



ADMINISTRATION FOR  
**CHILDREN & FAMILIES**

## OFA Regions V and VII TANF Technical Assistance Meeting

Innovations in TANF: Setting the  
Stage for the Next 20 Years

June 22 – 24, 2016 | Kansas City, MO



# Regions V and VII Office of Family Assistance TANF Technical Assistance Meeting June 22-24, 2016

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## Overview

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Office of Family Assistance (HHS/ACF/OFA) Regions V and VII hosted the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) Technical Assistance Meeting, *Innovations in TANF: Setting the Stage for the Next 20 Years* on June 22-24, 2016, at the Bolling Federal Building in Kansas City, Missouri. The meeting brought together TANF program administrators and other key stakeholders to engage with peers on innovative strategies and collaborations to promote economic and social well-being for individuals, families, and communities. Meeting attendees were provided with opportunities to discuss best practices and latest research, and to plan ways to improve TANF programming for low-income families in their own jurisdictions.

Over the course of the meeting, attendees were exposed to a variety of sessions presented by nine distinguished experts and federal leaders, and were engaged in various focused state dialogues and topical discussions. Seventeen state representatives registered for the meeting.

Specific topical areas discussed during the meeting included:

- TANF in Perspective: Lessons from 20 Years and Looking Ahead;
- Employment and Work Activities;
- Using Two-Generation Approaches to Break the Cycle of Poverty;
- TANF/WIOA Coordination;
- Integrating Lessons from Trauma and Executive Skills Literature and Research into TANF Programming;
- TANF and Transportation;
- Ending Family Homelessness; and
- TANF Opportunities and Challenges.

## Day One

### Welcome and Introductions

Tom Schindler, TANF Regional Program Manager, Region V and Gary Allen, TANF Regional Program Manager, Region VII welcomed participants and highlighted activities and outcomes for the meeting – including an overview of the three days’ sessions, and a request that participants leave the meeting having engaged with their colleagues, with ideas for what they can take home to their own TANF programs.

### TANF in Perspective: Lessons from 20 Years and Looking Ahead

Mark Greenberg (Acting Assistant Secretary, Administration for Children and Families) and Susan Golonka (Acting Director, Administration for Children and Families, Office of Family Assistance) introduced the session through a discussion of how TANF stakeholders can learn from the past 20 years as they look to inform new federal, state, and local efforts to improve outcomes for children and families.

The speakers shared a video entitled “Welfare and the Politics of Poverty.”<sup>1</sup> This video discussed the history of welfare reform in the 1990s, including the passage of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Act (PRWORA) in 1996. The video shared positive trends following the introduction of TANF, including a reduction in

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.nytimes.com/video/us/100000004377970/welfare-and-the-politics-of-poverty.html>

caseloads and an increase in employment. However, celebration of those successes were largely short-lived. While TANF came of age during an economic boom when many jobs were available, that boom did not last, particularly once the Great Recession hit in the late 2000s. Some of the primary issues were that, once given greater flexibility, states allocated TANF funds for other purposes, reduced the amount provided for cash assistance, and imposed stricter time limits on participants. However, the debate over TANF's legacy continues. While one interviewee in the video describes TANF as a "bold experiment that failed," others describe TANF as a good model for other social programs.

After watching the video, participants shared their initial reactions. Jovon Perry (Director, Minnesota Department of Human Services, Economic and Employment Supports Division) noted that TANF stakeholders and policymakers still have not moved people out of poverty, and Ms. Golonka added that this is especially true for children in poverty. Deborah Schlick (Manager of Special Projects, Minnesota Department of Human Services, Economic and Employment Supports Division) added that the video is a reminder of how conversations and language choice can shape perceptions of welfare recipients. Building on that, Laura Zeilinger (Director, District of Columbia Department of Human Services) shared that she was struck by the language and stereotypes reinforced in the video.<sup>2</sup> For example, almost all of the welfare recipients portrayed were single moms, and there was no acknowledgement of the fact that people on welfare often want to work. She noted this is a social justice issue and that it is the job of TANF stakeholders to help people onto the pathway they choose.

Participants discussed how the conversations in 1996 compare with those today. According to Ms. Zeilinger, after 20 years, people have come to realize that there is no simple fix to poverty – it is not enough to simply impose a work requirement and time limit on welfare recipients. Yekaterina (Kate) Probert Fagundes (Employment Services Manager, Family Investment Program/Diversionsary Work Program/Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, Ramsey County Workforce Solutions, Minnesota) highlighted how stereotypes have remained the same over time.<sup>3</sup> Patricia Brady (Director, Ramsey County Workforce Solutions, Minnesota) discussed how language is one of the most powerful tools used to suppress assistance to people and can create an underclass of those in constant poverty, simply by shaping rhetoric.<sup>4</sup> Margaret McMahon (Director, Wisconsin Department of Children and Families, Bureau of Working Families) added that the role of housing must also come into consideration; if people do not have a stable place to live they will not keep jobs. Engaging fathers is another crucial piece of serving families in poverty; helping noncustodial parents become re-engaged is vital to a program's success.

Linda Richardson (Section Chief, Milwaukee Operations, Wisconsin Department of Children and Families, Bureau of Working Families) noted that although currently there is a lot of pressure to investigate potential fraud, it is mainly driven by stereotypes about TANF participants; in reality there is a very low fraud rate in Wisconsin. Ms. Golonka reiterated that the continued emphasis on fraud is an example of how conversations have not changed since 1996. Welfare was framed in a certain light during the first discussions around reform, and service models that are frequently highlighted today, such as two-generation approaches, were not considered. In addition, there is still not a lot of discussion surrounding child outcomes. This shows that although the field has come a long way, there are still many directions in which it can continue to grow and develop.

In Iowa, despite the decreased caseload, it is not clear where people go once they exit the system and whether they are actually finding sustainable income; it is very likely in most cases they are not. Alan Summers (Associate Director, Illinois Department of Human Services, Family and Community Services) discussed the idea of a ladder

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<sup>2</sup> Ms. Zeilinger was present at the TANF Regions I-IV meeting as an Invited Speaker.

<sup>3</sup> Kate Probert Fagundes was present at the TANF Regions I-IV meeting as an Invited Speaker.

<sup>4</sup> Patricia Brady was present at the TANF Regions I-IV meeting as an Invited Speaker.

to self-sufficiency. In this analogy, he is able to get TANF participants to a certain rung, but then the ladder is cut off. In response, Ms. Golonka asked whether the Department of Labor's (DOL's) Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) could be a way to fill in those extra rungs.

Ms. Richardson shared that "work first" approaches are helpful for some people, although others need more individualized guidance. Work first approaches tend to be most effective when there is employer buy-in, which can occur when employers come to meet participants in person. However, if participants are not ready for the employment placements, this can lead to high rates of turnover and dissatisfied employers. Ms. Schlick added that in 1996, during the launch of welfare reform, there was a labor shortage; but when the Minnesota Department of Human Services tried to introduce subsidized employment, the timing was not right. Closer to the time of the Great Recession, employers had no shortage of qualified job seekers; the issue had shifted to a jobs shortage. This shows how unemployment is often largely a result of the private labor market rather than just a participant problem. Ms. Probert Fagundes added that another challenge is employers being more willing to identify jobs for those with visible disabilities than those on public assistance. Here again, the discussion turned back to the rhetoric surrounding TANF and how it shapes perceptions in the job market.

Mr. Greenberg shifted the conversation to how these issues relate to running TANF programs today. ACF leadership has been trying to use regional state TANF director meetings to consult with administrators and give them the opportunity to talk to each other. Before 1996, there were conversations about how to improve the cash welfare system, and today stakeholders are still pinpointing potential strategies and solutions. There has always been a focus on the idea of a work-based system, as well as the question of whether there should be a block grant structure. These issues remain in conversation to this day, and it is important to understand the context leading up to them. Early on in the life of TANF, there was no discussion around what to do if caseloads plummeted and states had extra money not being used for its original purpose of direct cash assistance. Neither did Congress concretely determine how much discretion states should have when deciding the amount of money to give to families. Ms. Golonka added that states thought they could keep their caseloads from rising, and, in fact, they were worried about not having enough funds. However, when caseloads dropped and states found they were running a surplus, they reallocated funds to other services and programs. TANF programs are now finding that once funds are allocated to another program, it is hard to pull them back to cash assistance or other uses. All of these issues create the context that has brought the field to where it stands today.

Ms. Probert Fagundes shared how Ramsey County has been using its Workforce Investment Boards (WIBs) to talk about employment with stakeholders. They have encouraged WIBs to play a more active role in policy change and engaged WIBs through constant communication, encouraging them to take charge of employment issues. Ms. Brady added that Ramsey County created a policy committee as part of this effort. This work has helped Ramsey County grow in their understanding of what they are trying to do for their participants and reframe their language, for example, by not using the word "welfare."

Ms. Golonka broached the idea of two-generation approaches and breaking the cycle of poverty by serving the whole family. For Ms. Probert Fagundes, one question is how to measure the impact of such approaches when programs are not directly serving the child. Ms. Perry added that the issue is beyond TANF and employment only; there are additional barriers to consider. If programs consistently attempt to solve issues the same way, they will consistently face with the same results. Two-generation approaches helps move us in another direction. Kim Stupica-Dobbs (Program Specialist, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Office of Family Assistance, Region VII) shared that a past Health Profession Opportunity Grant (HPOG) roundtable speaker said that the fact that we categorize children as a barrier to their parent's self-

sufficiency, along with other barriers such as transportation or housing, is something the field as a whole needs to address and reframe. A child is not a barrier – he or she is a family member to be served.

Mr. Greenberg asked meeting participants to share notable successes their programs have had. Wisconsin overhauled its service delivery structure in 2013. A study showed an increase in the number of job placements as a result, which the state accomplished with less staff and by allocating more resources towards participants. Ms. Probert Fagundes discussed Ramsey County’s Individual Placement and Support (IPS) job search model, which she is working on scaling up in her community. She has also been studying coaching approaches and having conversations with TANF participants. In Minnesota, the Department of Human Services has convinced the state legislature to be more open to educational reform by framing the discussion around Minnesota’s economy rather than TANF and “welfare.”

Michigan is beginning to concentrate on individuals with limited skill sets that do not have the opportunity to enhance those skill sets. The Michigan Department of Health and Human Services has begun to focus on what it can do to collaborate more effectively with employers to employ individuals and increase job retention. While unemployment and TANF caseloads are dropping in the state, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) enrollment is not.

### **Focused State Dialogue and Topical Discussion: Employment and Work Activities**

This interactive session gave participants an opportunity to discuss employment strategies that have been particularly successful at the state and local level, as well as challenges that states have faced in connecting individuals to work and career pathways. The moderator, Mr. Gary Allen (OFA Region VII), observed that TANF stakeholders have been asking themselves “how to get people into work” for the past 20 years. However, the focus has changed since the time of the passage of PRWORA, from finding jobs to a growing emphasis on career pathways. Programs are increasingly asking how they can help people advance and move ahead on a path toward a sustainable, living wage career.

Mr. Allen raised two questions to frame the session: “What is working best for you in helping people find employment?” and, “What has been your biggest challenge?” Karen Beckerman (Strengthening Family Services Director, Kansas Department for Children and Families, Economic and Employment Services) replied that connecting with employers from the start and having each TANF participant commit to retention at the start of a program has been working well in Kansas. This ensures that the participant is invested in his or her progress from the beginning. Additionally, during their six week job readiness training program, employers are engaged from the start of the participants’ journeys.

Kansas’ biggest challenge has been employment retention, often due to transportation and child care deserts. TANF participants often rely on relatives for child care needs, given a lack of other options. Mr. Tom Schindler (OFA Region V) said that many states have been using their TANF model for child care and asked if that applies to Kansas. In Kansas, there has traditionally been child care funding available to participants; the challenge is more availability and accessibility of child care services. Other participants agreed that this has been a problem for their states as well; and one option that has perhaps not been explored enough is TANF participants becoming child care providers themselves.

Wisconsin’s provisions allow TANF participants to pay a neighbor or other acquaintance for child care. However, programs have increased their emphasis on high quality child care, as determined through a five star rating system, which often TANF participants are not able to access. Ms. Golonka (ACF/OFA) added that there has been discussion around the HHS budget that after passing new child care legislation, all spending on child care would

be subject to the same quality standards. It remains to be seen whether those standards will apply to informal care and whether child care training programs will require health and safety or criminal background checks. Online training programs or something of a similar nature could also be used to meet those standards.

Iowa's child care system is coordinating with the state's TANF program to get TANF participants certified as child care providers to address both the quality and availability of caregivers, a common goal among the states present at the meeting. In Nebraska, informal child care providers need to be certified to receive a TANF subsidy and are subject to a background check. In Kansas, the only exception to child care monitoring is if a relative is the child care provider. Mr. Allen mentioned his concern that if TANF-sponsored child care had fewer regulations, spending on it would increase.

Mr. Schindler asked meeting participants whether all TANF families are eligible for child care in their state. There has not been a waiting list for child care in Wisconsin since 1996 or 1997. Other states are also trying to eliminate their waiting lists.

The participants discussed additional challenges and best practices. Mr. Terrence Beurer (Senior Deputy Director, Michigan Department of Health and Human Services, Field Operations Administration) mentioned that the Michigan system has a lot of fraud, and asked if that was an issue in other states. Technology and making data more readily available has helped immensely with combatting fraud in Wisconsin. Kansas' system precludes fraud and it has not been much of an issue. In Kansas, it has helped that food, cash, and child care assistance are all on the same electronic benefits transfer (EBT) card. Missouri has been reducing program specialists' error rates by making the processing center state-wide, rather than by county. However, they are still dealing with the fallout of passing Senate Bill 24, which legislates a full family sanction approach. The state is faced with helping a large group of people who no longer have TANF benefits, largely due to the fact that in January 2016, Missouri's time limit reduced from 60 months to 45 months. Also, if participants do not attain 30 hours per week of approved work activity within ten weeks, their case is closed. Now, Missouri case workers take a very individualized approach with participants, to allow them to still get 60 months of TANF services. Senate Bill 24 made additional changes, such as allowing people to count community service and child care toward their hours, which Missouri is hoping will incentivize some TANF participants to become certified as child care providers.

States have also faced difficulties determining what qualifies TANF participants for an extension of benefits due to "hardship" when they run up against strict time limits. Although states often have large amounts of data, they struggle with using that data to determine who should get an extension. They do not want to sever benefits if TANF participants are on a realistic path to Supplemental Security Income (SSI), but it is not often clear what constitutes "realistic." Some states, including Iowa, utilize a committee that reviews every individual request for an extension that comes in. Missouri used to have such a committee in the past, but now turns each request over to a technical assistance team in Kansas City, who reviews it and makes a determination. Having only one committee as opposed to two prevents confusion and inconsistency. Other states, such as Wisconsin, had started giving determination authority to contractors, but found that too many extensions were being offered.

Participants discussed the merits of having time limits at all. The District of Columbia is the only jurisdiction without a time limit on TANF support (after 60 months, cash assistance is paid for with local, rather than federal, funds). The District of Columbia City Council recently passed legislation that will impose a time limit, but there is not a concrete time frame for implementation. In 2012, the District's TANF program was completely redesigned, and has seen some promising results. Part of the success the District has had is in looking at each TANF participant individually and providing a more comprehensive, centralized assessment that offers referrals. This high level of detail allows staff to see the best way to proceed with services based on a participant's individual

needs. The District uses the Online Work Readiness Assessment (OWRA), which it adapted as the TANF Comprehensive Assessment (TCA) to align with its other human services departments.

The District of Columbia uses contractors for work engagement and utilizes incentives for participants to maintain employment. After the aforementioned initial assessment, the District assigns participants to specific service providers. Since contractors get paid based on their performance, such as how many participants obtain employment, they are willing to cover the front-end costs associated with placement. Wisconsin also uses performance-based contracting. One hundred percent of a contractor's pay is based on performance metrics, such as participants obtaining and retaining employment and attaining SSI. Prior to making contracting performance-based, Wisconsin had found that they were allocating large amounts of money to contractors without seeing results.

States reflected on the challenges presented by low literacy levels among TANF participants, as well as criminal history, as barriers to obtaining employment. The District of Columbia has an office that identifies employers who are willing to give citizens returning from incarceration employment opportunities. Michigan is attempting to expand employment services for re-entering citizens, but has been facing difficulty due to the stigma associated with having a criminal background.

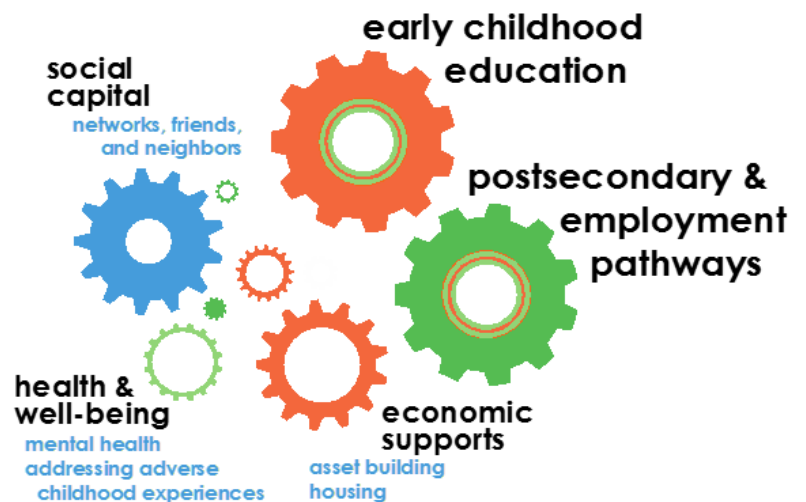
## Day 2

### Using Two-Generation Approaches to Break the Cycle of Poverty

This session provided an overview of the policy components of an intentional two-generation approach and offered tools and resources participants could take home and apply to their TANF programs.

Ms. Susan Golonka (ACF/OFA), moderator for the session, introduced the topic and outlined two-generation approaches as an OFA priority. The core components of two-generation approaches involve efforts to break the cycle of poverty through intentional service provision that combines comprehensive, career-focused employment and training opportunities for parents with educational and enrichment opportunities for their children. Programs should also help parents gain the skills, knowledge, and resources needed to support their child's development, ensure health and well-being, and build social capital to support resilience and upward mobility.

### CORE COMPONENTS



Because of the flexibility in how TANF dollars can be spent, TANF agencies can afford to be more creative in the initiatives they fund, as well as in their partnerships when implementing two-generation approaches. For example, partners could include schools, workforce development programs, community colleges, home visiting programs, and other community based organizations. Ms. Golonka concluded her introduction with a look to the future: ACF is beginning to think more about ways to bring currently funded programs together in a concerted,



two-generation strategy. Further, the President’s Fiscal Year (FY) 2017 Budget proposal includes \$100 million for competitive grants to states and tribes that would support coordinated efforts focused simultaneously on parental employment outcomes and child and family well-being.

Gloria Perez (President and Chief Executive Officer, Jeremiah Program, Minneapolis, Minnesota) provided an overview of how her program mobilizes a broad-based coalition of community members to create a network of support for low-income single mothers who are often isolated without a viable support system, dependent on multiple forms of public assistance, and struggling to find safe and stable housing. The Jeremiah Program’s mission is to “transform families from poverty to prosperity” by providing mothers with support for career-track



college education; a safe, affordable place to live; quality early childhood education for their children; life skills and personal empowerment training; and a supportive community that is the “secret sauce” of the program. Ms. Perez stressed that the empowerment component, a required pre-enrollment experience, is critical to the program’s success because it makes a “huge difference” in the mindset of participants who want to be self-sufficient but just “don’t know how to do that.” As a result the Jeremiah Program serves

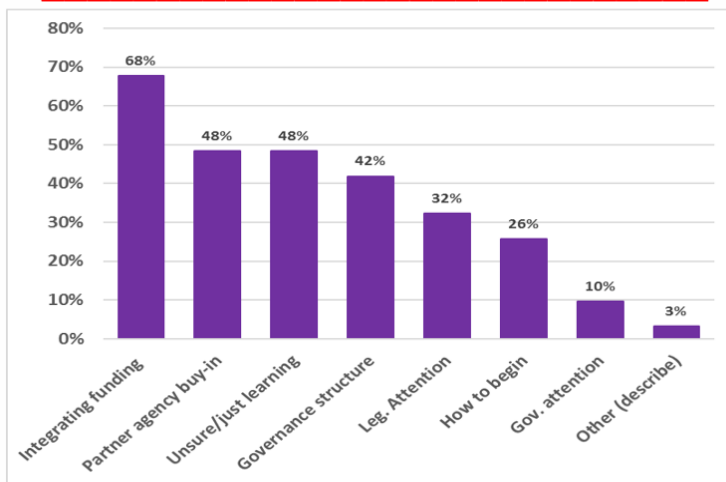
“determined families” (mothers who are motivated to seek assistance for themselves and their children), able to fully participate in their own goal planning. A life skills coach helps families keep on track with their goals, and the provision of fully furnished, campus style housing – where residents pay no more than 30 percent of their income for rent – creates a secure and supportive environment that decreases mothers’ isolation and helps them develop relationships and support networks. While their children receive early childhood education tailored to their needs, the mothers participate in parenting skills training so they can support their children’s education and understand how what they do at home complements what the teachers do at school.

Each participant is enrolled in a two- or four-year higher education program that provides appropriate services for single mothers on campus, offers career counseling, and works closely with Jeremiah staff to ensure that students have an opportunity to improve their income potential. After graduation, job readiness coaching is provided, internship opportunities are available, and the program provides links to employment with local corporations. Recent outcomes data indicate that 82 percent of graduates who moved out in 2015 are now employed and earning an average of \$15.78 an hour; 89 percent of graduates from the past five years can afford safe housing; 87 percent of children in Jeremiah’s Child Development Centers are performing at or above age-appropriate developmental benchmarks; and 76 percent of alumnae children from the past five years are performing at or above grade level. A return on investment study conducted by Wilder Research showed a return to society of up to \$4 for every \$1 invested in Jeremiah families through first generation benefits, such as decreased dependence upon public assistance and increased taxable earnings, as well as through second

generation benefits, including an increase in potential earnings and a reduction in costs associated with crime and special education.<sup>5</sup>

Sharon McGroder, Ph.D. (Program Director, National Governors Association Center for Best Practices, Economic, Human Services and Workforce Division) underlined the importance of understanding the intersecting needs of parents and their children and of offering child- and parent-focused services in a coordinated manner. In their work with states around family economic security and child well-being, the National Governors Association (NGA) sees promise in two-generation approaches because they resonate with constituents and have so far shown a positive return on investment for programs and society. Additionally, federal opportunities often align with adopting a two-generation approach to serving low-income families. Two-generation programs can sometimes be offered by a single organization, but more often through formal partnerships with other community organizations.

### Current, Anticipated Challenges?



NATIONAL GOVERNORS ASSOCIATION

Dr. McGroder reported on NGA’s Two-Generation State Policy Forum that was held March 14-16, 2016 in Salt Lake City, Utah to give participants a clearer picture of where states are with respect to two-generation state policy. The Forum’s objectives were to raise awareness among senior state leaders, highlight current state policy efforts, and help states take initial steps toward developing two-generation state policies. A survey of participants indicated that determining how to provide integrated or blended/braided funding was the largest anticipated challenge of two-generation approach integration (indicated by 68 percent of respondents); obtaining partner agency buy-in was the second largest anticipated challenge.

A number of ideas emerged from the Forum, including connecting WIBs to child care; finding ways to better link TANF and WIOA programs; bringing the family coaching case management model into other spheres; integrating financial empowerment into adult- and child-serving programs; and adopting centralized and presumptive eligibility determination procedures for TANF, SNAP, and Medicaid programs. This last suggestion encourages a “no wrong door” approach that many states use for Medicaid eligibility determination, which also helps support two-generation approaches.

TANF programs can think about two-generation opportunities in three ways: 1) Prioritize people for holistic services; 2) Fund programs and services to better coordinate child- and adult-focused services; and 3) Partner with programs or organizations such as workforce, early child education, child care, Medicaid, behavioral health, substance abuse, and SNAP Employment and Training (E&T). The central idea is to “put the family at the center” and “knit together siloed services.” For example, WIOA, which is designed to help individuals move into work and attain economic security, shares overlapping goals and target populations with TANF so states can design

<sup>5</sup> The full Wilder Research report can be found here: <https://www.wilder.org/Wilder-Research/Publications/Studies/Jeremiah%20Program/Return%20on%20Investment%20in%20the%20Jeremiah%20Program,%20Full%20Report.pdf>.

“combined plans” that include TANF, SNAP E&T, career & technical education, and other program services. Because one-third of work-eligible TANF recipients are parents under age 24 there is also a “natural marriage” opportunity with WIOA, which includes a particular focus on 16-24 year olds who are neither in school nor employed and emphasizes career pathways approaches – such as high quality education, training that meets the needs of individuals and employers, career counseling, and postsecondary options – to help individuals advance in jobs.

Finally, the Child Care and Development Block Grant’s (CCDBG’s) recent reauthorization aims to meet the employment needs of low-income parents and the child development needs of their children, and shares key goals with TANF. These goals include enhancing access to quality, affordable care, which is a major barrier to employment for low-income families, and establishing a national searchable website of child care providers.

### **Questions and Answers:**

A number of questions were raised and the presenters responded as follows:

- **Ms. McMahon:** Wisconsin is in the infancy of our two-generation research and planning. We have WIOA listed as one strategy, but are thinking about moving away from it for various reasons; now it seems like something we might want to take another look at. We are also now looking at helping fathers feel more hopeful about their ability to pay child support. When a parent walks in, what questions should we ask in order to get the full picture? Besides whether or not they have children, because we already know that.
  - **Dr. McGroder:** Connecticut is doing home visiting with fathers, so they would be good to look at for the fatherhood piece. They combine employment with fatherhood, working with the dads to get them jobs, but also teaching parenting skills. This is an example of a two-generation approach, even though the explicit focus is on fatherhood. Connecticut is in OFA’s Systems to Family Stability Policy Academy and is focusing on non-custodial parents.
- **Ms. Zeilinger:** Do you know how many states have shifted to the 12-month certification for child care providers? One of the District of Columbia’s biggest consistent barriers to employment has been child care and we want to get TANF participants certified as providers.
  - **Ms. McGroder:** The Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP) would likely have information on this. Something states have struggled with is that it is an “unfunded mandate” – improvements need to be made, but there is no new money. The District of Columbia will have to look at how they want to accomplish this including reviewing the WIOA plan for potential guidance.
- **Ms. Schlick (Minnesota):** Have other states figured out how to use funding to coordinate health services for individuals with mental health problems?
  - **Ms. Golonka:** This is an important issue that we need to pay more attention to in the future, especially when looking through the two-generation lens.

### **TANF/WIOA Coordination**

The inclusion of TANF as a required WIOA partner can provide TANF participants and other individuals with employment barriers improved access to comprehensive employment services and job-driven training. This session discussed Missouri’s and Ramsey County, Minnesota’s challenges, early success stories, and lessons learned. Christine Quinn (Regional Administrator, United States Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration, Region V) opened the session by emphasizing the value of WIOA opportunities for partnership. Ms. Quinn spoke of the need for partnership with TANF, as both WIOA and TANF are serving the same populations (such as youth), but shared that only three states in Region V submitted a state WIOA plan that included TANF, and two states opted out. She noted that the DOL Employment and Training Administration’s (ETA’s) policies do not necessarily reflect the best practices that drive the innovation conversations around WIOA.

Ms. Quinn encouraged attendees to integrate TANF into WIOA talks at all levels and to reach out to her or their OFA Regional Program Manager to facilitate such talks.

### WIOA in Missouri

JaCinda Rainey (Social Services Manager, Missouri Work Assistance, Missouri Department of Social Services, Family Support Division) briefly outlined Missouri’s WIOA plan. Missouri’s vision changed a few times throughout their development process to ensure they had a targeted program. In addition to Missouri-specific divisions, TANF, SNAP, and the Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) are all part of their submitted plan and have been involved in conversations surrounding WIOA implementation. Missouri created a WIOA Steering Committee which consisted of state agency leaders who guided the combined partners in developing a vision, goals, and activities for Missouri’s local workforce development boards. Sub-committees were also created to address the following topics, though many work together as their duties overlap: (1) administrative; (2) service design, and delivery; (3) employment engagement; (4) technology; (5) data and outcomes; and (6) youth services.

Missouri’s Workforce System has 14 Workforce Development Regions that each provide at least one full One-Stop Center with full employment services. Although the One-Stop Centers are geographically spread out throughout the state, accessing them can be challenging for individuals without transportation. Missouri used consultants (Maher & Maher) to process WIOA and help with efforts to better align workforce programs with each other and with the needs of employers for a skilled workforce. Each Workforce Development Area held sector strategy meetings around local workforce opportunities, and there is a TANF manager in each Workforce Development Area. Ms. Rainey’s team spoke with employers, which dissolved their pre-conceived notions of TANF participants. Employers, from companies as large and well-established as Ford to “mom-and-pop” businesses, shared their needs. One company representative shared, “If I can just get an employee to show up to work, I will hire them.”

Another manufacturing company invited TANF to tour their facility to dispel the stigma around the manufacturing industry.

The Missouri Department of Social Services’ mutual agreement is that once any partner sets an individual on a career pathway, it is every other partner’s responsibility to contribute, as appropriate, to the participant’s success along the way. Consideration needs to be given to what the participant needs to be employed, but also to the longer-term implications of that job for the participant’s career pathway. This is an important tenet of TANF, as retention in job placement is emphasized. An example of this focus is Scholars@Work, which attempts to expand apprenticeship opportunities and work-based programs through Title I and Title IV.

### *Senate Bill 24 and the 2015 Missouri Work Assistance Contract*

The Strengthening Families Act (Senate Bill 24) compelled the state of Missouri to start reorganizing itself to have resource centers, processing centers, and a call center. The state’s TANF time limit was changed from 60 to 45 months, which meant that 3,200 people lost benefits. The sanction policy also changed from a 25 percent sanction to a 50 percent sanction, with a full family sanction if families did not cooperate. Caseloads dropped



dramatically as a result. Lastly, a new spouse's income is now disregarded for the first six months. In order to disseminate all this information, Missouri developed and implemented a standard orientation video that explains program details to families upon their entry into TANF. Missouri works with many contractors to run this program.

Senate Bill 24 made Missouri look carefully at the number of assessments contractors were distributing and found it was confusing and inconsistent for caseworkers. Under the 2015 Missouri Work Assistance (MWA) contract, their contractors had to use one standard assessment. The 2015 MWA contract also permitted Transitional Employment Benefit changes, which allowed \$50 per payment for up to six months after a case was closed. To transition, other MWA contractors were still allowed to use this timeframe. Previously, transportation benefits were \$5 per day; this increased to \$15 per day because the amount was not meeting current needs. Missouri wanted to strengthen and expand both lines of communication and the mindset of contractors around the TANF Work Participation Rate (WPR), so they were involved in calls with TANF, community partners, and other relevant actors.

### *Skill Up MO*

SNAP to Skills is a peer-to-peer effort to help state agencies design and improve employment and training programs for adults participating in SNAP to help them find employment and ultimately move off SNAP. Missouri has been selected as one of ten states to implement this program; it is being piloted in both Kansas City and Springfield. MWA and SNAP E&T are very similar in their requirements as Missouri does not want a family to "jump through hoops" for one program and not the other. The TANF program will also be monitoring and reviewing SNAP E&T. There are a few factors that have contributed to the alignment of services between TANF/MWA, SNAP, and CSBG: (1) new leadership from the Department of Workforce Development is focused on getting everyone to "speak the same language" and open new lines of communication which has helped immensely; (2) interaction with other divisions (e.g. child care), even if they are not a formal partner in the state's WIOA Combined Plan, helps Missouri's Department of Social Services do their job; (3) consultant involvement (Public Consulting Group) helped conduct an assessment of TANF participants who have applied for Social Security Insurance (SSI), with a caseworker assisting with the process, and found that those with assistance have a higher success rate than participants applying for themselves. In addition, there have been multiple technology advancements including an online application feature, a pre-eligibility tool (titled MO PET), and public access workstations (PAWs).

In October 2015, a stakeholder meeting in Jefferson City, Missouri was held to define the new law's implications for staff responsibilities, partnership opportunities, and enhanced service delivery strategies within the Missouri WIOA system to maximize participant success. This meeting led to the creation of an initiative with WIBs that allows participants who want to apply for child care to submit applications through WIBs or email them directly to a TANF office.

### *Implementation Challenges*

Missouri has faced various challenges throughout WIOA implementation. One of the most difficult pieces has been ensuring that the most important people are at the table. Staff changes can also complicate this process. Furthermore, Memoranda of Understanding (MOU) take a significant amount of time to assemble. Approval can be delayed based on who signs them and how long they take to be returned. The Missouri Department of Social Services has received 10 out of the 14 MOUs they require and have faced delays in negotiating each of them.

Finally, although Missouri has seen effective referral activities through their “data hub” model, it is now looking at potentially changing that model. Missouri is also hoping to develop a state sponsored plan for public transportation and to increase the state’s number of One-Stop locations. Finally, Missouri is facing the challenge of filling available jobs with workers that have the required knowledge and skills.

### **Ramsey County TANF/WIOA Collaboration**

Patricia Brady and Kate Probert Fagundes presented the ways in which Ramsey County has been working toward greater TANF/WIOA collaboration. Although the purpose of TANF is well-known, the overlap of TANF and WIOA needs to be discussed more frequently. Maximizing self-sufficiency is what ultimately (and inextricably) connects both programs. Both TANF and WIOA are designed to move participants into work to achieve financial self-sufficiency, as well as family stability. There is also overlap in other primary focus areas, such as providing services to low-income individuals and those who are basic skills deficient, emphasizing opportunity, and looking through a racial equity lens in an attempt to address massive racial discrepancies.

Ms. Brady has been the director of TANF and the Workforce Investment Act (WIA)/WIOA in Ramsey County for 16 years. While Ms. Probert Fagundes has been working more closely in the local/community circles, Ms. Brady has focused statewide on conversations with elected officials. They have found that language is absolutely crucial. Reframing language to intentionally include public assistance recipients as part of a qualified workforce is important when identifying resources and services that overlap. For example, changing rhetoric from “client” or “welfare recipient” to “participant,” “family,” “resident,” or “jobseeker” destigmatizes an individual when speaking with high-level officials, such as the mayor. Individuals are never referred to as “welfare recipients” but instead as qualified jobseekers, especially by WIBs. Throughout this effort, it has been helpful for Ms. Probert Fagundes to serve as a WIB member to represent both TANF and WIOA as “one program.” Hours of prep work and frequent reminders are crucial to ensure individuals are using the appropriate language.

### *Systems to Family Stability National Policy Academy*

Ramsey County is one of eight teams that was selected to participate in the ACF/OFA Systems to Family Stability (SFS) National Policy Academy. The goal of the Academy is to redesign and reenergize TANF programs to ensure that families receive needed services and supports for successful transition to employment and economic stability. Ramsey County’s overall goal within the Academy is as follows: “To create tangible, sustainable, and long-term partnerships and a seamless program for residents and families using career pathways models which are based on the understanding of executive skills and life-long learning concepts, by the integration of TANF and WIOA and continued improvement in communities, education, and corrections.” Four specific goals guide the TANF program in Ramsey County, as seen below, in relation to Ramsey County Workforce Solutions priorities:

<p><b>Ramsey County Goal: Well-Being</b>  Strengthen individual, family and community health, safety and well-being through effective safety-net services, innovative programming, prevention and early intervention, and environmental stewardship.</p> <p><b>Related WFS Strategic Priorities</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Full Family Approach and Family Well-Being Measurement</li> <li>• Integrating Executive Skills Development for Clients and Staff</li> </ul>	<p><b>Ramsey County Goal: Prosperity</b>  Cultivate economic prosperity and invest in neighborhoods with concentrated financial poverty through proactive leadership and inclusive initiatives that engage all communities in decisions about our future.</p> <p><b>Related WFS Strategic Priorities</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduction of Racial Employment Disparities</li> <li>• Program Integration of 4Es – engagement, education, employment and employment retention</li> </ul>
<p><b>Ramsey County Goal: Opportunity</b>  Enhance access to opportunity and mobility for all residents and businesses through connections to education, employment and economic development throughout our region.</p> <p><b>Related WFS Strategic Priorities</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strategic Partnership</li> <li>• Career Pathways</li> <li>• Increase WIOA and TANF/MFIP program collaborations</li> </ul>	<p><b>Ramsey County Goal: Accountability</b>  Model fiscal accountability, transparency and strategic investments through professional operations and financial management.</p> <p><b>Related WFS Strategic Priorities</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Investment in Staff Development</li> <li>• Strive for Continuous Improvement/Evaluation</li> </ul>

To create a seamless handoff between WIOA and TANF, the goal is to have a staff partner look at similarities and disparities across WIOA and TANF to find synergies, economies of scale, successes of each program, etc. In terms of intentional messaging to residents, the language needs to change. The current work is not about getting people jobs; in this economy, it is more important to look at career pathways and economic independence and the path families can take to get there. The goal is *not* necessarily reaching independent wealth, but reaching a point where everyone is off of all and every public assistance system they are currently on. In addition to this, Ramsey County wants to focus on a holistic approach, one that takes into account what the family and/or resident wants to do and not necessarily what the program wants them to do.

In order to achieve its National Policy Academy goal, Ramsey County must take two steps: (1) establish a continuum of services across programs to provide seamless access to resources and expertise for the resident; and (2) establish career pathways in WIB-identified industries of health care, manufacturing, construction, information technology, hospitality, and customer service. Ramsey County is interested in the “learn and earn” model which involves building peoples’ essential skills as a foundation before moving forward. They are also interested in supporting people in industries where some may not believe they can be successful; for example, many bartenders make a lot of money. It might make more sense to have a participant do something they like than to force them into, say, manufacturing or construction. In addition to this, it is worthwhile to consider longer on-ramps. This includes the option of dual enrolling, as career pathways assumes dual enrollment. With a longer on-ramp, a participant can get the help they need over a longer period of time, even if they get a raise, for example. With continuity of service, a participant can move from TANF to WIOA without feeling like they are being “handed off.”

In their roles in Ramsey County, Ms. Probert Fagundes and Ms. Brady have been part of other associations that facilitate conversation between the TANF and workforce sides (i.e. The Minnesota Workforce Council Association, or MWCA). They have provided a public assistance presence at multiple local and state workforce driven committees representing TANF, health and human services, and employment services. Their focus is primarily on

internal WIOA/TANF collaboration, such as a continuum of services and data integration. They also frequently discuss how the “hand-off” between programs should look, how counselors are working together, where each program falls on the continuum of services, and what needs to be done to ensure a participant has a successful exit. The ladder of engagement with employers and how to put jobseekers on the ladder that leads to employment is also very important.

A specific example of how Ramsey County’s TANF and workforce programs are currently working together is the Pipeline to Prosperity program, which takes highly motivated individuals who want to be a part of the program and helps them gain essential skills, education, and work experience. Participants then move into jobs with retention services provided in WIB-targeted sectors with a sustainable wage. This program started with 20 families and now has over 300 families enrolled in high poverty neighborhoods within Ramsey County. It is a career pathways framework that connects TANF and WIOA, and it will soon connect SNAP too. In order to fund this program, Ramsey County shifted, rather than received, funding. Currently they receive about \$250,000 from TANF funding and multiple grant funders.

The approach used in Pipeline to Prosperity is simple. Two counselors (TANF and WIOA) coordinate the pipeline and navigate services. They use existing services enhanced with additional funding and specific investment in education/paid work experience and job retention. Counselors use coaching, mentoring, and motivational interviewing techniques, and listen to participants’ personal choices. Then, through various interventions, counselors help families develop skills and access education and employment within the targeted sector area.

In order to create its marketing materials, Ramsey County worked with a marketing firm to develop visuals and vet them through focus groups. These materials are designed to show an individual’s pathway is often not direct; through this messaging, the program is able to use the materials as a coaching tool. Employer outreach is structured using the vocational rehabilitation model with an individualized and targeted approach. Ramsey County’s Business Services and Placement and Retention Units identify specific employers within the WIB-identified sectors and prepare participants for a specific employer (each participant also has to go through competitive application process). Ms. Probert Fagundes and Ms. Brady believe this is a framework that could be used to provide services to all families in need.

### *The Importance of Data*

Data can drive decisions - which is why Ramsey County has emphasized making data easily obtainable for all parties that need it. Ramsey County would like to use common measures to find data that shows TANF and WIOA coordination can deliver high levels of performance. There was concern that combining the programs would drive down outcomes and performance measures, but this does not have to be the case. Currently, Ramsey County is working with data specialists to make sure they are all reading data the same way and working with evaluators to ensure the system as a whole has successful outcomes. They also wish to highlight that each individual services provider has successful outcomes. Tension between TANF and WIOA will likely exist in a healthy way, and Ms. Brady and Ms. Probert Fagundes hope it will push Ramsey County to do the right things and keep common language and vision at the forefront.

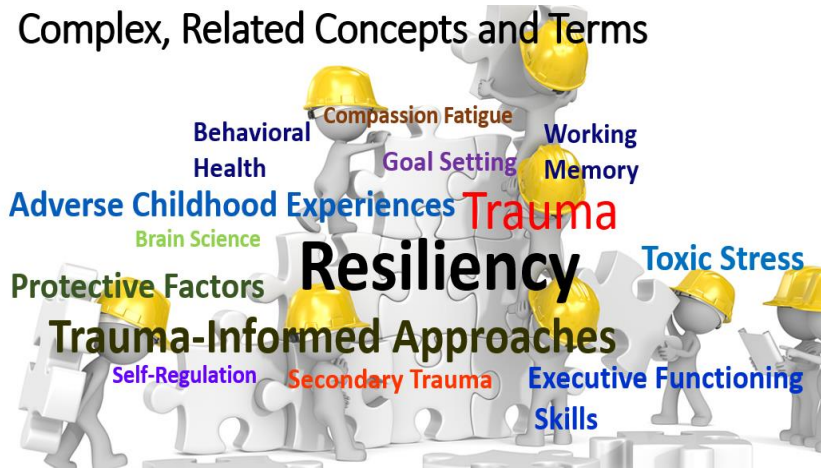
## **Integrating Lessons from Trauma and Executive Skills Literature and Research into TANF Programming**

Session moderator Nora Gilligan (Senior Associate, ICF International) pointed out that this session could not be timelier, given an increasing understanding of how chronic stress and poverty can impact how we think and interact with others. With a high prevalence of trauma among poor children and adults and an increasing number



of families living in extreme poverty, service providers have the opportunity to learn from this growing knowledge, captured by terms such as “trauma, compassion fatigue, adverse childhood experiences, toxic stress, protective factors, and executive skills,” and to assess how it can inform and improve their work with low-income and vulnerable populations. Ms. Gilligan particularly stressed the importance of recognizing the capacity of children and adults to be resilient and bounce back from adverse experiences: “Experiencing significant stress or being exposed to trauma does not create a pre-determined fate, so as we talk about trauma-informed approaches and executive skills training, and take these ideas home to our own practice, I hope that we keep the concept of resiliency front and center.”

## Complex, Related Concepts and Terms



Susan Pinné (Program Director, Trauma Smart, Crittenton Children’s Center, Kansas City, Missouri) shared her program’s focus on bringing trauma-informed care and education about brain science into communities. She engaged the group in an ice-breaker activity (Zip, Zap, Zop!) to raise the energy level in the room and emphasize the importance of engaging the frontal lobe and executive function in work with TANF participants. Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) can lead to physical and mental health disorders later in life, and the impacts of trauma and toxic stress

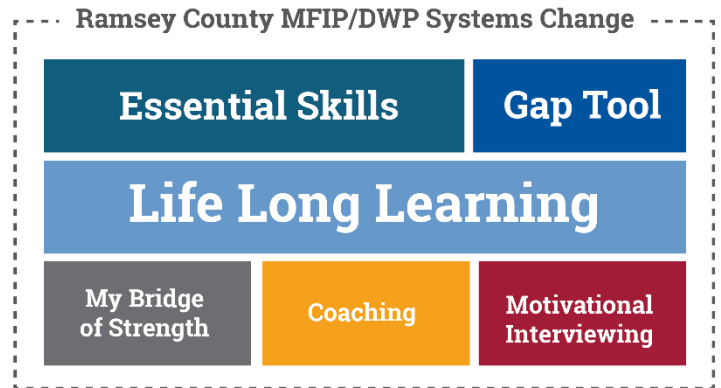
contribute to the challenges and barriers that many TANF participants are facing today. The Trauma Smart program supports children as they cope with toxic stress and provides practical solutions for parents, guardians, and teachers through training, coaching, individual therapy, and connections to additional community resources.

Ms. Pinné stressed the important role played by coaches who work with teachers to design specific interventions for individual children. The program follows the Attachment, Self-Regulation, and Competency (ARC) model, developed by Kinniburgh and Blaustein, to address the impact of toxic stress on attachment, which leads to predictability and safety for children, and on self-regulation, which involves an understanding of how you are feeling and what to do about it. Without attachment and self-regulation, executive function skills and competencies cannot be engaged. As an example, Ms. Pinné told the story of “Wyatt,” a very engaged and intelligent three year old whose father died after being hit by a car while riding his motorcycle, right before Wyatt’s fourth birthday. A change in the home environment, as his mother became emotionally inaccessible, led to a change in Wyatt’s personality. He started acting out aggressively, throwing chairs, kicking teachers, and ripping down artwork. His teachers came to a Trauma Smart training to better understand what was happening with Wyatt. The teachers learned about different tools and techniques they could use to help Wyatt learn to self-regulate and, within four or five months, he started acting more like he had prior to the loss of his father. “He was able to take the trauma and make it a part of his story, rather than having it be the driver of his entire story.”

Program outcome data has shown promising results for other children too. Staff and client feedback has been “exceptionally positive” and has reduced the need for therapy services by 50 percent. In response to a question from the audience about application of the approach to adult groups, Ms. Pinné indicated that the same philosophies apply at any age: “Although we do not focus on adults, what we hear from parents is that they have noticed a change in their own relationship to the world and other people as a result of the training as well.”

Session presenter Ms. Probert Fagundes explained how Ramsey County has redesigned their system to integrate elements of executive functioning in TANF programming. Working with various community and evaluation partners, Ramsey County developed an assessment to better determine and meet the goals of their participants. As a first step, all staff were trained in motivational interviewing and coaching techniques and then small groups of staff began to receive training on enhanced skill coaching.

Ramsey County also “downsized” orientation procedures for participants by reducing the number of intake and assessment forms in order to concentrate on services. The focus has been on creating a family-centered system that shifts power from the system to the family and helps families engage more fully in determining their education and employment goals. The agency completely redesigned their Resource Centers (they “repainted walls, added more toys for children, and installed fun carpets”), began to move from a case management model to a coaching model, and adopted a new



customer service philosophy that begins with “how can we serve you?” The goal is to treat participants as individuals, help them feel important, and motivate them to be engaged in “driving their own path” toward completion of activities and achievement of their goals. The enhanced coaching, which is still in its pilot phase, places an explicit focus on developing executive skills that are necessary to function day-to-day. This involves a mindset shift in how counselors do business, but does not necessarily involve a heavier workload. Ms. Probert Fagundes’ staff have already seen improvement in engagement and employment outcomes, although the TANF WPR has remained the same. The expectation is that the process will be more rewarding for counselors because they will be working with families who are much more engaged.

### Questions and Answers:

A number of questions were raised and the presenters responded as follows:

- **Leslie Cully (TANF Director, Illinois Department of Human Services):** Was the pilot funded by Ramsey County?
  - **Ms. Probert Fagundes:** Yes, the pilot was funded by Ramsey County. We cut funding from programs that were not working and shifted it to this pilot.
- **Mr. Beurer (Michigan):** Where do counselors and coaches come from in Ramsey County? Are staff internal and cross-trained, or does the County hire new folks? And what size caseload do they carry?
  - **Ms. Probert Fagundes:** Staff were already in the County system and we developed a coaching training for them. We were able to identify lead coaches, who were offered extra training, so they could then support and teach new staff as they came into the system. We wanted it to be a self-sustaining model. The caseload size is about 80 individuals per counselor; caseload size for the Diversionary Work Program is about 82.
- **Mr. Summers (Illinois):** How easy did Ramsey County find it to train existing people? How was the training received by existing staff?
  - **Ms. Probert Fagundes:** We did a mindset survey before we launched the training, and the majority indicated that they were ready to receive the training. They were extremely engaged for the most

part, and when we split into groups, we paired people who were more resistant with those who were very enthusiastic.

- **Ms. Schlick (Minnesota):** Ramsey County leadership also sent the message about a new set of expectations from the top down. They really set the stage.
- **Ms. Gilligan:** Both presenters spoke to very different sides of the spectrum, but the idea of systems change was consistent throughout. How does cultural competency play into this?
  - **Ms. Pinné:** Taking a collaborative approach is key to cultural competency. That means asking as many questions as possible and listening as much as we are talking. We need to find out what is most important to people. They have a good idea of what they need. It is just a matter of listening to them sometimes.
  - **Ms. Probert Fagundes:** We developed a very specific cultural competency training that all counselors go through. We have videos for people to watch and discuss, and racial equity plans that are monitored. We also have committees designed to advise us on how to integrate cultural competency into the system. Finally, all leadership staff participate in government training on racial equity.
- **Ms. Zeilinger (District of Columbia):** Ramsey County mentioned an increase in TANF engagement rates. Do you credit this to Ramsey County's new customer service approach, or directly to integration of the new approach?
  - **Ms. Probert Fagundes:** It is a combination of both. We asked counselors to get out into the community and to meet people where they are, to engage participants in the program. Also we were offering incentives for participants to come meet staff in the office to develop a plan. These conversations in local communities, incentives, and figuring out how to lift sanctions faster in order to provide child care were key to reengaging people.
- **Samuel Malson (TANF Program Manager, Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services):** Why do you think Ramsey County's TANF WPR remained stable?
  - **Ms. Probert Fagundes:** There are a lot of people with part-time jobs in the system, which is important, but that does not count toward WPR.
- **Ms. Cully:** Does Trauma Smart work through local school districts themselves? Do the schools provide funding?
  - **Ms. Pinné:** Not yet, but we would love to work directly with schools. If we were to get to that point, it would likely be funded through a combination of school funding, private funding, and other sources.
- **Ms. Gilligan:** Many state participants indicate that you would like to implement programming such as this but have had trouble getting it off the ground. Is it a budget issue? Or not really knowing where to begin?
  - **Illinois** has no budget, and it is also a matter of resources. The state would love to do something like this, but taking the time to coach staff and devoting the resources is difficult.
  - **Michigan** agrees, that it is a combination of budget, staff, and resources. The state went through a reduction of staffing and had a lot of layoffs a few years back. Ideally, it would be great to implement more of these things.
  - The **District of Columbia** wants to know how to tell staff that TANF is going to shift the focus away from WPR but still maintain the expectation that they track and maintain it?
    - **Ms. Probert Fagundes:** It is about defining clear expectations and priorities. Although we still need to track WPR, you will not be hearing from us about those numbers. Rather, you will be hearing about completing employment plans, for example. We also have a very clearly defined sanction policy, when to use it, when not to use it. The chain of command is

still there, but it is a shift in conversation about reports and employment plans. It is a lot of work on the part of supervisors.

- In **Wisconsin**, the governor's wife is very much behind the trauma-informed care cause. However, it really has not trickled down to TANF programs yet. Since it is the First Lady's cause, the Department of Children and Families is hoping to see something about it in the budget.

### **Focused State Dialogue and Topical Discussion: TANF and Transportation**

Melissa McKenna, Assistant Director and Virginia State Coordinator for Vehicles for Change (VFC), served as a Resource Person in this dialogue session focused on transportation options for TANF populations in rural areas. Ms. McKenna talked about the VFC program, started in Baltimore by Martin (Marty) Schwartz in 1999 with a core mission of taking donated cars and awarding them to low-income families in need. In 2005, VFC launched a social enterprise subsidiary used-car dealership called Freedom Wheels, also in the Baltimore area, which operates as a nonprofit and awards all sales proceeds to supporting the mission of VFC. VFC also operates training programs in Detroit, Michigan, and Baltimore that train individuals, many of whom are from the prison re-entry population, to become mechanics.

In order to receive a car under the VFC program, a participant must live in an area that is contracted to do business with VFC. VFC is focused on expanding nationally but currently operates in Virginia, Maryland, and Michigan. Participants must also have dependent children still in the home, be able to afford the day to day costs of car ownership including insurance, gas, and repairs, and have been on TANF at some point in the last 24 months.

The program matches 150 cars a year to participants. Under the VFC model, participants pay \$850 for a car that is valued around \$3,000. They also get \$1,000 worth of work including a new state inspection, a six-month/6,000 mile warranty, and American Automobile Association (AAA) membership for a year, including four free tows. In return, the participant is expected to make low-value car payments. VFC will repossess cars if payments are not made. VFC also offers a limited number of replacement cars for existing participants. The program matches car type with participants' needs and vehicle availability. For example, a participant with many kids would be matched to a van and participants who are able to drive stick shift can gain access to a car faster because there are fewer participants able to take those vehicles. The program is grant funded; in Virginia they have a block grant and in Maryland the funding is made up of several different grants. The program is administered through local social services departments; there is no exchange of funds with these offices, as the relationship is considered an asset for both organizations.

Ms. McKenna highlighted that receiving donated vehicles is both the primary challenge for the program and the key to making to the program work. As an incentive for people to donate cars, when donating to VFC, the donating individual can write-off the Kelly Blue Book value of the car on their taxes. For programs like VFC to work, they have to be located in an area where people have enough money to be able to donate a vehicle.<sup>6</sup> Ms. McKenna also highlighted during the question and answer exchange that there is a lot of additional material on the VFC website that they have collected about the societal benefit of programs like these and how having a vehicle opens up opportunities for individuals beyond just employment.

### **Questions and Answers:**

A number of questions were raised and the presenters responded as follows:

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<sup>6</sup> Further information about the VFC program and requirements can be found at: <https://www.vehiclesforchange.org/>.

- **Mr. Buerer:** Michigan is currently in talks with VFC and has a source of money called Direct Support Services. Along with our workforce colleagues, we are able to provide money for either car repairs (\$850 lifetime) or car purchase (\$2,000). So say we have client Jane Doe – does she first talk to the social service agency and then we are going to send her to VFC? How does it work?
  - **Ms. McKenna:** VFC will match her with a car. The social service agency will help her fill out the application materials and prove that she can make payments, and VFC is the licensed car dealer. The Maryland location has its own shop to repair and service cars to get them ready for award. In Virginia, the work is done by a long-term contracted mechanic. It is key to the program’s success that we do not just provide the cars – we also service them with a miles warranty. It is not a warranty that is available anywhere else. While the customer is responsible for general upkeep and maintenance (e.g., oil changes, air conditioning maintenance), VFC will fix items under warranty especially all safety related items.
- Does VFC have a direct connection to car loan insurance to which they refer participants?<sup>7</sup>
  - **Ms. McKenna:** We do not. We only acquire liability insurance. We get around insurance because of the low price of the car. Our default rate on loans is eight percent, which is low for this population. VFC cosigns the loan and the value of the car is low, so it is not a big risk to the bank and our default is only eight percent.
- Is it hard for participants to get car insurance?
  - **Ms. McKenna:** Usually it is not. People with Driving Under the Influence (DUI) records or similar records are not eligible to receive a car in the first place, so for those approved it is not too hard to obtain insurance most of the time. We reserve the right to deny cars to individuals with a criminal record, but rarely do.
- **Ms. Rainey (Missouri):** Do people ever sell the car to make a profit?
  - **Ms. McKenna:** It is their right to do what they want with the car. We have had people refuse cars as well, even though there is not another party or organization that is going to cosign the loan with you or offer the same warranty. It is a good deal that they are turning down; nonetheless, it does happen sometimes.
- Does VFC service outside of the initial inspection and repair that is done before it leaves with the customer, for example, basic maintenance?
  - **Ms. McKenna:** No, we do not do basic maintenance like fixing radios or air conditioning. Tune-ups and oil changes are the responsibility of the participant as well.
- **Mr. Allen (OFA Region VII):** Do you help with car seats since children are a requirement to receive a car?
  - **Ms. McKenna:** No, although local fire departments often do.
- **Ms. Rainey:** Do you have TANF grant funding?
  - **Ms. McKenna:** We have a TANF grant from the state of Virginia; the state is billed for as many cars as we send out.
  - **Ms. Rainey:** Is the state conducting monitoring other than reports you submit?
  - **Ms. McKenna:** Yes, they go through every file in my computer. Cloud storage has also made things much more transparent.
- **Mr. Summers (Illinois):** I started a program called Cars for Careers early in my career (1998-2000) serving approximately 33 counties. The ability to secure a steady supply of reliable cars is a killer. Our program ran through probably 150 cars in a two-year period of time. In order to access many of those cars, we struck up a relationship with a car dealer who would donate cars they could not sell or that needed repairs. In

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<sup>7</sup> Meeting notes did not capture the name of this state representative.

turn they received over \$150,000 in payment for the cars. Personal responsibility was key – we charged \$100 to apply to the program – which ultimately funneled back to the program and fundamentally to the individual – but it was important for individuals to have a stake in the deal. We only accepted applicants on a referral basis and provided training around basic bank loans.”

- **Ms. McKenna:** We do something similar and participants can always call our program. We are available to discuss car maintenance, if you have problems finding a reliable mechanic post-warranty, etc. As long as you own a vehicle from VFC, you can call our staff (including me) on the phone. The average VFC customer reports making \$7,000 more a year once they get a car, so it is worth the effort to apply for and maintain the car. We have a team of people dedicated to getting donated vehicles – that is the hard job.
- **Mr. Summers:** One thing we never ended up getting off the ground was utilizing the prison system for individuals who were in vocational training to do the car repairs. But at the end of the day, the difficulty of getting cars to give away in a rural area was what sunk the program.
- **Ms. McKenna:** We tried working with the prison system too. But it is difficult loading up the cars and bringing them to the prison where they’re training. They would keep the cars for a month and were only licensed to do certain repairs. How much return on investment this puts back into society is a huge selling point for a program such as this. Having a car opens up so many opportunities for people, and not just in employment. Every aspect of your quality of life improves when you have a car (e.g., schools, grocery stores, medical care, and more).
- **Mr. Summers:** What about utilizing old state fleets of cars?
- **Ms. McKenna:** We have not gotten far with the approach. We offer more money than anyone else, but ultimately have found the cars go to “people who know people.”
- **Mr. Buerer:** Will VFC go statewide in Michigan as you have in Virginia?
  - **Ms. McKenna:** We need to start small before we scale up statewide. We had to start somewhere we could get cars donated and establish the infrastructure and relationships. The expansion across Virginia was almost a fluke; it started with an e-mail meant for workers that was accidentally sent to state-level directors. It was a mistake but then suddenly there was statewide interest and a meeting was convened.

Mr. Gary Allen refocused the dialogue on the TANF population and transportation, more generally asking the audience what states are doing around transportation for TANF participants, recognizing that not every state is able to buy cars for people. Several states acknowledged they were struggling with this issue. Nebraska, for instance, has very rural parts of the state and people may rely on friends for transportation, which is not always reliable. Michigan and Iowa weighed in that there are limited options for people without a car and that relying on public transportation in urban areas requires a huge time investment from individuals and public transportation is not even an available option in rural areas.

Nebraska discussed how they provide up to four weeks of a commercial transportation subsidy. During that four weeks, they engage in intensive conversations about finding an alternative mode of transportation for when the time runs out, but they are not always successful in getting people to follow through on alternate plans. Nebraska will also cover the cost of a driver’s license, provided the license was not previously revoked for cause.

Illinois provided information on a strategy they tried in one rural area of the state where they funded a bus to take 20 employed individuals to a job site in a neighboring state. Illinois also said they sometimes take more creative transportation approaches, such as paying another specific covered need such as an energy bill, so the participant can use those funds for a car payments or repairs.

In Michigan, one county HHS office has partnered with Catholic nuns who have a large fleet of cars to finance low-mileage cars to participants that meet certain criteria, particularly those trying to leave domestic violence situations. Minnesota noted that they used a van system for grocery store access and other transportation needs such as senior transportation, but it was expensive and there was not the same return on investment as a car purchase so they stopped running the program. Minnesota noted that their counties run their own emergency assistance programs and interestingly, one county director, during the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA), tracked which county car repair shops were benefiting from the funding. It served as a good reminder that participants are not the only beneficiaries of this government funding.

Michigan noted that transportation to and from health services is a big issue. In northern Michigan there is no health center, so if a driver is taking someone to the hospital, they only get paid one way.

The session concluded with final questions and answers on transportation strategies for rural populations:

- **Illinois:** How might we be able to “uber-ize” the TANF population? A lot of participants have a car, but they are not working.
  - **Ms. McKenna:** That is an interesting question. In order to drive for Uber you have to have a relatively new car (2010 or newer).
- **Eric Scott (TANF Program Specialist, Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services):** Do other states have participants who are willing to relocate for easier transportation? Nebraska has found this to be highly case specific. For example, if a participant wants to be a nurse, and does not live near a hospital, he or she may be willing to relocate.
  - **Missouri, Michigan, and Illinois:** Agreed that this is case specific in their states; given social networks and the cost of relocating this is not usually an option people consider. This is especially true for single parents with children who may rely on their network of friends and family.

## Day 3

### One Year Closer to Ending Family Homelessness

This session was moderated by Ms. Gilligan (ICF International), and focused on sharing state and local TANF practices and exchanging ideas around allowable and innovative uses of TANF to address housing and supportive services for families experiencing or at-risk of homelessness.

In 2010, the U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH), made up of 19 Federal agencies, published *Opening Doors: Federal Strategic Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness* – its goal to effectively end family homelessness by 2020 and create a unified system within communities to support people when they find themselves without stable housing.<sup>8</sup> USICH defines four types of homelessness: family homelessness, veteran homelessness, youth homelessness, and chronic homelessness. Each of the four types have their own interagency working group, with OFA primarily contributing to the working group on family homelessness. Ms. Gilligan previously led OFA’s engagement in the family homelessness working group. In a 2013 Information Memorandum, OFA discussed the importance of addressing family homelessness with allowable uses of TANF funds for families experiencing and at-risk of experiencing homelessness and highlighted that TANF agencies are

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<sup>8</sup> USICH’s *Opening Doors* report can be found here: <https://www.usich.gov/opening-doors>.

allowed to use four months of non-recurrent, short-term (NRST) benefits for housing purposes (e.g., rent and moving fees).<sup>9</sup> Families do not need to be TANF participants to be eligible for this short-term assistance.

Sharon McDonald (Director for Families and Youth, National Alliance to End Homelessness) and Laura Zeilinger (District of Columbia Department of Human Services) provided an in-depth look at state program efforts addressing family homelessness.

Ms. McDonald highlighted what is known about families who become homeless. Mostly these are single parent families who are disproportionately African American. About 20 percent of parents have a disability. More than half of the children in homeless shelters are under five, with families being more at risk of homelessness the younger their children. These families tend to be very poor and not have deep social networks. Children in these families are very high on the “continuum of risk.” There is an affordable housing crisis in the United States: roughly seven million people in poverty are living in “doubled up” situations crowded into small spaces and 560,000 people are homeless. Shelter capacity is not enough to guarantee that the people in need have a place to stay.

Ms. McDonald introduced the “Dennis Culhane Typology” which focuses on improving family homeless systems. It divides homelessness into three typologies. People exhibiting a “Temporary” service pattern comprise 72 to 80 percent of the family homelessness population. These people come to the shelter temporarily, leave, and do not return. The new recommended response for this group is rapid re-housing when necessary. “Long Stays” comprise about 15 to 20 percent of the population. There is usually a significant amount of criteria to get into transitional housing, so families tend to be relatively steady once there. Historically, long transitional housing stays are where the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) had spent its money on homelessness. For this group, the new recommended response is rapid re-housing with some retention of transitional housing. The third Culhane typology is “Episodic,” characterized by chronic instability and multiple shelter stays. This includes about five to eight percent of the homeless population. The recommended response for this group is intensive housing and service models – including Permanent Supportive Housing.

**Culhane Typology:  
Improving Family Homeless Systems**

Service Pattern	Percent	Historical Response	New Response
Temporary	72-80%	Short shelter/TH stays	Rapid Re-housing when necessary
Long-Stays	15-20%	Long transitional housing stays	Rapid Re-housing/Some retention of TH
Episodic	5 – 8%	Multiple shelter stays	Intensive housing & service models – including PSH

The next framework Ms. McDonald introduced was the USICH Family Crisis System Framework. The central idea behind the framework is that people need better upfront assessments, more targeted prevention and diversion, and more reliance on getting people connected to rapid re-housing. Currently, money is not always allocated to the highest-risk portion of the population. Through strategic targeting we can end homelessness for as many families as possible.

Rapid re-housing is focused on helping people do what they need to do to get out of the shelter system as quickly as possible. The core components of rapid re-housing, as described in Ms. McDonald’s presentation, include the following:

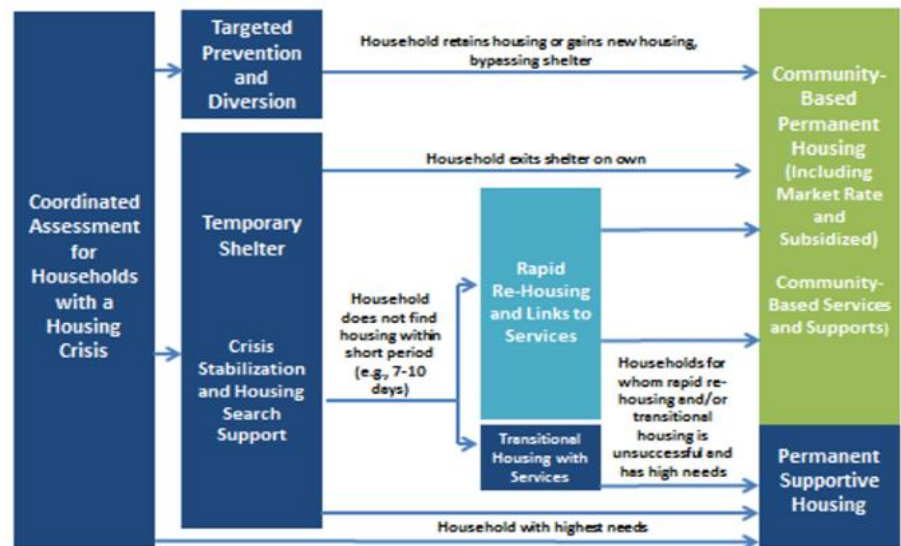
<sup>9</sup> The TANF Information Memorandum on family homelessness can be found here: <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/ofa/resource/tanf-acf-im-2013-01>.



- **Housing identification.**

The goal is to find housing for program participants quickly. Program staff recruit landlords with units in the communities and neighborhoods where program participants want to live and negotiate with landlords to help participants access housing. The recruitment of landlords is essential to program participants having rapid access to permanent housing

## USICH Family Crisis System Framework



from the moment they enter the program. As landlords experience the benefits of a partnership with rapid re-housing programs, they may give preference over time to program participants or be willing to occasionally consider some reduction in rent or an occasional late payment. The program should also be knowledgeable about landlord responsibilities to protect households served by the program. Programs should match households to appropriate housing – housing that they will be able to afford after the financial assistance ends and that is in decent condition and safe, including meeting the particular safety needs of survivors of domestic violence. Effective programs accomplish this by providing a variety of housing options in a variety of neighborhoods and by serving as a resource to households during the housing search, location, and application processes.

- **Rent and financial move-in assistance.** The goal of rent and move-in assistance is to provide short-term help to households so they can pay for housing. Activities under this core component include paying for security deposits, move-in expenses, rent, and utilities.

The intent of the rent and move-in assistance component of rapid re-housing is to enable the quick resolution of the immediate housing crisis. The majority of rapid re-housing participants will be able to maintain housing with short-term rent assistance and programs should start out by assuming households, even those with zero income or other barriers, will succeed with a minimal subsidy and support rather than a long subsidy. Subsidies can be extended if necessary. Households with higher housing barriers or no income may need assistance for different depths or durations, but such households should still be assisted in immediately attaining permanent housing and the large majority will still successfully exit to permanent housing. While programs should be attentive to the ability of a household to maintain housing once the subsidy ends, they should not be entirely constrained by attempts to reach a rent burden of only 30 percent of a participant’s income—a standard that is not achieved by the majority of low-income and poor households. Instead, they should recognize that once housed, rapid re-housing households are better positioned to increase their incomes and address their other needs. Additionally, by not over-serving households with unneeded resources, programs can maximize the impact of available resources to serve the largest number of people possible.

- Rapid re-housing case management and services.** The goals of rapid re-housing case management are to help participants obtain and move into permanent housing, support participants to stabilize in housing, and connect them to community and mainstream services and supports as needed. Rapid re-housing is a short-term crisis intervention and therefore, the intent of rapid re-housing case management is not to build a long-term services relationship, but instead to assist a household in accessing and stabilizing in a housing unit. Case management should focus on navigating barriers to tenancy and helping participants to build a support system.

HUD is now pushing resources toward these rapid re-housing models, which can be a painful transition for long-term transitional housing providers. HUD is pushing money toward these programs because, contrary to popular thought, it is actually less expensive to get families into permanent housing than it is to get in them in an emergency shelter or transitional housing. Rapid re-housing decreases public assistance spending per family by 50 percent because of reduced time spent on public assistance, increased earned monthly income by families, and reduced recidivism. Ms. McDonald illustrated the impacts of increasing the availability of permanent housing on the number of homeless families in Spokane, Washington. In FY 2014, the number of families who were homeless dramatically declined and Spokane were able to serve far more households with temporary housing.

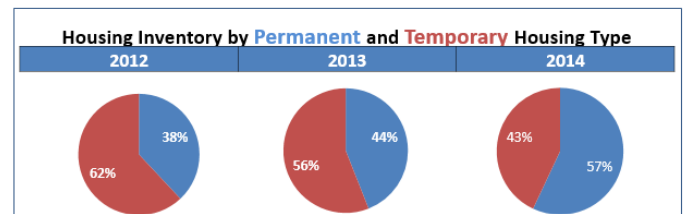
Ms. McDonald suggested that TANF agencies look at their own data on family homelessness to understand the intersection of TANF and homelessness services.

TANF programs should assess housing instability and homelessness risk at intake and periodically thereafter and develop the internal capacity to respond to families with immediate housing crises. This increased capacity for response might include streamlined applications, expediting benefits, improved coordination and referrals with homelessness service providers, and providing additional supports (e.g., child care, employment services, case management, etc.). TANF programs should also re-examine their spending on homelessness and look at their sanction policy because families experiencing housing crises often cannot meet work requirements, and getting sanctioned exacerbates their problems.

At the end of the session, Ms. McDonald highlighted several promising TANF Models, including:

- California’s Housing Support Program and Family Stabilization Plan.** Legislation in California designated money specifically for TANF agencies to use exclusively for rapid re-housing. Agencies often partner with homelessness service providers to run the program, determining who will conduct case management services, the amount of assistance families will need to stabilize, and how to effectively coordinate services. The Family Stabilization Plan in California recognizes that families in crisis do not make good use of their TANF work activities, and provides the option to work with families in crisis instead of imposing work requirements. Agencies develop an individualized service plan to help families overcome their crisis state. Families experiencing homelessness, parents with substance use problems, and families fleeing domestic violence situations are eligible to participate in the family stabilization program.
- Los Angeles.** Los Angeles County stations TANF staff at family homeless programs in order to better coordinate services.

## 2014 Snapshot (Spokane)



**Point In Time Total Households with Children**

2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
275	170	152	146	121

**Total Households Served in Temporary Housing**

2012	2013	2014
631	908	1175

- **Mercer County, New Jersey.** In Mercer County, homeless advocate groups went to the city and convinced them to invest in rapid re-housing. The county found \$7 million was being spent on homeless services, so they re-evaluated funding and stopped funding some transitional housing and started shifting funding to rapid re-housing. They created a rapid re-housing unit within the TANF agency so TANF staff were working to engage families quickly.
- **Idaho.** Idaho provides funding to a homeless service provider to provide rent assistance to allow families to get back into housing. The state also provides short-term non-recurrent money and intensive case management.
- **Utah.** Utah supports funding to a homeless service provider to provide rent assistance to allow families to get back into housing. The state has out-stationed staff who provide employment services to everyone receiving housing assistance.
- **Washington State.** Washington created a 100-day challenge to end unsheltered family homeless for the five counties that had the most families sleeping outdoors. They identified those families and figured out ways to address their needs with existing funds.

Ms. Zeilinger discussed the District of Columbia’s approach to integrating TANF and engaging homeless service providers. She opened her presentation with a picture of what family homelessness looks like in the District – 20 percent of families are fleeing domestic violence, 33 percent have children under the age of four, 43 percent of these families are headed by transition-aged youth and 75 percent are single-parent households, 80 percent previously lived with family or friends, and 95 percent are eligible for or receiving TANF. Trauma and toxic stress is very prevalent among these families. According to intake assessment data, 25 percent of TANF participants in the District are experiencing homelessness or housing instability.

The District of Columbia’s TANF program uses the block grant and local dollars to provide services to families using a Family-Centered Service Delivery approach, which encapsulates a holistic set of family-driven supports including connections to education and training, employment, cash benefits, and other barrier remediation services for each family in the program. Ms. Zeilinger’s presentation also highlighted that the District has created a local TANF work participation code, “Barrier Remediation,” to capture weekly participation hours for activities related to housing stabilization and family wellness activities that are not federally countable in the work participation rate. The District has also created a unified case planning model called DC Cross Connect for families with housing instability. This program engages families that are receiving the most support from social service systems at the front door by:

- Integrating eligibility and assessment into a streamlined unified screening process;
- Providing onsite support from core services: child welfare, schools, behavioral health screening and referrals, TANF, employment services, and domestic violence support,
- Increasing information sharing through systems integration and cross-training; and
- Unifying case planning across systems and providers.

Previously some families had as many as 11 different case managers leading to low-levels of engagement and success; under the unified case planning model, families have one lead case coordinator who navigates across all the different social service systems. Housing is a key part of this unified approach because these are families often face chronic housing instability.

Ms. Zeilinger emphasized how to build an effective response system for families in housing crisis. The plan includes having a single point of intake to assess eligibility for shelters and having TANF workers on-site at the intake centers so they can gain an understanding of a family’s situation and benefit status. Currently, the family

homeless system is overwhelmed and there is a need to grow the system to meet the full demand. An initial instinct is to screen people out who are not in an immediate crisis situation, but the District recently instituted a prevention initiative and has already served 1,200 families in the first six months to make their current situations workable and divert them from entering the shelter system.

Ms. Zeilinger’s staff is also looking at converting transitional housing and making emergency shelters places that have comprehensive services and supports so people can exit shelters quickly. Emergency shelters are the most expensive intervention in the District because families are required to have their own private rooms and they often overflow into motels. The District is interested in making the system work so families can have their permanent housing needs met much more quickly, and rapid re-housing is a large part of that solution.

## Building an Effective Crisis Response System for Families



The District of Columbia has an integrated TANF and homeless services delivery model that consists of primary (TANF) and secondary (homeless services) providers that are selected based on a participant’s individual plan. On the TANF and employment side, providers use a comprehensive assessment, plan creation, employment/workforce services, general barrier remediation, and work participation tracking. It is a very compliance-oriented system and the Department of Human Services has been working on striking a balance to make it more client-centered. On the homeless services side, the culture is more about supporting the family but tends to be a lot of the same services in terms of case management and barrier remediation for families. The two sets of providers interact with the expectation that they will communicate about what each is doing and enter information into the same system. The core idea is that participants will have one plan and, where housing instability exists, there will be communication between providers. This integration of services is working well in some places, but staff are still working out some process issues in others.

Starting in November of 2015, the District of Columbia Department of Human Services established an employment provider that would specifically target families who were receiving TANF and experiencing housing instability or homelessness and place them in a rapid re-housing program. The service provider delivers wrap-around services that help address each family’s housing and employment needs and gives each family unique treatment based on their level of functioning in different competency domains. Based on the family’s needs, and the results of an assessment by their case manager, each family establishes their own plan and their own goals. The District’s Office of Work Opportunity (OWO) provides case management services for families accessing both TANF and rapid re-housing services. This program is still new, but as of May 2016 80 percent of participating families were fully paying their portion of the rent (this reflects a much higher percentage than families in rapid re-housing alone). While the District’s TANF engagement is not particularly high, those who are in rapid re-housing are far more engaged and meeting their work participation hours at higher rates. Ms. Zeilinger believes that getting families into rapid re-housing and allowing them greater stability leads to better engagement with TANF.

Some of the on-going challenges the District of Columbia is working to overcome include:

- Building cross-system knowledge and practices among services in TANF and homeless programs;
- Integrating contracts so performance measures incorporate essential programmatic elements of TANF and homeless services;
- Aligning assessment tools or practices (e.g., currently there are two intake assessments resulting in different case plans) between TANF and homeless services;
- Launching a household benefit interaction asset calculator to create a full financial picture of a family; and
- Amending child care policy to allow 12 month certification and ensure broader access to high quality slots. Currently this is a huge barrier to family stability, because when people are disengaged they lose their access to child care.

Ms. Zeilinger indicated the next phase of the District's plan would include an integrated database so duplication of case contacts in multiple systems becomes unnecessary and conducting a cost and outcomes analysis to capture results of program changes. Ms. Zeilinger's team is also interested in piloting a shallow, flexible, housing subsidy to support transition from rapid re-housing for families with consistent earned income, in an attempt to bridge affordability for rent. Rent is very high in the District – even if people doubled their income, they still cannot afford rent without a subsidy. The subsidy would be a flexible amount per month to bridge the gap for hourly workers who often have varied monthly income. Finally, the District wants to look at a TANF exemption/extension policy for families who have reached 60 months of TANF cash benefits.

The key takeaways Ms. Zeilinger reiterated for the audience were that stable housing plays a huge role in supporting economic stability, employment, and educational attainment, and that state TANF and family homelessness systems are inextricably linked. By offering integrated services, families benefit and program performance improves. Linking service delivery systems to coordinate case planning and providing child care subsidies are critical components to supporting TANF families.

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

A number of questions were raised and the presenters responded as follows:

- **Connie Ehlers (Executive Officer, Iowa Department of Human Services, Division of Adult, Children, and Family Services):** Is the District of Columbia using its own general revenue funds to provide more long-term housing assistance?
  - **Ms. Zeilinger:** In the District, we are blending funds. We use the TANF grant, we use contingency funds, and we use HUD funding. However, TANF is the primary funding source for rapid re-housing.
- **Ms. McDonald:** I would be interested in hearing what, if anything, programs are thinking about doing around TANF and family homelessness.
- **Ms. Stupica-Dobbs (OFA Region VII):** I used to teach in the District of Columbia and the kids I taught moved from school to school frequently. How is that issue dealt with? A couple of my students got in trouble for truancy because no one knew where they were supposed to be.
  - **Ms. Zeilinger:** Every state has requirements for assisting students who are in the homelessness system. They can either receive transportation assistance and stay in their school of origin or switch. We have ongoing communication with school liaisons at all of our shelters. Liaisons can log-in and look at attendance to determine when there is an issue. There are a lot of barriers because we are overflowing into outlying motels that do not have services on site, so our ability to manage it is compromised, but what we are trying to do is get to the place Washington State is in,

where they serve more people with less resources. We have added faster connections to housing on the back end and increased prevention services on the front end and have seen promising results.

- **David Smalley (Deputy Director for Policy, Indiana Family and Social Services Administration):** In Indiana, we tried to partner with Housing and Community Development. Indiana does not have a great system like the District of Columbia and has encountered a lot of questions about utility shutoffs and about how much we can actually help. We end up focusing on those who are not actually in crisis.
  - **Ms. McDonald:** It sounds like Indiana is steering toward prevention rather than rapid re-housing. You are putting a lot of dollars over the heads of those who are actually homeless. Rapid re-housing is a radical shift from what is traditionally done. TANF agencies could be a little more assertive as a funder and say “this is what we are willing to fund” and push for more investment in rapid re-housing.
- **Ms. Gilligan:** If both presenters were to identify a starting point in addressing homelessness and coordinating services, what would it be?
  - **Ms. McDonald:** Get to know the homeless service people in your state and get to know how the system works. That is a big step.
  - **Ms. Zeilinger:** It is really important to look at the data and understand who the families in TANF are who are also receiving homeless services. We spend a lot of money inefficiently by serving people in multiple systems, so figuring out a more coordinated way to provide those services starts with identifying families, asking the right questions, and identifying issues of housing instability. There is an opportunity there to understand the resources that are available to help.

### **Focused State Dialogue and Topical Discussion: TANF Challenges and Opportunities**

This final meeting session was limited to discussion of topics of interest for states to discuss on future regular regional calls. Mr. Schindler and Mr. Allen moderated the discussion and heard feedback from the following states: Minnesota, Indiana, the District of Columbia, Illinois, and Iowa.

Minnesota asked to discuss General Educational Development (GED) certification issues. Minnesota has been working with community colleges to see if they have assessments as many families have discouraging experiences in school and therefore GED/credentials attainment is not a priority for them. Only when the job market cools off are more people interested in education, which makes it circumstance dependent. Minnesota does not have time limits on education as a work activity; students can continue until completion. In response to Minnesota’s concern, Mr. Allen asked what states have heard regarding the weight of a high school diploma versus a GED. Minnesota believes it depends on the labor market; over-credentialing for jobs may change the more the market changes.

Indiana would like to hear more about the disconnect states are seeing between TANF and WIOA.

The District of Columbia has a WIOA Combined Plan but is still trying to figure out how to better develop a connection between TANF and WIOA. As they are doing their re-compete with TANF employers, they are looking at incentives for connections to career pathways programs and looking at what other states are doing. Contracts may be a good way to make what people talk about in principle more what they do in practice. Mr. Allen suggested inviting a DOL representative, or other guest speakers/“resource persons,” to join future regional calls to get more insight on this.

Iowa shared that WIOA coordination has been hard, especially for Work Eligible Individuals ages 16-24. WIOA and TANF have different outcomes and workforce board authorities are at the local level. However, they have put the

TANF requirements on applications for WIOA youth to determine eligibility all at once so activities available to them can pull from the funding of both programs and vice versa; all TANF individuals coming in complete a WIOA assessment. Iowa assigns individuals based on what they need. For example, an activity may not necessarily meet a work requirement, but every activity completed will be accounted for in the TANF system.

No states responded that they have an electronic/online interface between TANF and WIOA.

Illinois shared that TANF and the education system were invited late to the WIOA conversations in their state, so the state's plan lacks consistency.

Iowa says there needs to be a differentiation between the hours of program engagement versus hours that count toward the TANF WPR, because some of the population is just not work-ready. Work requirements using engagement or commitment need to be reconsidered. For example, some individuals need mental health treatment before being ready for work, because that is what is needed for self-sufficiency.

### **Meeting Conclusion**

Mr. Gary Allen concluded the meeting by thanking attendees for their attention, input, and insight. He encouraged states to work in collaboration with OFA's Central Office, Regional Offices, and TANF program peers to build on the relationships and ideas fostered during the meeting.

## **Appendix A**

### **Agenda**



## AGENDA



ADMINISTRATION FOR  
**CHILDREN & FAMILIES**

### OFA Regions V and VII TANF Technical Assistance Meeting

Innovations in TANF: Setting the  
Stage for the Next 20 Years

June 22 – 24, 2016 | Kansas City, MO



## Meeting Objectives

- Allow participants to engage with peers and experts on innovative strategies and collaborations to enhance TANF program performance and outcomes.
- Promote economic and social well-being for individuals, families, and communities.

## Day 1

Wednesday, June 22, 2016

Time	Session Description
11:30 a.m. — 1:00 p.m.	<b>Registration and lunch on your own</b>
1:00 p.m.—1:15 p.m.	<b>Welcome and Introductions</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Thomas Schindler</b>, TANF Regional Program Manager, Administration for Children and Families, Region V</li><li>• <b>Gary Allen</b>, TANF Regional Program Manager, Administration for Children and Families, Region VII</li></ul>
1:15 p.m.—3:15 p.m.	<b>TANF in Perspective: Lessons from 20 Years and Looking Ahead</b> <p><i>The 20th anniversary of TANF gives us an opportunity to look back but also to look forward to what we want TANF programs to look like in the future. Acting Assistant Secretary for Children and Families Mark Greenberg and Office of Family Assistance Acting Director Susan Golonka will reflect upon and lead a discussion on what has been learned in the past twenty years that can help inform new federal, state, and local efforts to improve outcomes for children and families.</i></p> <p><u>Speakers:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Mark Greenberg</b>, Acting Assistant Secretary, Administration for Children and Families</li><li>• <b>Susan Golonka</b>, Acting Director, Administration for Children and Families, Office of Family Assistance</li></ul>
3:15 p.m.—3:30 p.m.	<b>Break</b>

## AGENDA

# Agenda

2016 Regions V and II Technical Assistance Meeting

Time	Session Description
3:30 p.m.—5:00 p.m.	<p><b>Focused State Dialogue and Topical Discussion: Employment and Work Activities</b></p> <p><i>Helping TANF clients find and maintain work – and progress in their field of employment – is a key component of TANF programs at all levels. In this interactive session, we'll facilitate an open dialogue about employment strategies that have been particularly successful at the state and local levels as well as the challenges that states have faced in connecting individuals to work and career pathways.</i></p> <p><u>Moderators:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Thomas Schindler</b>, TANF Regional Program Manager, Administration for Children and Families, Region V</li><li>• <b>Gary Allen</b>, TANF Regional Program Manager, Administration for Children and Families, Region VII</li><li>• <b>Christine Quinn</b>, Regional Administrator, U.S. Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration, Region V</li></ul>
5:00 p.m.	<p><b>Day One Closing</b></p>

## Day 2

Thursday, June 23, 2016

Time	Session Description
9:00 a.m.—10:30 a.m.	<p><b>Using Two-Generation Approaches to Break the Cycle of Poverty</b></p> <p><i>Two-generation approaches to serving low-income families combine comprehensive, career-focused employment and training opportunities for parents with educational and enrichment opportunities for their children. States have suggested a need for more targeted information and technical assistance around integrating two-generation approaches into their TANF programs. This session will provide an overview of the policy components of an intentional two-generation approach and offer tools and resources that may be applicable to TANF programs. Presenters will provide planning, policy, and implementation strategies learned from their own experience with two-generation programs.</i></p> <p><u>Moderator:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Susan Golonka</b>, Acting Director, Administration for Children and Families, Office of Family Assistance</li></ul> <p><u>Speakers:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Gloria Perez</b>, President and CEO, Jeremiah Program, Minneapolis, Minnesota</li><li>• <b>Sharon McGroder</b>, Program Director, Economic, Human Services &amp; Workforce Division, Center for Best Practices, National Governors Association</li></ul>

## AGENDA

# Agenda

## 2016 Regions V and II Technical Assistance Meeting

### Time Session Description

10:30 a.m.—10:45 a.m.

#### Break

10:45 a.m.—12:15 p.m.

#### TANF/WIOA Coordination

*The inclusion of TANF as a required partner at the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) One-Stops can provide TANF recipients and other individuals with employment barriers improved access to comprehensive employment services and job-driven training. WIOA state plans have been submitted, including some combined plans that include TANF as a partner. The goal of this session is to hear more about what's happening in states – challenges, early success stories, and lessons learned.*

##### Moderators:

- **Gary Allen**, TANF Regional Program Manager, Administration for Children and Families, Region VII
- **Christine Quinn**, Regional Administrator, U.S. Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration, Region V

##### Speakers:

- **JaCinda L. Rainey**, Missouri Work Assistance Manager, Family Support Division, Missouri Department of Social Services
- **Yekaterina (Kate) Probert Fagundes**, Minnesota Family Investment Program/Diversionary Work Program/Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (MFIP/DWP/SNAP) Manager, Ramsey County Workforce Solutions, Minnesota
- **Patricia Brady**, Director of Workforce Development, Ramsey County Workforce Solutions, Minnesota

12:15 p.m.—1:30 p.m.

#### *Lunch on your own*

1:30 p.m.—3:00 p.m.

#### Integrating Lessons from Trauma and Executive Skills Literature and Research into TANF Programming

*With the emergence of a growing body of evidence that links brain development to early childhood experiences, as well as research that suggests a strong link between stress, behavioral health and poverty, human service systems across the spectrum are seeking new ways to translate this knowledge into real-world practices. In this session, presenters will discuss efforts to use this research to inform their practice and set realistic and achievable goals for their customers to improve self-sufficiency outcomes. Speakers will discuss the literature around trauma-informed approaches and executive skills, and discuss how these concepts can be integrated into TANF case management and service delivery.*

##### Moderator:

- **Jessica R. Kendall**, Senior Technical Specialist, ICF International

##### Speakers:

- **Susan Pinné**, Program Director, Trauma Smart, Crittenton Children's Center, Kansas City, Missouri
- **Yekaterina (Kate) Probert Fagundes**, MFIP/DWP/SNAP Manager, Ramsey County Workforce Solutions, Minnesota

## AGENDA

# Agenda

2016 Regions V and VII Technical Assistance Meeting

Time	Session Description
3:00 p.m.—3:15 p.m.	<b>Break</b>
3:15 p.m.—4:45 p.m.	<b>Focused State Dialogue and Topical Discussion: TANF and Transportation</b> <i>Any discussion about employment needs for our TANF client populations includes issues around transportation and child care. Our moderator for this session will serve as a resource person as well as a facilitator to create a dialogue around strategies to address the transportation needs of TANF families, especially in rural areas. Moderator Melissa McKenna will also share her own programmatic experience providing vehicles for low-income families.</i> <u>Moderator and Speaker:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Melissa McKenna</b>, Vehicles for Change</li></ul>
4:45 p.m.	<b>Day Two Closing</b>

## Day 3

Friday, June 24, 2016

Time	Session Description
9:00 a.m.—10:30 a.m.	<b>One Year Closer to Ending Family Homelessness</b> <i>State and local TANF agencies have been gaining momentum in both conversation and practice around housing stability and family homelessness. In 2016, we are one year closer to the goal set out by the U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH) to effectively end family homelessness by the year 2020. Also this year, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Secretary Sylvia Mathews Burwell sits as chair of USICH's Council. This session will continue the conversation around allowable and innovative uses of TANF to address housing and supportive services for families experiencing or at-risk of homelessness, with a focus on the state successes and challenges in addressing family homelessness and the benefit of state TANF agencies working directly with their state and local Continuums of Care.</i> <u>Moderator:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Nora Gilligan</b>, Senior Associate, ICF International</li></ul> <u>Speakers:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Sharon McDonald</b>, Director for Families and Youth, National Alliance to End Homelessness</li><li>• <b>Laura Green Zeilinger</b>, Director, Department of Human Services, Washington, District of Columbia</li></ul>

## AGENDA

# Agenda

2016 Regions V and VII Technical Assistance Meeting

### Time

### Session Description

10:45 a.m.—12:00 p.m.

#### **Focused State Dialogue and Topical Discussion: TANF Challenges and Opportunities**

*In our final session, we want to hear from you about the direction you'd like to see the TANF program go in, both at the state and federal levels. What have you heard about this week that you might want to try in your state? What challenges do you face in making your TANF program what you hope it could be? What do you need from your federal partners? What do we all need to improve the lives of children and families as we move into the next 20 years of TANF?*

Moderators:

- **Tom Schindler**, TANF Regional Program Manager, Administration for Children and Families, Region V
- **Gary Allen**, TANF Regional Program Manager, Administration for Children and Families, Region VII

12:00 p.m.

#### **Day Three Closing and Meeting Adjournment**

**Appendix B**

**Participant List**

## PARTICIPANT LIST



ADMINISTRATION FOR  
**CHILDREN & FAMILIES**

### OFA Regions V and VII TANF Technical Assistance Meeting

Innovations in TANF: Setting the  
Stage for the Next 20 Years



June 22 – 24, 2016 | Kansas City, MO

## Participants

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