift to work-based education pushes them toward self-service.

Many TANF participants are not ready for community college; in fact, many do not have a high school diploma or GED. A participant from Maine stated that they do have comprehensive vocational assessments for TANF participants to determine whether they are job ready or have barriers. A participant from Rhode Island stated the TANF participation bar was set very high in terms of career pathways. Caseworkers needed to “bring the career pathways down a level” by supporting TANF participants where they are and finding a bridge to their career expectations. Rhode Island started this by going to industry partners to discuss the jobs they need filled with the lowest level of education. In the example of state healthcare, they found positions such as hospital transportation, medical waste, and working in medical facility kitchens where a TANF participant could receive basic training and become eligible for employment without any higher education. They have also developed programs for TANF participants on how to move up in their job field.

Some participants point to agency collaboration in their states as a key process moving forward. Some bring partners together on a monthly basis to discuss issues and strategy – “everyone is at the table, and they are listening.” That said, while the various agencies share the common goals of creating data-oriented accountability, they still have difficulty working together. The model works well to create expectations, but it takes time to break the ingrained behavior (of not working together). Mostly at the local level, staff members are not accustomed to working together for the same common goal. This appears to be related to concern about goals for each agency. If goals are not met, funding will be reduced. Everyone is in it for their specific outcomes.

## Topic #9: Changing Organizational Culture: From Compliance to Achieving Outcomes

Moderator: **Kate Probert Fagundes**, *MFIP/DWP Employment Services Division Manager, Ramsey County Workforce Solutions, North St. Paul, Minnesota*

Participants: Washington State; Colorado; Nevada; South Dakota; Washoe Tribe of Nevada; Arkansas; Oregon; Puerto Rico; Vermont

Participants were asked to share some of their promising practices for changing organizational culture to achieve outcomes versus managing to achieve compliance. Participants stated that managing to compliance keeps success rates down – it is easy to manage to compliance, so the challenge is to change



the culture of their agencies. Carving out time to think about this cultural shift and make change is very tough. Caseworkers revert to compliance versus actual case management because it is what performance is measured on. It is a difficult balance to achieve for states because maintaining compliance is still key, but it can become a problem if caseworkers do not see themselves as care givers any longer. Washington State mentioned motivational interviewing training as a helpful aspect of shifting the organizational focus. Motivational interviewing builds greater rapport with clients and improved buy-in among staff and clients. When clients feel self-motivated they are more likely to see agency assessments as an investment in themselves and their families, rather than as a punishment or judgment against them. Vermont brought up supporting creativity for trying new things and giving staff a strong voice in innovation.

## Day Two – Wednesday, September 2, 2015

### Commissioners Panel on State Innovation and Challenges

Moderator: **Mark Greenberg**, *Acting Assistant Secretary, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Washington, DC*

Speakers:

- **Pankaj Bhanot**, *Deputy Director, State of Hawaii Department of Human Services, Honolulu, Hawaii*
- **Elizabeth Connolly**, *Acting Commissioner, New Jersey Department of Human Services, Trenton, New Jersey*
- **David Stillman**, *Assistant Secretary, Washington Department of Social and Health Services, Economic Services Administration, Olympia, Washington*
- **James Koppel**, *Assistant Commissioner, Children and Family Services, Minnesota Department of Human Services, St. Paul, Minnesota*

Mark Greenberg, the Acting Assistant Secretary for the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) opened the panel, noting that it has been 15 years since the ACF has brought together stakeholders for a national summit and that there is a lot to be learned from peer-to-peer discussion. The Commissioners Panel on State Innovation and Challenges featured representatives from four states that discussed their successes and challenges in innovation.

In 2010, Washington State pulled legislators, advocates, clients, and others into a discussion to develop processes to help the family as a whole. The product, a “menu of implementation,” was intended to drive investment in frontiers of innovation by looking at the science of the developing brain and aligning policy to assist the development of children. They decided to track TANF educational outcomes for youth and have seen improvements over time. They also added a focus on motivational interviewing and trained staff on this approach. This was to help families plan their own success and to help lift families up. They now have an integrated client database system to track utilization of services, child support, and data. They are in the beginning stages of understanding the transportation needs of TANF families.

Hawaii has focused on addressing multi-generational families, to focus on all members of the family not just children or just adults. One of the state’s best practices continues to be connecting TANF participants to subsidized employment opportunities and the state is actively exploring how to collaborate with WIOA. Hawaii historically has a problem with homelessness and insufficient supportive housing. To address the needs of this population, they have eligibility staff provide assessments outside

of the office at service provider locations. They have found they often are not aware of families in need until eligibility workers find them.

New Jersey's goal is to have programs that keep individuals from having to rely on cash aid by connecting them to programs outside of TANF. One of the larger issues they face is managing behavioral health and providing substance abuse treatment. One successful innovation is to have one phone number for all services. A person can call anytime, 24 hours a day /7 days a week, and be assessed and guided to appropriate treatment and services. They can also walk through the door of any social service provider and get the same assessment and referrals. There have been many calls to the hotline and New Jersey has been able to use the data to look into the appropriateness and level of care and duration of care. In two months, they have already seen improvements, as well as identified some gaps such as an insufficient number of detox beds. So far, the results show that the appropriate people are getting into the program and receiving the appropriate referrals. The main challenge has been the reaction of some providers who initially balked at being over-managed. The surprise has been that clients have fewer childcare and transportation needs than expected.

In Minnesota, the goal has been to raise effectiveness of what they deliver to the total population; outcomes of the population matter most, not the program. TANF has specific process measures (e.g., work requirements), that had become the outcome they were trying to achieve. They had lost sight of the fact that family well-being should be the outcome that mattered. Minnesota wants stable families, but had to come up the appropriate way to measure the outcome they were trying to achieve. Outcomes selected for measurement include economic stability, number of kids ready for school, and number of kids that graduate. The State plans to develop specific measurements for families such as how many children changed housing over the year while on TANF. The next step is working to overcome some of the barriers such as data sharing, silos, and privacy concerns, developing the process measures that are necessary for credibility, framing their message, and identifying resources for training.

### *Question & Answers:*

- **Question (for Washington State / David Stillman):** About the impact of toxic stress in brain development, were there policy implications?
  - **Answer:** Washington's approach has been to try many things. Early learning work in Washington is the most widespread, it was clear they needed to increase the quality of early learning for children. On the housing approach, they had a project in the Tacoma area; the housing authority set aside vouchers to let families stay in the same setting for five years. Pankaj Bhanot added that the cost for social programs increases when children have to move often.
- **Question (for Washington State / David Stillman):** Talk a little more about data sharing.
  - **Answer:** They started small and made basic investments in centralized data systems. They had been looking for quite a while at how to change forms to gather data needed and how to share that data in a digestible way. They got people hooked on data to support more investment, and now have a team of data folks.

- **Question (for Hawaii / Pankaj Bhanot):** Subsidized employment, for the nation as a whole during the Recovery Act, was an expensive use of funds that was not sustained in some states. What has spurred Hawaii to keep doing it?
  - **Answer:** For Hawaii, it was natural to continue subsidized employment. They had showed the business community the advantage of subsidized employment and built relationships with businesses to combat the stigma that poor people are lazy. Hawaii did all the pre-work and training, so the employees that businesses received were good workers and the program catered to the needs of employers. They subsidize up to minimum wage but also part of every dollar in any salary given above that. They have had to reduce the number of months people can be on the program after American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA) ended and funding was cut.
- **Question (for all speakers):** What additional item do you wish you had time to discuss during your presentation?
  - **Answer (Minnesota / James Koppel):** If you want to show impact on a population, do not try to fix everyone in that group all at once. Minnesota just implemented a housing allowance increase and they are going to follow families that got this increase to see how their children fare. They will use that data to begin to make the case for housing increases.
  - **Answer (Hawaii / Pankaj Bhanot):** High interest in homelessness approach and picking a targeted population. Do not try to help every homeless person, but target veterans, families with young children, or other specific populations.
  - **Answer (New Jersey / Elizabeth Connolly):** Child stressors. It is hard to get people to listen when talking about your populations because of their stigmatized view. Watching the effect of Hurricane Sandy on children, however, showed people the effect of stress on children.
  - **Answer (Washington State / David Stillman):** Washington likes to think of the recession as being their friend. The recession made poverty real to a large number of middle-class people. It highlighted that no one can do this alone, we need the help of peers, parents, tribal governments, and others.

## Plenary: Helping Families Develop Social Capital to Foster Economic Security

Access to social capital can be critical to the economic success of low-income families. The support of a strong network of peers, friends, neighbors, community organizations, and business connections appear to play an important role in helping families move out of poverty. Social capital is also one of the key components of two-generation approaches to building family economic security. This panel of researchers and practitioners explored innovative programs that help families develop social capital and improve access to supportive social networks.

Moderator: **Nisha Patel**, *Director, Office of Family Assistance, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Washington, DC*

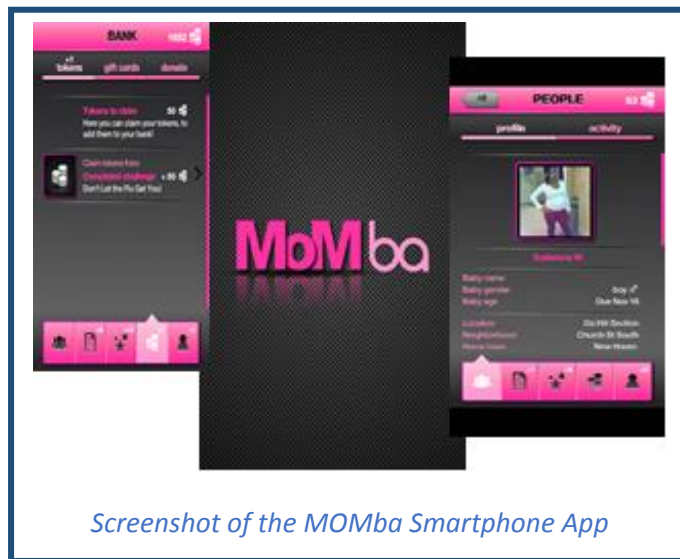
Speakers:

- **Dr. Mario Small**, *Professor, Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts*
- **John Padilla**, *New Haven Mental Health Outreach for Mothers (MOMS) Partnership, Concord, New Hampshire*
- **Mauricio Lim Miller**, *Lead Development of Services, Family Independence Initiative, Oakland, California*

Dr. Mario Small opened the plenary session titled *Helping Families Develop Social Capital to Foster Economic Security*. Families face multiple obstacles to achieving self-sufficiency, such as unemployment, material hardship, depression, or limited education. Social capital is an important factor in helping families achieve self-sufficiency. Social capital is defined as resources that people have access to by virtue of their networks, and there are three forms of social capital that serve different purposes: information; support; and reinforcement of norms. Empirical research reveals that individuals who have more social capital are more likely to be promoted, have greater well-being, and ultimately, greater social mobility. Organizations help contribute to social capital and counter obstacles to self-sufficiency. As an example, Dr. Small shared his research on child-care centers and mental hardship (depression), which used a nationally representative sample of 3,500 mothers. The study analyzed the role of child-care centers with helping mothers to build their social capital, and when comparing poor and non-poor mothers whose child was not in a center, mothers with children in child-care centers had lower odds of being depressed and increased social capital. For more information on data and statistics, please refer to Dr. Small's book *Unanticipated Gains: Origins of Network Inequality in Everyday Life*.

Mr. John Padilla presented information on the New Haven MOMS Partnership, serving over 2,000 women in New Haven, Connecticut. He cited the statistic that 20.6 million children live with an adult with a mental illness over half of children living in poverty. Research has shown that positive social networks enhance mental health, perceived social support, and parental self-efficacy. Few programs that are targeted to improve material mental health, focus on social networks.

Social networks are a pathway to employment, and low-income parents have smaller social networks, which is also amplified by the fact that some live in isolated areas. Information flow about potential job opportunities can be delayed where opportunities may no longer be available. Positive social networks increase trust and reciprocity to improve mental health, family well-being, economic security, and child outcomes.



*Screenshot of the MOMba Smartphone App*

MOMS assessed over 2,000 mothers and found that 83% of low-income mothers in New Haven were using a smartphone, and they determined that smartphones held great possibility for enhancing social capital as a way to improve mental health and parenting and executive functioning. The Partnership created a smartphone app called MOMba, designed to help build positive social networks and social capital based on the principles of behavior change, social epidemiology (social support, social network, social capital), attachment theory, and behavioral economics. Through the app, moms can build tokens as they interact and complete “challenges,” which can result in an incentive of a gift card to help moms meet the needs of their children. The challenges were designed to promote social support and capital, maternal-infant attachment, parental skill building, and executive functioning. Based on results of focus groups, they found that moms responded positively to the app, responding that it is judgment free and connects them to information, employment opportunities, and basic needs exchange, in addition to connecting them to other moms in their geographic location. They also found that mothers received benefits from app usage, such as increased self-efficacy, exchange of resources, and reductions in perceived stigma. Additionally, using a randomized sample, there was a statistically significant difference where mothers using the app had a reduction in depressive symptoms, clinically significant reductions in parenting stress, and statistically significant increases in aspects of social capital and social support.

Mr. Mauricio Lim Miller, Family Independence Initiative (FII), outlined statistics on poverty and instability. The Census Bureau reported in 2011 that over a three-year period, 96.5% of people moved above the poverty line, but 30% fell back under. A 2009 Urban Institute study showed that about half of the U.S. population experience poverty by age 65 and become poor again within five years. Information can lead to investment – the Initiative provides low interest loans, investment matching, scholarships, and awards. FII families organize and meet in cohort groups, receive computers from FII, and input data monthly in exchange for payment. After six months, they are eligible to apply for resources and recruit other families to form new cohorts. FII staff facilitate the family self-organization, audit and analyze family data, help build the “resource banks” for families,” and share data and stories with “influencers.” Staff do not provide counseling or advice because their role is to empower families to use their peers for advice. The information flow has allowed families to have a continuous feedback loop to see and show their own progress; they also receive social signaling in seeing their peers’ progress.

The Initiative uses UpTogether, which is a community sharing site, which allows users to find and access resources and form groups.

FII does a variety of data analysis including regression, geospatial analysis, text mining, and machine learning. FII captures more than 200 data points every month allowing FII to look at an indicator through time and “cut” by any number of



*UpTogether Homepage Screenshot*

indicators. FII runs simple and complex regression analysis, including but not limited to correlations analysis and ordinary least square regressions. They also geocode addresses of each household to see how families are located geographically. Text mining is completed by capturing unstructured data from sentiments, ratings rationale, and family ideas and suggestions. The text mining allows FII to identify trends to provide a foundation for additional analysis.

Two year impacts from eight cities reveal that by participating in the program families' savings increased by 120%, income earnings increased by 24%, 25-30% of families started a small business, and 3% bought a home. Additionally, 70% of children improved their grades or attendance, 75% of families reported an improvement in their health, and 80% of families reported helping friends or neighbors.

## Listening and State Sharing Session with ACF Leadership

Speakers:

- **Mark Greenberg**, *Acting Assistant Secretary, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Washington, DC*
- **Nisha Patel**, *Director, Office of Family Assistance, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Washington, DC*

During this session, participants engaged in a dialogue with ACF leadership on TANF related issues and concerns. Participants also shared TANF innovations and challenges in their states.

## Concurrent Workshops

### Concurrent Workshop 1: ACF Leadership Briefing with State Commissioners

Speaker: **Mark Greenberg**, *Acting Assistant Secretary, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Washington, DC*

During this session, ACF Acting Assistant Secretary, Mark Greenberg met with approximately twenty State Human Services commissioners, secretaries, and their designees to discuss current and emerging issues in human services delivery and ACF priorities. The following items represent the major themes discussed during this session:

- **Managing Criminal Background Checks in a Public Assistance Environment:** Participants initially discussed the challenges of developing policies, processes, and partnerships for conducting criminal background checks in a social service context. Mr. Greenberg highlighted that the Office of Child Support Enforcement (OCSE) has raised this issue among their program directors. Representatives from Washington shared that a number of organizations, namely trade unions, find these background checks concerning. They added that it is important, if implementing background checks, to make outreach and enforcement consistent across programs. Related to certain Homeland Security background checks, employees in states where

marijuana is legal face additional complications when asked to state if they use “illegal substances” given the federal government’s stance on this drug.

- ***Developing Innovative Collaboration Efforts:*** Session participants broached the possibility of having ACF model innovative programs for states to review and possibly model – participants mentioned one-stop centers partially staffed by TANF staff and methods for cost sharing as possible ideas. Mr. Greenberg discussed some of the collaborative research efforts currently in development involving the Departments of Education, Labor, and HHS. He mentioned joint technical assistance, collaborative informational memorandums, and coordinated research as active partnership examples. At their center, TANF and workforce agency partnerships should focus on sharing resources and finding solutions for helping TANF participants. He discussed how ACF is aware that states channel their TANF funds into a wide variety of programs and supports, such as investing in their child welfare system. In the end, while states must decide how best to use their dollars, it is generally advisable to focus some TANF funding on employment and training.
- ***Promoting Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Focused Partnerships:*** States confirmed receiving a great deal of questions and comments from stakeholders concerning WIOA. While interest is high, states also expressed uncertainty on how to go about finding answers to these WIOA focused questions. Mr. Greenberg discussed the importance of having Health and Human Service agencies closely involved in the WIOA development process. Human service agencies gain better access to job training and employment opportunities through this kind of partnership. It is also important to remain mindful that workforce agencies have not always been sensitive to barrier removal and meeting the needs of low-income parents and families. Engagement with human service agencies can strengthen workforce training quality by enhancing the experiences of TANF participants.
- ***Ensuring Proper Use of TANF Funds:*** Mr. Greenberg encouraged commissioners and assistant/deputy commissioners to ensure appropriate use of TANF funds to meet the four purposes of TANF and to quickly raise any issues with OFA. States in attendance echoed his words of caution but also emphasized the importance of flexibility in TANF programming. In Hawaii, 45% of their block grant is spent on cash assistance, with the remaining funds dedicated to child care, work and training, and child welfare. The state feels this was the “only way” to create an effective TANF program, though it required extensive dialogue and support from governors, legislative staff, and the community at large. Participants expressed mixed opinions on the usefulness of third-party Maintenance of Effort (MOE) contributions – certain states believe MOE provides flexibility in meeting work participation requirements (WPR) while other attendees recommended removing MOE due to excessive loopholes and because the requirement has never been adjusted for inflation.
- ***Presenting Data on TANF Families Effectively:*** A number of states raised the issue on how to present data on families receiving assistance in order to truly improve understanding of



caseloads, access, and participant engagement. Mr. Greenberg confirmed this is an issue of high importance at ACF. Fundamentally, ACF believes that the use of financial data is helpful to states in making the case around where to best direct resources. Mr. Greenberg highlighted recent, promising data outcomes drawn from programs focused on career pathways, sectoral employment, Health Profession Opportunity Grants (HPOG), and a job search evaluation. He also addressed that some of the best research on self-sufficiency is dated – from before the 1990s – and since that time there have been massive changes in the labor market and how people find employment. ACF intends to explore a number of research agenda items, such as the potential of behavioral economics within the self-sufficiency field, with the goal of identifying new strategies for strengthening human service programs. Massachusetts discussed their pay for performance model, which appears to have created enhanced outcomes for employing hard-to-place individuals.

- ***Sharing Information on Child Care Reauthorization:*** Mr. Greenberg shared that ACF will issue additional guidance around reauthorization of childcare in the near future. ACF is looking at the periods of childcare receipt, high turnover rates and the impact on children, and issues related to losing a child-care provider connection. ACF recognizes the connection between childcare and stable employment, and the importance of families having multiple child-care options. He added that, prior to 1996, there was less emphasis on child-care quality and minimal federal regulation language. Since that time, there has been a notable shift to strongly emphasize quality in the federal statutes.

## Concurrent Workshop 2: Case Management and Coaching

Moderator: **Larry McDowell**, *TANF Program Specialist, Office of Family Assistance-Region VI, Dallas, Texas*

Speaker: **Jodie Sue Kelly**, *President, Cygnet Associates, Annapolis, Maryland*

Jodie Sue Kelly led a discussion of strategies for implementing a coaching approach that places clients at the helm of mapping out his or her future. In this approach, customers take the lead in identifying their strengths, setting individual goals, and developing action steps to achieve these goals. Coaching has shown promise in increasing recipients' motivation to complete education and training, and other activities critical to finding and retaining employment.

Ms. Kelly shared that TANF case managers have a prime opportunity to inspire people and engage them throughout the case management lifecycle – from orientation to post-job placement. Orientation in particular is an important time to be clear about expectations and to avoid confusing jargon. To build engagement, Ms. Kelly, suggested that programs:

- Decide their theme and pick a selling proposition that motivates: Do not pick one that is just about compliance. Clients come into the TANF office because they need money, not because they want a case management plan or to be “self-sufficient.”

- Focus on what they are selling: if they focus on compliance, short-term messages may relate to getting a job and attending training, but programs need to sell longer-term messages that resonate with clients. For most clients, their primary motivation is to increase earnings.
- Be clear about messaging: TANF gives clients *temporary* help in the form of cash assistance. Focus on the temporary aspect of the program and state it early and often, beginning at orientation.

She then provided a series of tips on how to host orientations for recently approved TANF participants. She suggested that programs:

- Look at their orientation slides and check them against [www.readability.com](http://www.readability.com) to assess whether they are understandable to the program’s audience and at their reading levels.
- Make it participatory and get to know clients in the room. For example, she suggested programs ask participants about their bucket list items (i.e., long-term career and life goals). Programs can then connect client bucket list items to their goals of moving off TANF.
- Tell participants about the history of ADFC and TANF, only for a few minutes, and do so through a story format.
- Emphasize spending time wisely while on TANF and how it will “fly by.”
- Conduct an exercise that looks at the changing cost of goods over the last 20 years and compare that against the changing amount of cash assistance. Cash assistance levels have risen only slightly in some states, while there have been no increases in other states. Clients may get upset and Ms. Kelly noted that it is important for the trainer to use this exercise to drive home the point that TANF should only be a temporary measure and that it cannot afford a comfortable living.
- Conduct an exercise that helps clients understand the difference between the amount of money they receive while on TANF versus working full time. This exercise is intended to show clients that full-time employment will lead to more financial resources compared to just receiving TANF benefits.
- Write down goals –she suggested discussing how their lives will improve with additional resources (once clients realize working equates to more money). She suggested having them write those goals down, laminate them at the office, and encourage participants to take them home as a reminder to continue to search for jobs or attend training.
- Be clear about rights/responsibilities, sanctions, and penalties.

Ms. Kelly concluded her presentation by stating that case managers need to repeat this information continually throughout the client-case manager relationship.

## Concurrent Workshop 3: Promoting Child Well-Being and Family Self-Sufficiency through Improved Non-Custodial Employment

Moderator: **Lauren Antelo**, *Senior Program Specialist, Office of Child Support Enforcement, Washington, DC*

Speakers:

- **Bob Prevost**, *Deputy Director, Arapahoe County Human Services, Aurora, Colorado*
- **Tamara Thomas**, *Director, Stanislaus County Department of Child Support Services, Modesto, California*

During this session, grantees of the Office of Child Support Enforcement's (OCSE) non-custodial parent employment demonstrations discussed their strategies to improve family stability by helping non-custodial parent (NCPs) become successfully employed.

Lauren Antelo from OCSE began the presentation by outlining the core functions of child support enforcement and the benefits of CSE/TANF partnerships. She emphasized that both agencies possessed similar missions – to serve and support low-income families – and that CSE/TANF partnerships that engage NCPs in work related activities typically lead to improved employment and child support payment outcomes. OCSE launched the five-year National Child Support Noncustodial Parent Employment Demonstration (CSPED) project in 2012 to test the efficacy of child support-led employment strategies. CSPED's goal is to increase the reliable payment of child support by noncustodial parents who are willing but unable to pay. There are eight CSPED grantees – California; Colorado; Iowa; Ohio; South Carolina; Tennessee; Texas; and Wisconsin. Early lessons learned from the project revealed the importance of:

- Having staff understand the social, economic, and labor attachment barrier challenges NCPs face.
- Designing programs that take into account 68% of NCPs have criminal backgrounds.
- Establishing strong partnership and communication systems – grantees report their work is most effective when multiple partners work independently but offer clients a seamless delivery model.

Ms. Antelo shared the location of a number of CSPED resources, including a [fact sheet](#) and a series of [grantee success stories](#). Following her introduction, two grantees, Colorado and California, discussed their experiences and findings to-date.

### ***Arapahoe County Human Services, Aurora, Colorado***

Arapahoe County's Colorado Parent Employment Project (CO-PEP) targets parents able to work but unable to pay child support (CS) because they are unemployed or underemployed. Examples of CO-PEP supports include parenting classes, intensive work assistance such as job skills training, and modification

of child support orders, if needed. CO-PEP will measure their success by tracking employment rates, amounts of child support and arrears paid, and cost savings from decreased use of public assistance by families, among other evaluation measures.

CO-PEP focused initially on NCP engagement and identifying barriers that might prevent an individual from finding and keeping a job. With a focus on employment outcomes, the county redesigned their entire department and elected to collaborate exclusively with their two top performing TANF vendors. In order to increase accuracy and timeliness with vendors, the County adopted an automated workflow system used across all county departments. To emphasize a strengths-based, individualized approach to intake and assessment, the county adopted the Online Work Readiness Assessment (OWRA) tool. Part of their assessment approach also includes identifying where a participant is along a spectrum of “willing and unwilling” and “able and unable.” While these typologies are often fluid, clients may shift from one to another over time, the County elected to spend fewer resources on those “willing and able” individuals. In addition to altering their business processes, the county also promoted a cultural shift among case managers and frontline staff. Staff adopted motivational interviewing techniques, particularly when working with the “unwilling and unable,” and emphasize flexibility by asking clients’ preferences for appointment times, providing tailored welcome packets to both parents, prioritizing walk-ins, and seeing clients as early as 6:30 a.m. CO-PEP also adopted measures such as post-TANF support, gradual increases in CS payments based on rising income, and referrals to outside support agencies to help ensure parents remain employed and continue supporting their children. CO-PEP reported 80% CS payment compliance among their participants. As comparison, the goal for the entire state of Colorado is 66%.

### ***Stanislaus County Department of Child Support Services, Modesto, California***

Stanislaus County Department of Child Support Services’ CSPED grant seeks to increase reliable child support payments among unemployed or underemployed noncustodial parents, thereby improving child well-being, strengthening families, and avoiding public costs. Traditionally, in California, staff conducted CSE in a highly punitive fashion; in the words of the presenter, it was not “warm and fuzzy.” At the start of the CSPED grant, the county shifted priorities in order to adopt an employment focused, family centered approach. In addition to engaging the whole family in CSE and offering parental support groups, the county worked to first address employment barriers among their child support paying clients. The county also worked to streamline their service delivery, open communications among partners, and hold regular staff “Customers in Common” groups to promote seamless assistance to clients. TANF is one of the key partners involved in the county’s CSPED grant – over one-third of their child support clients are also enrolled in TANF. The county is currently conducting a random assignment evaluation of the grant – early outcomes show a 61% increase in client enrollment, a 66% increase in employment, and a 27% increase in individuals involved in parenting support programs.

### ***Questions and Answers:***

- **Question (for Stanislaus County):** Do you hire caseworkers with specialized TANF expertise?
  - Answer: No, the majority of staff have more of a general social service background. The county spends considerable time trying to hire “the right person,” someone who exhibits passion for this line of work.

## Concurrent Workshop 4: Two-Generation Approaches

Moderator: **Shelley Waters Boots**, *Senior Consultant, Annie E. Casey Foundation, Silver Spring, Maryland*

Speakers:

- **Gloria Perez**, *President and CEO, Jeremiah Program, Minneapolis, Minnesota*
- **John Padilla**, *Principal, New Haven Mental Health Outreach for Mothers (MOMS) Partnership New Haven, Connecticut*

Two-generation approaches are an innovative solution that TANF programs with dual goals—of increasing parental employment and family well-being—are beginning to explore. During this session, program designers shared their experiences and lessons learned from developing and implementing two-generation programs at the community level.

Shelley Waters Boots began the session by providing some background on two-generation (2gen) approaches and discussing the Annie E. Casey Foundation’s definition of 2gen approaches to poverty alleviation. She explained how approximately half of all children grow up in low-income families and to break this cycle of poverty, interventions must focus on the well-being of the entire family. In the context of TANF, she discussed how there is \$75 million earmarked for 2gen projects in a discussion draft of the House Committee (Ways and Means) bill reauthorizing TANF. She concluded her introduction by pointing to the Building Nebraska Families program and the Utah TANF Demonstration as two examples of promising TANF and 2gen partnerships.

John Padilla next discussed the efforts of the New Haven Mental Health Outreach for Mothers (MOMS) Partnership – a collaboration of agencies across the City of New Haven that work together to support the wellbeing of mothers and families living in the city. The mission of the New Haven MOMS Partnership is to transform service delivery systems for mothers and children through community and neighborhood-based resources dedicated to wellness; thereby strengthening generations of families to flourish and succeed. MOMS originally provided stress management and other mental health supports but quickly transitioned into workforce development assistance as a natural next step in helping mothers become self-sufficient. He discussed some of MOMS key elements of success:

- Establishing formalized partnership across sectors (MOMS has an interesting partnership at the Stop and Shop, a very public location, which has been instrumental in the recruitment of women).

- Using comprehensive needs assessments.
- Filming interactions between parents and children in order to use this as a learning tool.
- Implementing cognitive behavioral therapy-based workforce and mental health interventions.
- Lessening the stigma associated with mental health/mental illness (when caseworkers talk to women, they talk about stress and depression on a continuum).

Gloria Perez spoke to participants regarding the Jeremiah Program, a Minneapolis, Minnesota based 2gen program. Jeremiah’s strategy is to mobilize a broad based coalition of community members to work together for the betterment of moms and their children. Jeremiah incorporates a five-part service delivery model that, when combined, seeks to bring about family stability and prosperity:

- Provide support for career track education – Jeremiah enrolls each participant in a two- or four-year higher education program that provides tuition assistance, is financially healthy, offers career counseling, and is willing to work with Jeremiah staff.
- Provide a safe, affordable place to live – Jeremiah provides safe, affordable housing. Housing provides a fully furnished, campus apartment. Residents pay no more than 30% of their income for rent. Campuses are located near educational institutions, employment opportunities, public transportation, and provide a secure, supportive environment for women to live with their children.
- Provide quality early childhood education – Jeremiah tailors education plans tailored to children’s needs, while parents acquire skills to help their children excel throughout their education careers.
- Provide life skills and individualized empowerment training – the curriculum focuses on parenting and child development, healthy living and wellness, financial literacy, career development, and economic independence. Jeremiah provides one on one support with a life skills coach that keeps women on track with their goals. Life skills training also focus on decreasing isolation, and changing the mindset from victim to “powerful self.”
- Provide employment readiness support – the Jeremiah Works! program directly links women to employment advocates from local corporations to create career pathways. Jeremiah provides coaching to help develop critical skills such as resumes writing, interview, and job shadowing.

Ms. Perez reported that Jeremiah recently expanded to campuses in St. Paul, Austin, Boston, Fargo, and the Twin Cities. Jeremiah graduates earn \$16.32 on average, with half of all graduates earning a bachelor’s degree (the other half obtain an associate degree). She also mentioned that for every one dollar spent, Jeremiah achieves a return on investment of four dollars.

### *Questions and Answers:*

- **Question (for John Padilla):** You said you developed your own model for job readiness. Is that available?
  - Answer: We are testing it now and hope to have it available in February of 2016.

- **Question (for John Padilla):** Regarding the job readiness pilot – does it include anything about worker rights? Are people being told they do not need to answer questions about whether or not they have children?
  - Answer: This is not covered in job readiness but is covered in a supplemental workshop.
- **Question (for Gloria Perez):** Do you address fathers’ involvement or co-parenting as part of the Jeremiah program?
  - Answer: Only 20% or so of the fathers are involved with the Jeremiah program. We try to foster relationships but, admittedly, that is not the focus of our program.

## Concurrent Workshop 5: TANF and Child Care Coordination

Speaker: **Rachel Schumacher**, Director, Office of Child Care, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Washington, DC

During this session, Rachel Schumacher, the Director of ACF’s Office of Child Care presented an overview of key components of the Child Care Development Fund (CCDF) reauthorization including the increased focus on quality and the potential implications for TANF. Ms. Schumacher began her presentation by describing the similarities between the Child Care and TANF programs – both operate as block grants, work with the same population, and are increasingly adopting a “whole family” approach to case management. Given the common elements of both programs, researchers have for many years investigated the connections between childcare and employment stability. Findings from these studies show that parents with childcare are more likely to find and maintain employment, which leads to increased feelings of “security.” When parents feel secure, it positively affects child well-being – it offers peace of mind and motivates parents to stay employed. In addition to the shared service approach and common service population, Child Care and TANF also share some funding intersections. States can choose to use TANF funding to provide child-care assistance to families in need. They can do so by either spending TANF funds directly on childcare or transferring money to the Child Care Development Block Grant (CCDBG) program. Ms. Schumacher discussed how, despite the many connections, from a research perspective, there is not a great deal of information or data on Child Care and TANF coordination. She hoped to draw new insight on these partnerships from participants in attendance.

Ms. Schumacher next touched on the issue of CCDF Reauthorization. Passed at the end of 2014, changes in Reauthorization reflect what Congress has heard for decades, namely the critical importance of childcare and that there are insufficient high quality child-care options. Key elements included in Reauthorization include:

- Promoting involvement of both parents and advocating for 2gen programs.
- Coordinating programs to maximize participation options.
- Improving the overall quality of child care and the child development aspect while increasing the number of low-income children in quality child-care settings.

- Altering eligibility to allow all CCDF families to remain eligible for 12 months as long as their income is 85% below the state median income. Eligibility is not disrupted during times of employment training or education. This also allows TANF families to work or obtain education for longer periods.

### *Questions and Answers:*

- **Question:** A question about TANF and child care – if the states choose the three-month<sup>1</sup> option, how would that affect TANF employment participation? If they were to stop participation would they be allowed to reengage?
  - Answer: If you do not choose the three-month option, every family deemed eligible at intake remains so for 12 months.
- **Comment (from Elizabeth Lower-Basch at CLASP):** Beyond the things encouraged in law, some states do have policies that were set in 1996 and have not been revisited. This is a perfect time for states to examine their regulations and determine if alterations are needed. Depending on regulation, there may be no effect on TANF direct spending on Child Care.
  - Answer: We need to closely examine childcare, particularly issues of child safety, regardless of the funding source. For example, criminal background checks are critical as it difficult for child victims to articulate the details of a crime. Child-care administrators often do not have sufficient authority and must collaborate with the Department of Justice or local law enforcement to undertake comprehensive background checks. Concerning monitoring and inspections, states also need to set qualifications for licensed providers and employ a sufficient number of inspectors.
  - Answer: Moving more children into higher quality care is important in order to establish equal access for low-income children. Price is not always a good indicator of the market especially in areas where there is a very low number of suppliers or where states are the biggest buyer.
  - Answer: States must establish policies that establish general requirements, such as paying for child absence days and timely pay for child-care service, but in many states there are no requirements to pay for absence days, which places more burdens on the provider.
- **Question:** We pay for sick and some child absence days. What is the reality from Congress' standpoint regarding the new requirements attached to the block grant? Agreeing to reauthorize and actually paying for something are two very different things.
  - Answer: There is new funding attached to Reauthorization. We are not certain on specifics but we intend to conduct an impact analysis with the release of the formal regulations. If states have hard numbers, please share them with the Office of Child Care – data will help us illustrate more of an impact.

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<sup>1</sup> This is in reference to a new CCDF Reauthorization policy giving states the option to terminate assistance prior to re-determination if the parent loses employment. States must though allow for a three-month period of job search.



- Answer: Regarding CCDF implementation planning, the Office of Child Care provided an extension to March 1, 2016 to submit applications. The extension was to give states more time for planning and partnership creation.
- **Question:** How are you currently working with CCDF? What opportunities and challenges do you see in TANF and CCDF coordination? How will CCDF reauthorization affect coordination and TANF families?
  - Answer: In our state, the CCDF sub-program is the same agency as the TANF employment program. If you choose the three-month option, can there be more than three months within the program year/individual's eligibility?
    - Answer: It is not officially addressed, but I do not see a reason why there cannot be multiple three-month periods.
- **Question:** Relative care may be exempt depending on the state – are there any federal guidelines, or is it up to the state to decide what degree of family member qualifies?
  - Answer: I would have to look back at the law to see what is defined as a family member.
- **Question:** What are the minimum training requirements for the care of four unrelated children?
  - Answer: There are ten health and safety requirements for CCDF providers – CPR, medicine administration, sleep practices, etc.
- **Comment:** OFA should develop and send out guidance on Child Care and TANF coordination.
  - Answer: We hope TANF programs will comment when the Office of Child Care sends out the formal regulations.
- **Comment:** There are concerns that these new CCDF regulations will drive more young people into the TANF program.
  - Answer: Our hope is that these new rules will ensure fewer people exit and return to TANF.

## Concurrent Workshop 6: TANF and WIOA Partnerships

Moderator and Speaker: **Eileen Friedman**, *Regional Program Manager, Office of Family Assistance, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services-Region III, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania*

Speakers:

- **Cheryl Keenan**, *Director, Adult Education and Literacy Division, Office of Career and Technical Education, U.S. Department of Education, Washington, DC*
- **Amanda Ahlstrand**, *Administrator, Office of Workforce Investment, Washington, DC*

The inclusion of TANF as a required partner at the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) one-stops can provide TANF participants and other individuals possessing employment barriers with improved access to comprehensive employment services and job-driven training. At the federal level, the Department of Health and Human Services, the Department of Labor, and the Department of Education have been working together to develop guidance and provide technical assistance for WIOA implementation. During this session, representatives from these federal agencies provided insights and updates on WIOA implementation.

Amanda Ahlstrand from the Office of Workforce Investment announced that DOL would issue some operating guidance outlining the types of services provided through dislocated adults and youth programs. She also discussed how DOL is working with the U.S. Department of Education (DOE) and HHS to issue a vision for the workforce and One Stop systems. She outlined how the workforce system must help individuals gain skills and access to career paths, be driven by the needs of businesses and workers, and provide job seekers with needed resources. Similarly, One Stop Centers must be customer-driven, meeting job seekers “where they are,” conducting upfront assessments, and tailoring resources to an individuals’ needs. Ms. Ahlstrand highlighted how state governors must have state workforce boards in place with TANF serving as a required partner (though governors have the option to opt out). She directed session participants to explore [www.workforce3one.org](http://www.workforce3one.org), “Eye on Community of Practice,” as a source of technical assistance.

Cheryl Keenan from DOE’s Adult Literacy and Education Division closed the presentation by describing the common population served by DOE, DOL, and ACF. She encouraged participants to participate in the design of one-stop services in their area and to advocate for the adoption of a customer-centered approach. She also highlighted the importance of including rehabilitative services for those with significant disabilities as part of the customer service design.

### *Questions and Answers:*

- **Question (from Connecticut):** We were invited to a state planning table to discuss WIOA. What can we say in the legislature in order to become a required partner?
  - Answer: Federal partners are working to agree on guidance in order to deliver a consistent message to states. We know the importance of certain required partners in order to make career services available within the one-stop system.

### **Idea Labs**

Idea Labs served as networking opportunities for Gateway participants to engage in peer-to-peer dialogues on selected topics. In each session, a facilitator shared information about an idea or concept in order to spark discussion and then moderated the participants’ conversation.

## Idea Lab 1: PACE-STED

Erica Zielewski, from the Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation (OPRE), led participants in a discussion of the 2010-2017 funded Subsidized and Transitional Employment and Demonstration (STED) project. STED emerged from the ARRA/TANF Emergency Contingency Fund as a way to evaluate the next generation of subsidized employment programs. OPRE and DOL funded seven sites across a broad-spectrum of strategies – from wage subsidy to transitional employment. Ms. Zielewski discussed the considerable variability in how these programs operate (e.g., paid work experience vs. traditional job placement), focus on a specific population (e.g., disconnected youth vs. ex-offenders), and engage partners (e.g., more focus on private sector placements). She highlighted some of STED’s mid-term findings such as how upfront costs remain a deterrent for employers, ongoing challenge of TANF retention, the importance of an intermediary to work between program staff and employers, and how OPRE is still working to identify the key elements of a subsidized work program. She also mentioned that STED is also integrating lessons learned from another OPRE career pathway focused project, Pathways for Advancing Careers and Education (PACE), also funded through 2017. Following the STED introduction, states shared some of their experiences with subsidized employment programs:

- Pennsylvania – focusing more on subsidized placement for TANF participants with long-term disabilities. It is challenging to find employers able to accommodate employees with special needs. The large number of trade unions in the state also shrinks the pool of possible partner employers.
- Montana – looking more at job shadowing opportunities to provide TANF participants with exposure to work settings. The state experienced numerous instances of training individuals for jobs they later discovered were not aligned with their career interests.

## Idea Lab 2: BIAS-GOALS

Emily Schmitt discussed OPRE’s Behavioral Interventions to Advance Self-Sufficiency (BIAS) project (2010–2016) and the possible implications for introducing behavioral economics into TANF work. She began with a brief introduction of the BIAS project and behavioral economics. Traditionally, program designers implicitly assume that individuals will carefully consider options and make decisions that maximize their well-being. Research in the area of behavioral economics (which combines psychology and economics) has shown that human decision-making is less ideal. People — clients and program administrators alike — procrastinate, get overwhelmed by choices, and miss important details. As a result, both programs and participants may not always achieve their goals. The goal of BIAS is to develop a strong base of knowledge of the existing behavioral economics literature and the needs of human services programs while engaging behavioral experts to explore the application of behavioral economics to ACF programs. Ms. Schmitt discussed that, while the use of behavioral economics often results in only small gains, these benefits often come at very low to no cost. Ms. Schmitt outlined some ways to leverage BIAS’ initial findings in order to increase programs performance:

- People can only pay attention for a limited amount of time. Sometimes providing more limited options is more effective than giving people many choices.
- As people give more weight to the present, programs should limit their messaging around long-term and/or future benefits.
- Small factors can have an outsized impact. Small amounts of assistance can help people complete a task.
- People are more motivated by losses than by gains. Messaging to clients that they may lose benefits they qualify for or “deserve” has shown to increase program participation.

BIAS launched 15 “experiments” in eight programs that focused on one of three ACF areas: child support, childcare, or TANF. For example, at the Louisiana site, BIAS staff designed simplified outreach materials in order to increase participation in a child care/transportation exemption reengagement meeting. BIAS designed two sets of outreach packets – one outlined the benefits participants stood to lose by non-attendance while the other discussed benefits clients would receive by participating in this meeting. Results from this test showed that the “loss” materials resulted in a significantly higher number of participants in attendance at the reengagement meeting. In closing, Ms. Schmitt shared links to some of BIAS’ recent publications, such as [“Reminders to Pay: Using Behavioral Economics to Increase Child Support Payments”](#).

### Idea Lab 3: TANF Data Q&A – OFA Division of Data Collection and Analysis Division

Yun Song and Debbie Perez, statisticians with the Office of Family Assistance, met with participants to answer questions related to states’ collection and submission of data and how states can ensure that their data are accurate, timely, and complete. Ms. Perez opened the discussion by outlining her work on three different TANF related reports:

- Characteristic Data – deals with all characteristics deemed appropriate for the population that receives TANF such as caseload/families, race/ethnicity, education, and age. This data is published once a year as part of a report to Congress. Ms. Perez mentioned these tables are complete and she will be working with ACF Regional Offices to address any data anomalies or coding errors.
- Caseload Reports – concerns caseload and application data. OFA creates tables by fiscal year, TANF population, and by quarter. These reports also look at characteristics such as two-parent households, one-parent households, no parent families, total children, total families, and total recipients.
- Frequency and Questionable Reports – used to find abnormalities in data such as families reported as “TANF” recipients even though no individual within the family appears to receive TANF. Ms. Perez works with Regional Offices once a month to address any of these items.

Mr. Song next described how he creates feedback reports for the states including TANF work participation rate (WPR) reports. He flags any detected errors and communicates this information to the

Regional Offices for remediation or explanation. He emphasized that quality control is critical and asked session participants how they ensure quality data collection.

At this stage in the discussion, states began asking questions of the speakers:

- Tennessee – worked with Mr. Song over a number of days to address some error flags. While Mr. Song was on-site, the state brought in a number of different teams to explain how they collected and reported data. Within a few months, the state reported a significantly lower error rate. Tennessee transitioned from submitting all cases to submitting small volumes of cases and checking every month before submission to ensure quality. The state reported this change has significantly helped lower their error rate.
- Georgia – the state spoke with Tennessee after experiencing similar error rate issues. Georgia is using similar processes to help lower their error rates. Both states agreed that training on how to identify and understand error rates is incredibly beneficial.
- Guam – reported that, since 2012, they have seen improvements in error rates. The territory uses OFA provided data tables in meetings with their contractors.
- ACF Region VII – when the region sees a state has data challenges over time, they connect with data colleagues and the state because often, when there is an error, it will affect the WPR. States are not always aware of this fact. The region periodically sends data technical assistance teams to the states to conduct trainings on the types of data, why it is important, collection and reporting processes, and how to interpret data trends.

#### Idea Lab 4: Show Me the Money: How States Spend TANF and MOE Funds

Peter Germanis from the Office of Family Assistance provided an overview of the newly released TANF/MOE financial data for FY 2014. Mr. Germanis began by outlining state TANF and MOE funds by activity and describing the dynamics of TANF as a fixed, flexible funding stream. He outlined the impact of inflation and demographic changes on federal AFDC/TANF funds spent per poor family. Prior to TANF (in 2014 dollars), a total of \$3,916 was spent per family – after TANF, this figure declined to \$2,454. He reported that no state increased the amount of funds to poor families post-TANF implementation. The reason for this reduction in funds is due to the sharp increase in the total number of poor families. He also added that this issue is exacerbated by TANF's block grant structure, which allows states to divert TANF funds to fill other state budget needs. States and Mr. Germanis discussed some of the challenges associated with helping states regulate and protect TANF funds such as a lack of TANF knowledge among legislators. Participants raised the possible strategy of giving individuals more benefits for a shorter period as a way to keep funds within the TANF program. Participants also raised the challenge of child care affordability and a lack of political will to enact legislative and funding changes in order to “make being on TANF affordable.”

## Idea Lab 5: Development Needs: Serving Young Adults and Parents of Infants in TANF

Elizabeth Lower-Basch from CLASP highlighted recent work on how TANF can best serve the developmental needs of two overlapping groups of TANF participants: young adults and parents of infants. Ms. Lower-Basch began her presentation by describing findings from an upcoming CLASP paper entitled “TANF and First Year of Life.” This report discusses how 30% of the TANF population is 18-24 and that 15% of the TANF caseload includes a young pregnant women or a woman with an infant. The paper sets forward a foundational policy checklist to support these types of woman and their children:

- Provision of adequate income support (e.g., receiving cash assistance prior to the birth of a child).
- Implementation of minor parent requirements (required under federal law).
- Work requirements for parents of infants – understanding low-wage jobs have unpredictable schedules and providing flexibility for women to choose the right job for their family.
- Interaction of exemptions with child-care policies.
- Access to quality childcare, good cause provisions when childcare is not available, and time to locate high quality care.
- Connecting to other services (e.g., SNAP, WIC, rapid rehousing, mental health screenings, supported referrals,).

The paper also highlights a number of experimental strategies impacting young adults and parents of infants in TANF such as offering training opportunities that include child-care services, enhancing TANF service provision to other eligible populations (e.g., SNAP and WIC), and creating access to stable jobs (e.g., subsidized employment). Ms. Lower-Basch also led session participants in a discussion on the complex workforce needs of young parents aged 16-24. She explained that, while youth may be well connected to service programs, a lack of coordination among providers can create challenges for establishing a high quality, individualized, continuous stream of care. She recommended that TANF should be a major partner in providing and coordinating these services, particularly to out-of-school and disconnected youth. She also pointed to WIOA Title I (youth adult services) and WIOA Title IV (vocational rehabilitation) as ways to leverage this funding source for youth focused services. Following this presentation, states shared their strategies for serving young adults and parents within TANF:

- Washington – supports the idea of assisting mothers in the last trimester and first year of life but has concerns over time limits and limited resources for this population outside of TANF. The state is also seeking data to quantify the value of parental and child bonding as well as parenting education. Ms. Lower-Basch reported that there is employment data tied to home visiting models. Washington responded that they recently implemented a home visiting model within the TANF parent exempt population.
- Minnesota – reports losing momentum with teens that elect to become exempt when they get to the young adult stage. Washington responded that, for this demographic, they will offer exemption from work participation but will continue to assess and include in other barrier reduction activities such as mental health assessment and parenting classes. Minnesota also

discussed their challenges with policymakers not recognizing TANF as part of the workforce system.

- Oregon – hopes to develop more individualized and specific processes for sub-populations such as parents of infant and youth. This level of specialization only comes about with a firm understanding of a state’s caseload characteristics.

### Idea Lab 6: Strategic Partnerships: Office of Community Services – Assets for Independence

Jennifer Medina discussed a Corporation for Enterprise Development (CFED) guide, released with the Office of Community Services (OCS) in April 2015, called Building Financial Capability: A Planning Guide for Integrated Services. This guide is focused on providing tools to sites interested in integrating financial capability services with existing programs. Financial capability is defined as the capacity, based on knowledge, skills, and access, to manage financial resources effectively. Financial capability services can include financial education, coaching, or counseling; access to safe and affordable financial products; incentivized savings programs; or asset ownership programs. Integrating financial capability into existing services means taking a client-centered approach and aligning financial capability with the services the client is already receiving through either in-house services or referrals. Individuals who receive more than one service are 3-4 times more likely to attain jobs, increase income, and increase savings. Following the introduction to the guide, states shared some of their experiences with integrating financial capabilities into existing services:

- Utah – TANF collaborated with the AAA Fair Credit Foundation to provide financial education workshops tailored to the needs of TANF participants who are employment ready and Housing Authority residents.
- Vermont – provided a range of services including coaching and education, incentives, and access to free tax preparation services to households with some level of earned income.

### Idea Lab 7: Program for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIACC)

Kyo Sin Kang, from the American Institutes for Research, provided a comprehensive overview of the Program for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIAAC) Survey of Adult Skills. Ms. Kang showed how participants could access PIAAC data to help plan and advocate for services. She also displayed the PIAAC Gateway, <http://piaacgateway.com/>, which has several online tools available:

- NCES International Data Explorer and Results Portal.
- Distance Learning and Dataset Training System.
- Outreach Toolkit.
- Education and Skills Online, the online assessment that aligns with PIAAC.

## Idea Lab 8: Strategic Partnerships: U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development

Representing HUD, Jayme Brown provided an overview of the Jobs Plus program, which began out of a demonstration in 1990 in New York. Evidence from a randomized control trial showed that the experimental Jobs Plus group had better program outcomes than the control group. Participants in the experimental group increased their earnings by 16%. The services provided include employment and training, financial incentives, and creating a culture of work in the housing system, such as elders picking up children and providing childcare. Currently funded sites and their public housing authorities have local control over their employment and training programs. Participants have a development plan and are required to work to increase their incomes. Performance measures include youth outcomes, employment entry, job retention, and case management. There have been two evaluations of the program: a process evaluation and an outcome evaluation. Ms. Brown mentioned the 2015 Jobs Plus Pilot Program Notice of Funding Opportunity, which requires grantees to collaborate with workforce development.

## Idea Lab 9: Executive Skills: A New Lens for Helping TANF Recipients to Set and Achieve Goals

LaDonna Pavetti from the Center for Budget and Policy Priorities (CBPP) discussed her work from the [Center on the Developing Child](#) that looks at toxic stress and executive function skills in children. She described how this stage for children is a starting point for how TANF and workforce programs can think about how executive skills relate to adults. She presented a self-administered [questionnaire](#) that asks about executive skill capacities in 12 domains, which participants completed and scored to identify their strengths and weaknesses. Generally, executive skills fall into three categories: how we plan, how we react to things, and how we get things done. Ms. Pavetti said that it is important for TANF and workforce programs to understand what these skills are and how they affect client engagement and success. Achieving goals also relies heavily on executive skill functions, and to support client achievement she suggested having clients set goals that motivate them, break down those goals into explicit tasks, provide support to clients based on their executive skill strengths or weaknesses, and review and revise goal plans regularly. During the Q&A section of the presentation, a few participants brought up resources that may be useful to other programs:

- Ramsey County, Minnesota's TANF program has assessments, training, and tools available for other states to use.
- Crittenton Women's Union has materials available on using neuroscience to build bridges out of poverty.

## Idea Lab 10: Improving Business Processes for Delivering Work Supports for Low-Income Families: Findings from the Work Support Strategies Evaluation

Heather Hahn from the Urban Institute presented findings from the Work Support Strategies Evaluation, a multistate initiative to simplify access and improve the processes for work supports like SNAP and



TANF. Six states received grants, which include technical assistance, peer support, and evaluation. The initiative's goals are to improve family well-being by increasing enrollment in work supports, help states deliver services more efficiently, and share and deliver lessons.

Ms. Hahn's presentation focused specifically on how states reengineered their business processes to improve customer service and decrease the burden on families and staff. States made business process changes such as changing the expectations for processing time, encouraging cross-program integration, reducing the handoffs between programs, and using electronic documents. There were challenges associated with these process improvements, such as competing goals across agencies and staff capacity. Factors that improved program performance though included dedicated and committed leadership, good communication, staff training, gradual implementation, and using data. Ms. Hahn concluded that changing business processes involves a long, iterative effort; requires trust, collaboration, and communication; and is inseparable from technology and policy. Four states discussed their experiences with business process changes as part of the Work Support Strategies Evaluation:

- North Carolina – attempted to move to the universal worker concept and ended up backing off and letting counties decide when and how to implement it. One of the challenges they faced was getting staff buy-in on the new policy. The county directors are employed by the counties, not the state, so they are reluctant to take direction from the state.
- South Carolina – implemented a telephone interview process for the first contact with TANF and SNAP applicants. This change helped reduce the wait for benefits from 28 days to 8-12 days.
- Maryland – recently changed their policy to encourage phone interviews, but so far this service is underutilized. The state has struggled to build trust among clients that phone interviews are secure. Maryland implemented an “Everybody is your Case Worker” campaign to build support for this new business process. As more agencies adopt this model, the state hopes that clients will be more comfortable with the process.
- Washington – established a robust online application system. Their data shows that similar usage and reported quality when comparing phone and in-person interviews. The state is still trying to achieve more clarity on any cost and time savings from using the online system.

### Idea Lab 11: Strategic Partnerships: Office of Refugee Resettlement

Mariestella Fischer, Assistant to the Director, Office of Refugee Resettlement, began her presentation by giving an overview of refugees in the United States. More than three million refugees have been resettled in the U.S. since 1975, and there are over 60 million estimated refugees in the world. The President has a ceiling on the number of refugees accepted from each country that refreshes annually. In the 2014 fiscal year, 35% of refugees came from Iraq. Refugees are allowed to access Medicaid, SNAP, CHIP, and SSI. Income data are collected from refugees 180 days after resettlement to determine self-sufficiency. Wyoming is the one state that does not resettle refugees, and Florida receives the most

refugees due to its proximity to Haiti and Cuba. The U.S. has a humanitarian commitment to welcoming and supporting refugees

## TANF on the Horizon: Legislative Panel

Moderator: **Susan Golonka**, *Deputy Director, Office of Family Assistance, Washington, DC*

Speakers:

- **Becky Shipp**, Health Policy Advisor for U.S. Senator Orrin Hatch (R-Utah)
- **Matt Weidinger**, Staff Director, House Ways and Means Subcommittee on Human Resources
- **Nick Gwyn**, Staff Director, House Ways and Means Subcommittee on Human Resources

During this session, participants spoke with key staff from Senate Finance and House Ways and Means committees on prospects for TANF reauthorization, Congressional priorities for reform, provisions of current proposals, and possible timelines.

## Day Three – Thursday, September 3, 2015

### Reframing Human Services for the 21st Century

Demographic, economic, technological, and social changes require human services agencies to rethink, redesign, and reframe their programs and systems to meet the realities of the 21st century. Cross-sector partnerships among the public, private, nonprofit, and philanthropic sectors can help support development of new strategies to improve outcomes for families. This panel explored new approaches to communicating about and delivering human services for greater impact.

Moderator: **Nisha Patel**, Director, Office of Family Assistance

Speakers:

- **Dr. Julie Sweetland**, Director of Learning, Frameworks Institute
- **Michael Laracy**, Director of Policy Reform and Advocacy, Annie E. Casey Foundation
- **Loren Harris**, Director of Family Economic Security, W.K. Kellogg Foundation

#### **Michael Laracy, Director of Policy Reform and Advocacy, Annie E. Casey Foundation**

Mr. Michael Laracy, Director of Policy Reform and Advocacy, Annie E. Casey Foundation (AECF) discussed four important poverty innovations that AECF is currently supporting:

- 1) Development and use of the Supplemental Poverty Measure (SPM).
- 2) Use of a refundable tax credit to increase family resources.
- 3) Advancement of two-generation approaches to poverty reduction.
- 4) Improvement of the delivery and coordination of benefits and work supports through technology.

#### *Development and Use of the SPM*

Mr. Laracy discussed the need for the SPM and how it differs from the largely outdated official poverty measure. The official measure was developed in the 1960s and other than being adjusted for inflation has not changed much since then. The two main criticisms of the official measure are that it does not take into account the cost of living and types of family expenditures necessary today and it only includes cash income and does not reflect sources of income such as SNAP, Medicaid, and the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC). The AECF started supporting research around better poverty measures 20 years ago and in 2011, the U.S. Census Bureau released the SPM. The SPM includes cash income plus income from in-kind government programs such as EITC, SNAP, and housing vouchers and uses a mix of expenditures to calculate the poverty threshold that more accurately count what people need to spend money on today,

such as housing costs and transportation. The SPM is also adjusted to the cost of living geographically. Using the SPM, the data show significant strides in poverty reduction.

### *Refundable Tax Credits*

The AECF funds research efforts around child tax credits. Currently, they are supporting a project called Poverty Reduction and the Developing Brain. Poverty is associated with delays in the development of young children and children from high poverty neighborhoods lag behind their counterparts, but it is unknown to what extent poverty itself is a cause. AECF is engaged in a nationwide study to understand to what extent the developmental delay is due to poverty. The control group in the study has access to any social service benefit for which they are eligible. The treatment group receives the same benefits in addition to a monthly stipend of \$333 through a debit card they control. The money is pure income and has no conditions attached, but AECF does track how it is spent. AECF is following families and will conduct brain scans on the children at the age of three to see if there are differences in the development of the groups. If the study shows that reducing poverty helps the development of young children's brains, the results can help demonstrate to Congress the potential value of providing tax credits.

### *Two-Generation Approaches*

Two-generation approaches to reducing poverty are designed to work simultaneously with children and parents, linking parents to employment and, at the same time, helping with children's development. Though AECF has found that the name, "two generation approach" does not always resonate, the strategies can have great impacts and AECF believes these models are the future of human services.

### *Work Support Strategy*

The Work Support Strategies project, run by the CBPP and CLASP in six states, designs and implements 21<sup>st</sup> century strategies to ensure families have better access to work supports and, at the same time, streamlines services to make them more efficient. The project is utilizing technology and critical analysis of application processes to achieve their goals.

Mr. Larcy closed the session by stating the importance of TANF administrators staying engaged in and bringing their voice and perspective to the current debate on poverty and mobility.

### **Loren Harris, Director of Family Economic Security, W.K. Kellogg Foundation**

Mr. Loren Harris, Director of Family Economic Security, W.K. Kellogg Foundation (WKKF), began by discussing the four purposes of welfare reform and the TANF program. Data from the SPM shows that TANF has helped families, especially in times of crisis like the Great Recession. However, the data around the four purposes of TANF have been mixed. There are three principles that drive the work at the Kellogg foundation: inclusivity, accountability, and equity. Continued challenges in the work of the WKKF are inefficiencies in both their efforts to promote successful interventions and government efforts to best serve families. It is important to increase efficiency and recognize the diversity of participants.

Currently, the WKKF is focused on two-generation approaches and expanding the model to include grandparents, fathers, and other family members. The critical role dads can play as caregivers in the lives of their children is often overlooked. WKKF is funding research measuring the impact of dads' roles in birth, prenatal care, success of breastfeeding, and early childhood development.

Wages have been stagnant for four decades. WKKF is working to create a win-win strategy that connects parents to work that pays living wages by building human capital, changing market behavior, and illustrating for employers the value of paying better wages as a talent development and retention strategy. WKKF believes that employees working 40 hours a week should be able to support their families and not be in poverty. Mr. Harris argued that public sector partners can build human capital through career pathway models, use of workforce intermediaries, and building relationships with employees, but acknowledged there is more to be done on the market side to promote better wages.

Mr. Harris also focused on accountability and the work WKKF had done in civic engagement to foster accountability. Accountability for foundations includes the way progress is tracked and measured, but also how partners are engaged and how accountable they are to each other. While foundations are often focused on their own issues and grants, they are also obligated to the public and a key question is how foundations can ensure that tools and programs are accountable to the public and that the public in return is accountable to the programs. Mr. Harris concluded by encouraging Summit participants to think about opportunities to break down the silos and collectively work together with other sectors.

#### **Dr. Julie Sweetland, Director of Learning, Frameworks Institute**

Dr. Julie Sweetland, from the Frameworks Institute, explained how they are most known for framing the conversation around early childhood investment, the role of toxic stress in child development, and where society bears the cost.

They conduct research in two phases. They start by describing how the public thinks about an issue including implicit assumptions they hold. Then they move into prescriptive testing with a sample of Americans that focuses on shifting the understanding of the average citizen. They believe shifting the public's understanding is an underused lever in creating the policy climate for change.

In their research, they have identified that the public:

- Views human services through the charity model lens, i.e., a helping hand that gives to needy people who deserve help.
- Sees financial assistance as analogous to addictive substances, i.e., "once you get a taste of it, can't get off of it."
- Upholds the American values of individualism, motivation, and drive.
- Understands that there can be circumstances beyond a person's control that force them into situations of need, but struggle to see where society and interventions can help.

The Frameworks Institute is re-telling the story, not around the value of programs, but focused on well-being and the family lifecycle. After testing specific metaphors, they found that what resonated with the public was an analogy around building a house – a house cannot be built by one person, it needs a strong foundation; without a strong foundation, the house will collapse due to outside circumstances such as weather conditions. These circumstances for a family could include a death, illness or job loss and the metaphor shows that the goal of human services is to make each individual a stronger structure in society to stand up to outside forces. Strategic communications are a way to move the field forward with regard to framing human services around improving American well-being. Dr. Sweetland encouraged Summit participants to use strategic communication to frame the issues strategically and to move away from stories of people and towards the idea of building our shared well-being.

### *Question & Answers:*

- **Question (for Dr. Sweetland):** What are some practical tips and how do state representatives start conversations and make the case?
  - Answer: Human services can be combined within a “worthiness” frame by eliminating stereotypes around people who need assistance. Organizations are trying to show that people are not on assistance for life and not lazy or entitled. However, there is a need to start reframing and making an affirmative case: Americans need support for their well-being to build human potential within the “well-being” framework.
  
- **Question (for all):** Fifteen years ago, TANF was more of a hot topic for foundations with a large amount of investment. In recent years, foundations seem to be investing in a broader frame to include poverty measures, tax credits, etc. How do you see TANF fitting into the broader frame?
  - Answer (Mr. Harris): One role that TANF can play in reframing is around the wage conversation. Everyone can benefit from increased wages, including small businesses, in the form of worker retention and growth. TANF agencies can help figure out how to create a platform to ensure families attach to the labor market. TANF can support these goals through integrating services, co-locating, collaborating with WIBs, creating a platform to get families to work, and providing work supports such as childcare and transportation. There is a need to transform the way we think about the role of TANF – as a mechanism to allow those at the bottom to be able to support themselves.
  - Answer (Mr. Laracy): In 1995, 90% of the public had an opinion on welfare reform, now, 90% of the population does not know about welfare, and part of the reason is due to re-framing from welfare to opportunity and mobility. TANF dollars are flexible, which is a powerful tool.

- **Question (for all):** Regarding financial capital, while public capital cannot be utilized in high risk situations like private capital, there is a need for innovation capital as well in the public sector and that is the role of philanthropy. How can TANF leadership approach innovation and risk with philanthropic organizations?
  - Response (Mr. Laracy): Key partners would be smaller, local foundations, who can be more responsive to what is happening in their local area or state. Larger foundations are strategic and can be difficult to penetrate. It is difficult for state government to take the risks that foundations can.
  - Response (Mr. Harris): In addition, contributions from private partners could provide capital, such as private corporate capital to support TANF participants, and regional associations, as a place where coordination and cofounding occur, can help identify state funders.
  
- **Question (for Dr. Sweetland):** Does the frame need to change depending on the audience for human services funding?
  - Answer (Dr. Sweetland): Frameworks Institute recommends a “style shift” for audiences rather than a subject shift, which uses different contextual considerations. A framing strategy is most effective when it harnesses the power of repetition, so the message itself remains the same.
  
- **Question (for all):** What are some communication efforts to help with shifting behavior?
  - Answer (Dr. Sweetland): Focus on public understanding and shifting conceptual understanding of a concept, rather than individual behavior change.
  - Answer (Mr. Laracy): Behavioral economics is a new way of looking at changing behavior in a big way with small interventions. In the next decade, there will be profound results from research on behavioral economics.
  - Answer (Mr. Harris): Doorways to Dreams, MDRC, and Pew are conducting research on behavioral economics, which is informing knowledge about how families make decisions based on stress and scarcity.

## Strategic Implementation Workshops

### Strategic Implementation Workshop 1: Case Management and Coaching Workshop (Part Two: Motivational Interviewing)

Moderator: **LaMonica Shelton**, *Regional Program Manager, Office of Family Assistance-Region IV*

Speaker: **Jodie Sue Kelly**, *President, Cygnet Associates*

During this session, Jodie Sue Kelly providing information on using motivational interviewing to keep “hard-to-serve” recipients motivated and engaged in workforce programs. She began by emphasizing how important it is to allow TANF participants to dream and set goals. Because many TANF participants

are happy with their current situation, it is critical to have them set higher goals. Including those dreams will help keep clients motivated and engaged during their case management. Ms. Kelly continued by discussing the central challenge in workforce programs, which is the difference in expectations between employers and case managers/job seekers. For example, employers and case managers have different views on what makes a client job-ready. An employer may not think a client meets the minimum expectations for job readiness, but a case manager may want to push that employer to hire a client because TANF rules require them to look for work right away. A client may have unrealistic expectations of a potential job, such as being able to take time off at any time.

Ms. Kelly provided questions case managers can ask to determine whether a client is ready to be competitive for jobs. Do they have the necessary job search tools? What job retention skills and attitudes do they need to possess? What occupational or academic skills and qualifications do they need? What life challenges do they need to have plans and strategies to address? It is important to start with the job search questions, then address the challenges. That way the client understands they need to address the challenges in order to go to work or school.

There are four ways for a case manager to assess a client's job readiness: self-assessment, observation, structured interviews, and formal assessments. She described structured interviews in detail and emphasized the importance of using open-ended questions, because yes/no questions can make a client feel interrogated. The presentation slides included open-ended question starters and several draft structured interview questions for different phases of the job search process. For formal assessments, she provided multiple ways of asking a client's permission before giving advice, providing information, or expressing a concern.

## Strategic Implementation Workshop 2: Integrating Career Pathways into a TANF Context

Moderator: **Louisa Jones**, *Principal, ICF International*

Speakers:

- **Gilda Kennedy**, *Project Coordinator, Division of Employment Services, South Carolina Department of Social Services*
- **Dr. Karon Rosa**, *Program Director, Career Pathways Initiative, Arkansas Department of Higher Education*

Gilda Kennedy's presentation focused on Project HOPE, South Carolina's HPOG program. She began her presentation with an overview of career pathways and HPOG, which is a career pathway program that provides a series of connected education and training programs and support services that enable a student to secure a job in a high demand industry or occupation.

After this overview, she describe the objectives and partners of Project HOPE. There are multiple phases to the project. First students go through a selective recruitment process in which they complete assessments, such as WorkKeys and the Tests of Adult Basic Education (TABE). Next, the clients go through Boot Camp, which is a four-week course of intensive academic and hands-on introduction to



allied health careers. During boot camp, students also develop an individualized training plan and have an assessment of support services. After boot camp students take Intro to Healthcare, which introduces them to medical terminology. Then students go through Healthcare Career Prep and Employment Readiness and Placement. Students receive supportive services, such as child care, transportation, and food vouchers throughout the program. Project HOPE had 743 students complete boot camp and 1,598 students complete training as of May 2015.

Karen Rosa discussed the Arkansas Career Pathways Initiative. Only 18% of Arkansas' population has a bachelor's degree, which is important because education and economic development are intrinsically linked. Arkansas also has the highest percentage of adults in the U.S. who have a high school diploma but are not earning a living wage. To increase the educational attainment of Arkansas' population, the Arkansas Career Pathways Initiative was started in 2003, and by 2007, all 22 two-year colleges had career pathway programs.

The program's target populations include parents or caretakers who have children under age 21; current or former recipients of Transitional Employment Assistance; current recipients of food stamps, ARKids, or Medicaid; and those earning 250% of the federal poverty level or less. The target career fields are allied health, education, business administration, and manufacturing. The average age of participants is 31, 90% of participants are female, 65% are Caucasian, and 30% are African American. Enrollment has grown steadily. In 2006 there were 2,223 participants, and in 2012 there were 9,354 participants. According to the students, mentoring support outweighed financial support as the most important service that the program provided. Out of the 29,000 students who have completed a career pathway, 55% found employment, 80% retained employment, and there were 30,000 degrees or certificates earned.

### Strategic Implementation Workshop 3: TANF and WIOA Partnerships

Moderator: **Ed Trumbull**, *Principal, ICF International*

Speakers:

- **Heidi Wicks**, *Statewide Program Manager of TANF Employment and Training Program, Iowa, PROMISE JOBS*
- **Laurie Bouillion Larrea**, *President, Workforce Solutions Greater Dallas*

Heidi Wicks discussed her experience in overseeing employment and training for TANF in Iowa. The Iowa Department of Human Services contracted with Iowa Workforce Development to provide case management services at 15 one-stops throughout the state. Both TANF and WIOA provide services at all offices, which have been co-located since legislation was passed in 2009-10 requiring all TANF, WIOA, and Wagner-Peyser partners to co-locate in one-stops. There are no longer separate workshops for TANF participants, which has been a huge transition for staff.

Currently Iowa is focusing on customer service. They have remodeled the office where customers are greeted and triaged customers to determine which path they would like to take. In addition they have

been focusing on engagement rather than work participation, and emphasizing engagement initially to reduce barriers. Iowa has one of the lowest unemployment rates in the nation, which is a challenge with current participants on the caseloads. Often these clients will need more assistance in areas such as vocational rehabilitation and veterans resources on their path to self-sufficiency.

Laurie Bouillion Larrea talked about her experience at Workforce Solutions Greater Dallas in Texas. She said that employers are their first customer and job seekers are their second customer. The workforce development system in Dallas has a 501(c)(3) board, a \$100 million operating budget, and eight offices. Their work participation rate is currently at 40%. They have also pulled in childcare services and veterans services because there are many military bases nearby. Including multiple partners has been possible because the workforce system has performance measures that accommodate partnerships. Workforce Solutions Greater Dallas works with private contractors and hosts hiring events once a week. They also host a combined “dress for success” and mock interviewing session twice a year for 200 participants.

### *Questions and Answers:*

- **Question (for Ms. Larrea):** Who are your contractors?
  - **Answer:** Lockheed Martin was previously a contractor, but now they are using ResCare who manages their workforce centers. Child Care Group is another contractor; they do parental education and Head Start. There is also a community college that runs a youth program.
- **Question (for Ms. Larrea):** Since WIOA requires making programs accessible at the one-stop, are duties going to be delegated to other staff to make programs available?
  - **Answer:** Technology will be the answer. We already have a system like that in place, so why dismantle it.
- **Question (for Ms. Larrea):** When you speak to technology, what about those in crisis?
  - **Answer:** Workforce has a crisis conversation with those who need it. Staff know which partners to send customers to. Workforce boards can evolve to have specialists available that know LEAP, CDBG, TANF, and other programs.
- **Question (for any):** For co-location, there is a worry that TANF customers will get lost in the workforce centers because they can be intimidating for individuals with disabilities and trauma. How do you work with that?
  - **Answer (from Ms. Wicks):** Contractors helped with customer centered focus. In each of the offices there are shared staff and they all have the resources within and outside of the community to provide to the participants. We also have state and local level connection meetings with TANF and workforce to discuss issues. Staff will conduct in home visits with harder-to-serve clients.
  - **Answer (from Ms. Larrea):** TANF staff could go to the workforce center to meet the manager and spend some time looking at business processes. Everyone who is unemployed is in the same boat, but you can have systems in place for those with different abilities and barriers.
- **Question (for any):** What does the contract look with WIOA and TANF? Do you get paid per person you serve and is it performance based?

- **Answer (from Ms. Larrea):** Dallas uses a cost allocation model. We determine what resources each location needs to serve its clients.
- **Question (for any):** California is using an unified plan and Maryland might use a combined plan. Which option is best?
  - **Answer (from Ms. Larrea):** Unified plans are easier. There is a lot in TANF that is not work and training related, so why include it?
- **Question (for any):** What about serving out of school youth?
  - **Answer (from Ms. Larrea):** We are serving out of school, but they need education. They are having a hard time recruiting and helping youth stay connected, especially youth with disabilities.
- **Question (for any):** Are any states going to do Pay for Success under WIOA?
  - **Answer:** California is co-located in most places. They are looking at RFPs this year and examining youth services and pay for performance in the Central Valley and locations where methamphetamines are popular to catch kids that are at risk. They want to bring in employers like Amazon and Gallo Wines to look at creative ideas.

## Strategic Implementation Workshop 4: Customer-Centered Design and Design Thinking

Speakers:

- **Stephanie Wade**, *Director, Innovation Lab at Office of Personnel Management (OPM)*
- **Arianne Miller**, *Deputy Director, Innovation Lab at OPM*
- **Blair Corcoran de Castillo**, *HHS Detail, Innovation Lab at OPM/Program Specialist, ACF*

Stephanie Wade, Arianne Miller, and Blair Corcoran de Castillo discussed the Innovation Lab at the Office of Personnel Management (OPM), which is one of the first established innovation labs in the federal government. The lab has a mission of equipping government workers with the ability to innovate across government, by helping them think or work together differently and serving as mentors and coaches. More specifically, the lab can help government agencies by:

- **Leading:** fostering the development of a connected federal community or creative innovators, or serving as subject matter experts.
- **Doing:** conducting integrated design projects that result in groundbreaking solutions, or working through an entire methodology from prototyping to implementation.
- **Teaching:** delivering learning opportunities that build effective teams of designers and innovators, building the capacity of the workforce, and teaching through projects.

One key principle of the Innovation Lab is human-centered design, or developing innovative solutions based on people’s needs. In human-centered design, it is a priority to understand the people involved and to empathize with them in order to provide a framework from which to foster innovation. If done well, it can be a key strategic driver of top and bottom line growth. The U.S. Army, The Gates Foundation, GE, and Proctor & Gamble have all successfully used human-centered design. For example, GE had problems with pediatric MRIs. Pediatric patients often had to be sedated and costly retests often occurred. GE designers went to observe the traumatic experiences of customers and talked to the

children in order to build empathy. The result was a completely redesigned testing experience, in which the examination room and MRI machine were repainted to resemble a ship.

Next, the presenters went over examples of human-centered design in government. One project focused on improving the USAJobs Web site by empathizing with people's real experiences using this resource. First, the Innovation Lab had to collect meaningful data through conducting qualitative interviews and behavioral observation to understand the problem's context. Then the Innovation Lab sorts all the data gathered into clusters to generate insight into people's experiences, which will ultimately become the design pillars that serve as the foundation for prototyping. Finally, the team brainstorms how to address users' unmet needs using multiple tools that encourage divergent thinking. Those ideas quickly become prototypes, which are advanced through user testing, rapid iteration, and agile development.

Another example was the USDA School Meal Application. Parents did not understand how to fill out the application, so the Innovation Lab did research to gain insight into how parents were filling out the forms. Low-income parents with lower literacy levels had trouble with the complicated form, and even the size of the boxes on the form was a problem. By identifying questions that could be eliminated, the form went from four pages to one page. In the second phase, the Innovation Lab talked with parents, school staff, and lawyers to streamline what information had to be on the form according to regulations.

The presenters concluded by mentioning a recent publication that details human-centered design innovations in three Office of Family Assistance grant programs, entitled [Creating Solutions Together: Design Thinking, the Office of Family Assistance, and 3 Grantees](#).

### *Questions and Answers:*

- **Question:** We are undergoing a TANF redesign in Rhode Island and we want to create a customer focused TANF service center. We have not gone into the depth described in the presentation. What is your advice for engaging individuals in that type of forum?
  - **Answer:** Bring in an outside group of objective people who can help. How people are approached can lead to more willingness to participate. Understanding what their work looks like and showing an interest in their environment helps. Focus groups will be useful for product testing. Incentives can go a long way, but are not necessary. Reach out to people who are eligible for TANF but are not actually on it to figure out why.
- **Question:** In Guam, we have a high error rate for SNAP and a redesign has not been effective.
  - **Answer:** You need to understand the issue before trying to figure out how to improve the process. It is important to answer the right questions first because perfecting the wrong process will make no difference.
- **Question:** What is the intersection between Lean and human-centered design?
  - **Answer:** Lean can take you to efficiency, but it does not bring in the human element. Lean is not bad, but it is not enough.

## Strategic Implementation Workshop 5: Improving Program Engagement of TANF Families

Moderator: **Michelle Derr**, *Senior Researcher, Mathematica*

Speakers:

- **LaDonna Pavetti**, *Vice President for Family Income Support Policy, Center on Budget and Policy Priorities*
- **Elizabeth Schott**, *Senior Fellow, Center on Budget and Policy Priorities*
- **Ife Floyd**, *Research Associate, Center on Budget and Policy Priorities*

Liz Schott started by emphasizing that it is not just access and engagement in activities that matter but also the 3.5 million people who are eligible for but do not receive TANF. She posed the question, “are we sufficiently providing the opportunity for a better life to those who need it?”

Ife Floyd discussed the state TANF data that the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities (CBPP) has been collecting since 2006. These data are different from the data HHS collects; the CBPP data only includes solely state funded (SSF) cases and excludes cases from working supplement programs where a person employed but received a small cash supplement from TANF. The HHS and CBPP data generally follow the same trends and magnitude shifts. Poverty started to trend up again after 2000, especially for families with children, but TANF has weakened as a social safety net. The ratio of families receiving TANF for every 100 families with children in poverty has steadily decreased since 1996. In the vast majority of states, fewer than 30 out of 100 families in poverty are receiving TANF benefits.

Ms. Schott asked who the families receiving TANF are and what they are doing. Are they getting jobs or just falling off caseloads? There is pressure for states to lower their caseloads, but if there is real appetite to make a difference and provide people with opportunities, programs and policymakers cannot ignore the people who are eligible but not on TANF. She then opened the discussion up to workshop participants, asking who are these families not on TANF, and what do you know about them?

- **Answer:** In Delaware there are more people on SNAP with no income, because TANF rules discourage clients from applying, especially the work participation requirements.
- **Answer:** Massachusetts has not raised its grants in 15 years, so the value of the grant has declined relative to inflation.
- **Answer:** In Colorado, the income guidelines mean that we generally serve up to 28% of the federal poverty level. We eliminated resource and asset tests and did not see a change in our numbers but it freed up time.
- **Answer:** In California, the eligibility threshold is indexed for inflation, but the exit point is compressed because it is not indexed.

Ms. Schott commented that states could change their ratios. In Indiana, the ratio dropped between 2005 and 2013; in Illinois, it rose. Indiana tightened sanctions and created more front-end barriers. Illinois raised applicant thresholds and instilled a culture of “if you need TANF it’s not easy but it’s possible,” so staff got the message that they are supposed to give benefits. Nine states had benefit increases this year, and 12 states have made changes to benefits. Ms. Schott then asked what barriers

states are running into, what they know about the people who are not on benefits, and what they do to learn.

- **Answer:** California has high numbers and a very low SNAP uptake rate. They do not have full family sanctions or time limits on age, which shows that policy choices can make an impact.
- **Answer:** Delaware has a 36-month clock. They are looking into a policy where if a family works and then loses a job, then they can regain months to get a second chance at assistance.
- **Answer:** Colorado is using Medicaid data to move toward greater access, especially for SNAP benefits. They are doing cross training across agencies so staff understand the eligibility requirements of other programs.
- **Answer:** Michigan contacted people nearing their TANF time limits and informed them of other services they could receive, and saw their SNAP rates increase. Many people have opted out of TANF because of the stringent work and accountability requirements, and the addition of drug testing.

Ms. Schott closed by saying that program success is not necessarily success in engagement. For example, Ohio improved its work participation rate after being penalized for a low rate. She presented a chart that shows Ohio's TANF caseload decreasing as its participation rate increased. Counties in Ohio got the message that they could increase their participation rates by making benefits more difficult to access.

Michelle Derr led an exercise where participants wrote 1) factors that contribute to a lack of engagement and 2) concrete interventions that would improve engagement on sticky notes at each table. Some of the findings:

- **Environment:** Politics in rural environments are not always welcoming to families, or there could be family stressors.
- **Program:** The TANF interview is 1-2 hours long and staff does not always process paperwork timely. There are few incentives to engage in work activities, and it is easier to seek a disability exemption.
- **Direct service staff:** Work requirements can be daunting. Ms. Derr is working on research that shows how the brain reacts when a task feels too big. Counties have also diverted more staff to work on the Affordable Care Act, so TANF has become a lower priority.
- **Hard to serve clients:** Caseloads are reduced but we are seeing more mental health issues among clients. Work can be part of the therapy but it cannot be the base issue. Clients may not disclose their lack of trust in the system.
- **Seen as last resort:** Clients are not excited about enrolling because TANF is seen as a last resort. Framing TANF differently might help. The focus should be on encouraging clients to make progress.

Ms. Derr closed by mentioning an OPRE project on advancing welfare that focuses on building a culture of evaluation to learn about what is not working and building more effective programs. Programs can start with smaller issues like increasing staff skills and determining the outcomes they would like to see, and then work on choosing the interventions that will get you there. Focus your efforts and do not go in the direction of the latest idea.

## Strategic Implementation Workshop 6: Promoting Interoperability across Human Services and the ACA

Moderator: **Susan Golonka**, *Office of Family Assistance, Administration for Children and Families*

Speakers:

- **Uma S. Ahluwalia**, *Director, Montgomery County, Maryland Department of Health and Human Services*
- **Jack Rogers**, *North Carolina Division of Social Services*
- **Stan Dorn**, *Senior Fellow, Urban Institute*

Susan Golonka described the advantages of promoting interoperability within and across human services including:

- Better delivery of services to families;
- The ability to apply online to multiple programs;
- Information sharing among case managers working with families across programs; and
- Data sharing between programs.

Stan Dorn's presentation focused on using federal funding to modernize TANF eligibility systems. There is a one-time Affordable Care Act cost allocation exception, meaning that if Medicaid needs an IT investment to meet the data-driven eligibility requirements of ACA then states can pursue those upgrades without having to share the costs between programs such as TANF. This exception includes states that are not expanding Medicaid eligibility. The cost allocation exemption is only available until December 31, 2018, meaning that all money must be spent by then. Human service adaptations are not covered, but states could use this exemption to lower the net cost of building an integrated eligibility system for multiple programs.

Medicaid will be a huge data repository that will have more enrollees than any other program, so TANF agencies may be able to use those data to streamline eligibility processes. Using Medicaid data to enroll TANF clients in benefits would be cost effective and reduce the burden on clients, but there three challenges that stand in the way of that goal:

1. **Legal access to data** – TANF agencies will need data use agreements in order to access Medicaid data.
2. **Different income rules** – Medicaid uses the Modified Adjusted Gross Income (MAGI) based on federal income tax law, which has different definitions for households and income than TANF's rules.
3. **Data quality** – Medicaid data may be old, since it uses 12-month eligibility periods.

To streamline Medicaid enrollment, states use a strategy of targeted enrollment through special Medicaid waivers, or identify TANF categories that are certain to be financially eligible for Medicaid. To streamline Medicaid retention, states could pursue administrative renewal based on reliable evidence of continued eligibility.

Jack Rogers described his experiences with interoperability in North Carolina, which is a state that chose not to expand Medicaid but still wanted to improve customer service. Other drivers for interoperability included increasing service access, improving business practices, information sharing, and the Affordable Care Act. The North Carolina Families Accessing Services through Technology (NC FAST) project was focused on replacing 19 legacy systems by 2017. NC FAST has already completed improvements to Medicaid screening, including web-based online screening, online verification, and online service delivery interface setup. The next projects for NC FAST include eligibility determination for energy assistance programs, child-care screening, and child welfare services.

Uma Ahluwalia presented Montgomery County's experiences with integration, which started in 1995 and will complete its build phase by December 2016, merging four departments under one "No Wrong Door" approach.

### Strategic Implementation Workshop 7: Integrating Mental Health Services for TANF Recipients Through ACA Collaboration

Moderator: **Phyllis Ottley**, *Senior Manager, ICF International*

Speakers:

- **Lori Beyer**, *Trauma Clinician and Lead Trainer, DC Connections*
- **Denise Marzullo**, *President and CEO of Mental Health America*

Phyllis Ottley introduced the session by mentioning that those with mental health conditions are more likely to be poor and unemployed. About one quarter to one third of TANF participants have a mental illness, the most common of which is depression. Many have co-occurring mental illness and substance abuse problems. Having a mental health condition is a major barrier to consistent employment. Addressing this problem will require conducting screenings and assessments, developing supportive services, connecting recipients to SSI benefits, allowing recipients access to state funded programs, and linking recipients to skilled mental health professionals.

Denise Marzullo began her presentation by asking the audience what their thoughts were on mental illness, and asking them to imagine how the rest of the public feels about mental illness. She then provided definitions of mental illness, saying that it refers to disorders that are characterized by disturbances in thinking, mood, behavior, or functioning. Mental illnesses can be caused by physical illnesses, biochemical abnormalities, stress, and other environmental factors.

Attitudes toward mental illness are often negative. Over 70% of the population would not want a person with depression to marry into their family. On TV dramas, 73% of characters with mental illness are portrayed as violent, and 70% of people believe that people with schizophrenia are dangerous. Only 19% of people would be comfortable around someone with a mental illness. The truth is that one in four Americans suffers from a diagnosable mental illness in a year, but only one-fourth of those individuals seek treatment. Mental illness affects people of every race, gender, and economic background, but low-income families and certain minority groups experience higher-than-average-rates of mental illness.



Income is one of the strongest predictors of mental illness. There are also higher rates among poor women who have experienced trauma.

Ms. Marzullo continued by discussing the difficulties of accessing treatment for those adults with a diagnosed mental illness, because only one third of adults with a mental illness receive treatment. Some of the difficulties include the cost of treatment, the stigma associated with mental illness, a lack of culturally sensitive and bilingual services, concern with the quality of mental health treatment, and living in a rural location. Best practices for expanding mental health services to welfare recipients include linking clients to existing providers, expanding the capacity of existing providers, developing mental health programs in welfare offices, utilizing SOAR Benefits Specialists, utilizing Peer Specialists, and Mental Health First Aid Training.

Lori Beyer's presentation focused on building empathy for clients, because the high level of psychosocial stressors they face on a daily basis. She started by talking about how a client's mental health needs will differ based on their diagnosis. Clients with a major mental illness, such as schizophrenia, depression, or bi-polar disorder, will often struggle with trust and working with others when coming into a TANF office for services. Clients with personality disorders, such as borderline, antisocial, OCD, or paranoid personality may have difficulties trusting and interacting with people. Personality disorders are not a billable category in many areas, so people with these disorders do not get the help they need. A holistic assessment, including understanding a person's circumstances, their family's needs, and the community resources can help better serve clients with mental illness.

Ms. Beyer continued by discussing the incidence of child abuse, which can lead to trauma and psychiatric diagnoses as an adult. In 2011, there were over 500,000 substantiated reports of child abuse in the U.S. In at least one study, about 80% of 21 year olds that were abused as children met the criteria for at least one psychological disorder. Trauma informed care is an important tool for serving clients who have experienced childhood or adult trauma. The core values of trauma informed care include:

- **Safety:** ensuring physical and emotional safety;
- **Trustworthiness:** maximizing trustworthiness, making tasks clear, and maintaining appropriate boundaries;
- **Choice:** prioritizing consumer choice and control;
- **Collaboration:** maximizing collaboration and sharing of power with consumers; and
- **Empowerment:** prioritizing consumer empowerment and skill building.

### *Questions and Answers:*

- **Question:** Can you discuss trauma that arises because of the communities where people grow up and live v. child abuse?
  - **Answer:** There was a study called Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs), which looked at whether it makes a difference if you have several ACEs or just one. The study found that there is a huge difference if you experience multiple ACEs, but it did not go far enough because it did not ask questions about growing up in violent communities. More

study is needed in this area so we can expand the idea of trauma to include this. Factors of trauma and abuse have a huge impact on people's ability to be hopeful about their lives.

- **Question:** I am struggling with groups of participants who are found to need assessments and assistance but will not go. How do I connect these people to services?
  - **Answer:** Often people have a lack of trust with state organizations. Bringing in a Peer Specialist to serve as a first responder can help, because they are real people and not providers and that increases trust. Trauma informed care also makes more people come back after their first visit.
- **Question:** What are your thoughts about deinstitutionalization and prisons becoming providers?
  - **Answer:** There is still a need for an institutional level of care, but it is no longer an option. Bringing back that level of care is needed, but there needs to be more oversight, administration, and accountability.

## Strategic Implementation Workshop 8: Post-Employment Coordination with SNAP Employment and Training

Moderator: **Marcie Foster**, *Office of Employment and Training, Food and Nutrition Services, U.S. Department of Agriculture*

Speaker: **Susan O'Callaghan**, *Contract Manager, Seattle Jobs Initiative*

Marcie Foster discussed the benefits of the SNAP Employment & Training (SNAP E&T) program. SNAP E&T has existed for a decade, but it is only for clients who are not receiving TANF assistance. It is useful for clients who are transitioning off TANF as part of a career pathways model. States are currently leaving money on the table because they continually give back unused SNAP E&T monies. There is \$300 million available annually that serves 650,000 individuals, but Ms. Foster anticipates this number will rise as states learn more about SNAP E&T.

States have flexibility in how they design SNAP E&T programs. They can use SNAP E&T for a variety of activities, such as job searching, vocational training, job retention, and education. States also have the option to make enrolling in SNAP E&T mandatory or voluntary, and are required to submit an annual SNAP E&T plan. Ms. Foster suggested that states who want more information about SNAP E&T should contact Food and Nutrition Services regional offices or headquarters.

Susan O'Callaghan discussed Washington's experiences with SNAP E&T, called Basic Food Employment & Training (BFET). They used SNAP E&T funds to serve 55,000 individuals in job searches, basic education, vocational education, and job retention. BFET also provides support services like childcare, transportation, clothing, housing, and tuition and books. The program has expanded quickly since 2005; it started with \$1.4 million and has increased to \$36.6 million. In 2013-14, the participants that received vocational education had the highest wage outcomes, which were up to \$11.44 an hour. A study of 1,156 participants showed a \$3.01 return on every \$1 invested, based on the participants' wage gains.

BFET best practices include:

- Place skills at the center;
- Complement, but don't duplicate existing workforce systems;
- Build on strong existing partnerships;
- Foster a spirit of peer-to-peer support and technical assistance on strategic planning and fiscal expertise;
- Integrate support services;
- Build on existing administrative structures and capacity; and
- Consider all-voluntary programs.

BFET can be aligned with TANF along a career pathway. A client may start on TANF, get a job, then get on SNAP E&T to work toward getting training for a better job. SNAP E&T could also provide indirect support for TANF by providing training opportunities for non-custodial parents who are not TANF eligible, resulting in increased earning power that leads to contributing more money to a custodial parent on TANF.

### *Questions and Answers:*

- **Question:** Does this program have a connection to local workforce boards?
  - **Answer:** No, but Washington received pilot funding from the Farm Bill to test SNAP E&T models, and part of that directive is to engage local workforce boards.
- **Question:** Did you get funding to help integrate with TANF's MIS system?
  - **Answer:** The state directed some funds to support this partnership.
- **Question:** In North Carolina, we have increasing case growth, but caseworkers say they do not have time to talk about SNAP E&T. How do we get staff to see its advantages?
  - **Answer:** Conduct internal outreach to raise awareness of the benefits. USDA is also implementing a Center of Excellence and is working with 10 states to grow SNAP E&T. This center will include peer-to-peer tools, resource mapping, and information on potential target populations.
- **Question:** How do we get SNAP E&T to connect with non-custodial parents?
  - **Answer:** This is part of Washington's pilot program, so we are still developing a solution.
- **Question:** What strategies are you using to move clients along the continuum from TANF to SNAP E&T?
  - **Answer:** Seattle Jobs operates a career pathways program that has 80% BFET participants and 20% TANF participants. We can see when folks get off TANF and move them to BFET. It is important to align TANF workers and make them aware of BFET.
- **Question:** What are the program measures from the Farm Bill?
  - **Answer:** USDA cannot share them yet, but they will be reporting requirements not program measures. Until now, there were no reporting requirements.
- **Question:** What are some sectors where BFET participants have been able to get jobs?
  - **Answer:** Healthcare, auto trade, manufacturing, HVAC, and welding. Culinary programs have also been successful and are increasing in popularity.
- **Question:** What is your childcare funding source?

- **Answer:** We receive state child-care subsidies that were originally available for TANF, but now BFET activities are also eligible for childcare.

## Strategic Implementation Workshop 9: Integrating Trauma-Informed Care into Human Services Programs

Moderator: **Heather Zenone**, *Senior Advisor, Tribal Children, Children's Bureau, Washington, DC*

Speakers:

- **Kathy Szafran**, *President, Crittenton Services of West Virginia*
- **Susan Dreyfus**, *President and CEO, Alliance for Strong Families and Communities*

Susan Dreyfus framed her presentation by asking how to infuse trauma science into our practice and policy, especially as TANF reauthorization is beginning. What will it really take to move families onto pathways out of poverty? The current major trends are:

- **A move from program thinking to social and systems change thinking:** Organizations need to address the whole context in which people live their lives, such as ensuring access to healthcare, transportation, and education.
- **“Wrap” as an orientation:** Tribal services have taken this approach for decades. It is important to recognize natural supports, cultures, and traditions and engage people where they are. It is an orientation, not a methodology. Nashville has had success with teachers walking neighborhoods where their students live to understand the realities of their students' lives.
- **Integrating health and social care:** Medicaid costs drive most spending in this country. You need to have strong influence on Medicaid to provide behavioral health. In Washington, high percentages of people have mental health and substance abuse challenges. TANF leaders could help push for early diagnostic screening of behavioral health issues.
- **Unique networks and partnership:** See your organization as part of a larger system driven by larger outcomes, and measure your success based on how you influence other systems to collaborate with you to create better outcomes.
- **Data analytics:** Rhode Island had a problem with kindergarten truancy. Initially officials blamed the problem on the parents, but after looking at Medicaid data by neighborhood, they found the highest truancy rates matched the highest rates for ER use for asthma. Those asthma problems were related to lead paint and rat droppings, which is a housing instability issue.
- **Advancing sciences:** There is a new emphasis on executive function, meaning the ability to focus and sustain attention, set goals, make plans, delay gratification, and control impulses. Those skills do not form through case management or court orders, but through experiencing the success of those skills over time.

Ms. Dreyfus also described her experiences with the WorkFirst Redesign in Washington State. They moved from participation that counts to engagement that matters. Now their measurements focus on whether kids are doing well, whether parents are doing well socially, and whether parents are doing well economically. Case managers will know if they are successful if participants feel listened to and are

allowed to take the lead in their own plan for success, instead of being told what to do in order to keep benefits.

Kathy Szafran described how Crittenton Services of West Virginia uses trauma-informed care to meet the needs of its clients. Crittenton Services is a national organization that is rooted in the belief that women and children should be together and they deserve the chance to be self-sufficient. They provide a continuum of services from residential to home-based, and they integrate trauma informed care into how they deliver all their services.

Crittenton Services is trauma-informed and trauma-focused. Recently they gave an Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) survey to clients across the country, and found that West Virginia had higher scores than other states. Nationally 8.7% of clients surveyed had experienced five or more ACEs, but in West Virginia 38% had five or more. Experiencing six or more ACEs can reduce average life spans by 20 years. The highest scores come from having an absent parent. There is another ACE research study under way, which will include an ACE survey that better describes the profile of respondents, the programs and systems they are involved in, and their experiences within those systems.

Ms. Szafran continued her presentation by described three evidence-based practices for trauma:

- **SPARCS:** Structured Psychotherapy for Adolescents Responding to Chronic Stress
- **ARC:** Attachment, Self-Regulation and Competency
- **TF-CBT:** Trauma-Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy

Using these practices has increased staff retention. For ARC, staff changed paint colors, dimmed the lights, and made the lobby more friendly and welcoming. Staff also turned off the intercom system and used walkie-talkies instead. The goal is to help families create a healing environment and work on the basic attachment, self-regulation, and competency domains. Crittenton Services also merged ARC and CANS, a universal assessment tool, so that each ARC building block matches an item on the CANS assessment. This helps clinicians integrate assessment information into the treatment process.

Crittenton Services has learned that trauma-informed work is a process of creating a healing environment. West Virginia is an outlier for having a high number of ACEs, and workforce development and training need to be trauma driven. Earlier interventions are better and appropriate assessments need to be tied into treatment. .

### *Questions and Answers:*

- **Question:** Independent Living for Youth is considering bringing in ACE factors for youth transitioning from foster care to TANF so they will not have any interruption of support. Are there any national resources looking at that?
  - **Answer:** Missouri is working with youth with disabilities, looking at bridging between other systems. It is important to take an approach that will support a population that is not prepared for adulthood or careers.

- **Comment:** Until the recession, we did not hear a lot about TANF, but now poor people are the villains and legislatures are passing things to keep people from getting TANF.
  - **Response:** This is true, but as leaders we have responsibility to address this. We need to reframe how we talk about the people we serve. There is a fixation on participation, but motivational interviewing is the work that caseworkers want to do. It is important to onboard and develop staff, and to give them the right resources, framework, and content.
- **Comment:** This is not something you do in isolation. It is about the culture, reducing toxic stress, and giving people the experience of success.
- **Comment:** We need to effect change in the larger context in which people live their lives.

## Does 1+1 = 3? Two-Generation Approaches to Improve Parental Employment and Family Well-Being Outcomes

Moderator: **Nisha Patel**, *Director, Office of Family Assistance, Administration for Children and Families, Washington, DC*

Speakers:

- **Peter Palermino**, *Program Manager, Connecticut Department of Social Services, Hartford, Connecticut*
- **Sisifo Taatiti**, *TANF Program Manager, Department of Workforce Services, Salt Lake City, Utah*

Two-generation approaches provide opportunities for and meet the needs of children and their parents together. TANF agencies are beginning to design and implement these approaches with a focus on increasing parental employment and child and family well-being outcomes. Utah and Connecticut are each at different stages of development with two-generation approaches in TANF. Panelists shared insights and lessons learned from their work on two-generation approaches.

Nisha Patel opened the session by discussing the ABCs of Two-Generation Approaches, which include:

- A **Adult Services & Systems**, such as helping adults find jobs.
- B **Bridging**.
- C **Child Services & Systems**.
- D **Definition:** Two-generation approaches provide opportunities to meet the needs of children and their parents together.
- E **Evidence:** The mean reading and math scores for children in kindergarten for the first time are higher based on the parent's level of education.
- F **Framing**.

Mr. Palermino discussed Connecticut's comprehensive legislation on two-generational policy, which was implemented as a "two for one" strategy intended with both parental employment and child school success.

In Connecticut, 4,100 babies are born each year to a mom who has not completed high school, and 7,750 babies are born to a mother who does not have education past high school. Eighty thousand children under five live in low-income households. Sixty percent have no parent working full-time, year-round. Eighty percent of the parents have no post-high school diploma. Statistics show that a parent's literacy level is the number one indicator of a child's literacy level. Thus, helping parents attain literacy and work skills offers families a pathway to a livable income.

A National Center for Families Learning Study revealed that two-generational learning increases student achievement, expands parent engagement, improves adult reading, and prepares parents to help their children in school. Two-generational policy provides parents with paths to economic-sufficiency. Pathways include literacy, adult education, workforce development, family-supports, quality infant-toddler care, preschool programs, and enriching elementary school experiences. Two-generational work is more than a program; it is a framework. It addresses the learning needs of the child and the workforce needs of the parent at the same time and often in the same location. There is strong interest by philanthropy, both in Connecticut, but also nationally, to foster intergenerational success through coordination of services for children and parents.

Two-generational policy and programs do not require extensive new funding, but require an assessment of how funds are being used, with program and policy alignments that support "family outcomes." Two-generational programming will likely reduce bureaucracy, braid together necessary services, improve a data collection system, advance accountability, and bolster creativity with research and evidence. Mr. Palermino discussed components of two-generational programs and policies:

- The family is valued over standard protocols. The family is the unit. Data is collected on both the child and the parent to see how the whole family is thriving.
- There is a common portal for entry for parent and child. Whether in one location, or the parent or child is referred elsewhere, the strategy is intentional, welcoming and coordinated across generations.
- The focus is on learning, work, and family strength. Components often include family support, access to quality infant and preschool settings, hybrid models of work and education, leading to an employment path with a reasonable wage.
- The operation is based on service effectiveness and resource efficiency for the family. Services are delivered simultaneously and integrated across sectors.
- Dignity and authentic commitment to diversity are common denominators. Peer to peer learning is maximized. Families share resources with other families.
- Fathers and mothers are supported. Whether the father is at home or is the non-custodial father, his input often helps children meaningfully connect to adults, nurtures cognition, offers structure, and supports the family emotionally and financially.

Connecticut's two-generational state policy (Section 404 of Public Act 15-5) created two-generational pilot programs in six Connecticut communities with a focus on academic success and job readiness. These six pilots will serve as a blueprint for a statewide, two-generational model, and include core components of early learning programs, adult education, childcare, housing, job training, transportation, financial literacy, and other support services. The program will use TANF funds, but the state also has partners to help support technical assistance, evaluation, program design, and best practices. Each pilot has created workforce liaisons to help parents work and children thrive. Connecticut has also created an

interagency workgroup that includes an array of skilled participants to achieve the two-generational systems plan, evaluation, and outcomes. Expected outcomes include improvements in literacy, access and use of job training, obtained education certificates or degrees, and employment.

Sisifo Taatiti from the Utah Department of Workforce Services (DWS) discussed Utah's Family Centered Case Management: A Two Generation Approach to Serving Families. The DWS is comprised of Workforce Development (TANF and WIOA), public assistance eligibility (TANF, SNAP, Medicaid, and childcare), unemployment insurance, Office of Child Care, refugee services, and housing and community development. In 2012, Utah began to recover from the nationwide recession as the state saw TANF caseloads and unemployment rates decline. In the same year, the Utah Legislature passed the Intergenerational Poverty Mitigation Act, which requires multiple state agencies to work together through the Intergenerational Welfare Reform Commission. The agencies must gather data around intergenerational poverty families, which is compiled in a yearly report. (To view the reports, see [Intergenerational Poverty Reports](#)).

In 2014, "Next Generation Kids" was created as a two-generation approach where TANF grants were awarded to community programs to provide services to families that help lead to employment. Next Generation Kids focuses on parent, child, and family outcomes.

Additionally, in 2014, Utah introduced the Family Centered Case Management program, which is currently being implemented in phases. The goal of the program is to measurably reduce the incidence of children in Utah who remain in the cycle of poverty and welfare dependency, as they become adults.

Family Centered Case Management is focused on empowerment using a strength-based approach and helping families to build trusting relationships. The approach includes a full family assessment and family plan where staff work with both parents and children simultaneously, using an intensive team approach with coaches and licensed clinical therapists. The team carries small caseloads and provides ongoing case management to include follow-up after the family has exited the program. Staff also collaborate with community partners and other state agencies. The four program focus areas and benchmarks include:

1. **Early Childhood Development:** includes benchmarks of access to health care beginning in infancy, access to quality childcare, preschool participation, and kindergarten readiness.
2. **Education:** includes benchmarks of kindergarten participation, chronic absence rates, third grade language arts proficiency, eighth grade math proficiency, AP (Advanced Placement) participation, ACT scores, graduation rates, and juvenile justice rates.
3. **Family Economic Stability:** includes benchmarks of adult educational attainment, annual employment, wages, and housing.
4. **Health:** includes access to health care (physical, behavioral, and dental health), rates of abuse and neglect, and participation in nutrition programs.

Since the program's inception, Utah has learned that parent participation increases when their children are stable, and children are motivated to do well in school when they see their parents making progress. Utah offered the following lessons learned:

- Know the data; identify the gaps, and know where to find the necessary data.



- Conduct a comprehensive family assessment that addresses the needs of the whole family including children, which creates a natural collaboration between schools, parents, and children.
- Collaborate with partners in the community and school districts. Outcome measures are dependent on the data that is housed within the school system.
- Provide extensive and ongoing training of staff.
- Be patient as working with families and community partners takes time.
- Begin making program changes early.

## **Concluding Discussion**

Speaker: **Nisha Patel**, *Director, Office of Family Assistance, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.*

Ms. Nisha Patel concluded the *Gateway to Opportunity: Improving Parental Employment and Family Outcomes* by asking participants to share their key takeaways. Through a roll call of states and virtual engagement, participants reflected on the three-day convening. Common themes from participants included, focusing on social capital, full family engagement, data, collaboration, design-thinking, and development of Two Generation approaches. In her closing remarks, Ms. Patel encouraged participants to be bold and try new approaches as they move forward in their program development and implementation efforts.