



ACF-OFA Tri-Regional TANF – Child Care Forum

Regions IV • VI • VIII

The Power of Partnership

September 23-25, 2008

Doubletree Hotel Dallas • Campbell Centre • 8250 North Central Expressway • Dallas, TX 75206



Final Workshop Report

In keeping with the goal of *engaging all families and improving employment and self-sufficiency outcomes* as well as the goal of *increasing collaboration between the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) and Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF)*, the Administration for Children and Families (ACF), Office of Family Assistance (OFA), Regions IV, VI and VIII, held a Tri-Regional Technical Assistance Forum, September 23-25, 2008, in Dallas. The theme of the 3-day Forum was appropriately titled, “The Power of Partnership.”

The forum, in plenary sessions, addressed the interface issues of both programs. Separately, State TANF Directors and members of their staffs learned about strategies and new resources to help refine implementation of the provisions of the Deficit Reduction Act of 2005. As TANF staff met in program breakouts, their CCDF counterparts were engaged in a host of subsidy and quality issues, including market rate survey, access to care by various age groups in different settings, and supporting the emotional well-being of families and children.

The following information includes highlights of the TANF-specific and TANF and CCDF interface sessions of the Forum. Also attached to this report are many of the speakers’ PowerPoint presentations.

Keynote Address: The Power of Partnership

Joseph Juarez, Regional Administrator for Employment and Training, Department of Labor, Region IV, provided the keynote address on “The Power of Partnership”. Mr. Juarez noted that partnerships are critical for providing the full range of services and supporting the neediest populations to successfully navigate education, training and career pathways that lead to improved, sustainable employment and self-sufficiency.

Mr. Juarez recalled some of the historical partnerships between the Department of Labor and the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS). Specifically, he mentioned the Work Incentive Demonstration program in the 1980s and the Welfare-to-Work program in the 1990s, both of which targeted parents who needed to end their dependency on public assistance. These earlier programs were incorporated into the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) of 1998, which requires the coordination of services through a one-stop delivery system. Today, the two agencies continue to carry out initiatives designed to help States and local areas work with needy

populations. Mr. Juarez cited the recently established workgroup and the Collaboration Institute, which promote meaningful collaboration among TANF, Child Support and WIA.

Mr. Juarez acknowledged that many State TANF agencies already collaborate with their State and local workforce partners:

- Georgia has a partnership for a more Intensive Service Strategy;
- South Dakota's Department of Labor administers both WIA and TANF programs in their one-stop offices.
- Florida delivers workforce, welfare and employment services within its 24 Regional Workforce Boards via the local One-Stop Career Centers; and
- North Dakota's Parental Responsibility Initiative for the Development of Employment (PRIDE) project is a collaboration involving Child Support, TANF, Job Services and the courts in the Dickinson and Grand Forks area.

Mr. Juarez also cited Department of Labor's (DOL) and HHS' recent partnership with the Louisiana Department of Social Services, where the two agencies worked side-by-side to implement a case management pilot project to address the needs of individuals who were impacted by Hurricanes Gustav and Ike.

Also discussed during the presentation was work being done within the context of the Faith-Based and Community Organization Initiative, One-Stop Career Centers, Regional Economic Development, the Disability Program Navigator Initiative (a topic that was addressed later in the forum) and Child Care and Youth Initiatives. To effectively prepare youth in the 21st Century economy, the Department of Labor developed a new strategic vision of increased collaboration among Federal Agencies and better coordination among Federal programs that serve the neediest youth identified as dropouts, foster youth, juvenile offenders, children of incarcerated parents, migrant youth and youth with disabilities. Partnerships among the U.S. Departments of Education, Health and Human Services, Housing and Urban Development, Justice, and Labor; the U.S. Social Security Administration; and the Corporation for National and Community Service have created a collaborative approach to prepare youth for success in a global, demand-driven economy.

Follow the Leader: Understanding the Concepts of Collaborative Leadership

Eva Carter, NCCIC Technical Assistance Coordinator, began the session by introducing the Partnerships, Alliances and Coordination Techniques (PACT) modules. The modules are part of an initiative of the National Child Care Information and Technical Assistance Center (NCCIC), a service of the Child Care Bureau. Six modules cover topics such as financing, management, creating sustainability and fundamentals of collaborative leadership. All of the training modules are available on the NCCIC Web site www.nccic.org/pact/index.htm at no cost. Each module contains activities, case examples and templates. The concepts and materials in the modules are generic enough that they can be used by CCDF and TANF administrators alike.

Desiree Reddick-Head, NCCIC Technical Assistance Specialist, introduced the module dealing with collaborative leadership to the meeting participants. This particular module includes the key concepts of communication, modes of communication and six principles of collaborative leadership. A small group activity about building trust was then completed. In closing, the presenters encouraged participants to make the most of the opportunity, during the meeting, to meet new people, build trust and create networks. They were also invited to visit the NCCIC Web site to review and use the PACT modules. Each participant was also given a homework assignment to identify their biggest challenges in bringing TANF and CCDF together and to identify the most important opportunity or biggest impact in doing so. Their responses were used during the closing session of the meeting.

Maternal Depression: Impact on Children's Well-Being, Parenting Skills and Work

Maternal depression is a public health issue that affects both the TANF and CCDF programs. Depression has a negative impact on all aspects of an individual's life, including work and family. Janice Cooper, Ph.D., is the Director for Child Health and Mental Health, at the National Center for Children in Poverty (NCCP), at Columbia University. She discussed how maternal depression affects parenting and child outcomes. The panel members discussed strategies for working with low-income women who suffer from depression and strategies for working with families of children who present challenging behaviors in child care. Panel members included Peggy Butcher, Program Administrator, Oklahoma Department of Human Services (DHS); Barbara Wall, Director, Child Care Services, Tennessee Department of Human Services; and Rob Corso from the Center on the Social Emotional Foundations for Early Learning (CSEFEL).

Dr. Janice Cooper set the demographic context of depression, explaining that 43 percent of children under age 6 live in low-income families. Twenty percent of children under age 6 live in families that are below the Federal poverty level. The younger the children are, the more likely they are to be poor. Race has an impact on depression: while whites are more likely to have major depression, African-Americans and Latinos are more likely to have a less severe form of the disease called dysthymic disorder, which is exacerbated by lower levels of education, poverty and immigration. Demographic risks for young children can be aggravated by poor quality child care. Dr. Cooper explained how maternal depression can affect employability, parent-child relationships and the ability to manage and monitor the family. She cited studies showing that TANF clients with depression were significantly less likely to be employed and likely to earn less. Impacts on children include poor birth outcomes (e.g., low birth weight), impaired parenting, and poor cognitive, language and behavioral outcomes. Because depression is treatable, the challenge for agencies is to help low-income women get treatment and to provide help with parent-child relationships. Dr. Cooper discussed examples of several States that have enhanced their capacity for screening and treatment, while addressing the stigma of mental illness. Rhode Island's Work Toward Wellness program is a telephone care management strategy that has helped low-income mothers reduce their depressive symptoms.

Peggy Butcher, Program Administrator, discussed Oklahoma's assessment and screening tools that measure work readiness and identify possible barriers, including substance abuse, addiction and depression. TANF clients who need substance abuse or mental health services are referred to appropriate providers. Oklahoma DHS has a written agreement with the Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services, which provides for screening, assessment and treatment, within 10 days of the request, for substance abuse, substance dependence, and any co-occurring mental health diagnosis. The \$3.1 million contract provided services for 5,725 adults in State fiscal year 2008. Other treatment options are available, including Community Health Centers, Residential Care and Comprehensive Home-Based Services.

Barbara Wall, Child Care Services Director, described Tennessee's Strengthening Families Partnership and its interface with the Center on the Social Emotional Foundations for Early Learning (CSEFEL). The Strengthening Families factor #5 matches the CSEFEL goal of collaboration to provide a seamless system of professional development with a consistent message about the nature and significance of social and emotional development. Tennessee provides ongoing, consistent training to providers using a cadre of individuals trained in CSEFEL's Pyramid Model, including Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R) specialists, parent liaisons, infant and toddler specialists and other partner agencies. Tennessee is collecting data on implementation outcomes and is developing a sustainability plan for Pyramid Model practices in the State.

Rob Corso defined social and emotional wellness as the ability to experience, regulate, and express emotions; the ability to form close and secure interpersonal relationships, and to explore and learn from the environment. He quoted, from a 2002 study by Gladstone and Beardslee, "Children of depressed parents are at increased risk for cognitive and language problems, insecure attachments, difficulties with emotion regulation, social competence and behavioral problems." He explained that children's caregivers can learn to recognize symptoms of parental depression and to help by supporting the child and by referring the family to services in the community. Mr. Corso noted that six 90-minute training modules for professionals working with parents would be available on CSEFEL's Web site beginning in October, 2008.

<http://www.vanderbilt.edu/csefel/>

Assisting TANF Recipients Living with Disabilities to Obtain and Maintain Employment

Dr. Michelle Derr, Mathematica Policy Research, Inc., has conducted research on States' strategies for helping TANF recipients living with a disability find and maintain employment. TANF agencies can employ multiple strategies to identify recipients, whose difficulties with program participation or employment may be influenced by the presence of a disability, and to develop an appropriate employment plan once a disability is identified. Representatives of three States involved in the Mathematica research discussed how the necessary partnerships were developed in their respective States to serve this group of clients.

Dr. Derr listed three purposes of the presentation: (1) inform administrators about strategies for helping TANF clients with disabilities obtain and keep jobs, (2) brainstorm possibilities for creating or modifying existing services and (3) motivate administrators to take action, even if it is small. TANF clients may have physical and mental conditions, learning disabilities and/or cognitive impairments, which frequently are undiagnosed and untreated. As a result, clients have

trouble participating in work activities and often cycle in and out of jobs. Dr. Derr listed five stages in Prochaska's and DiClemente's *Stages of Change Model*: pre-contemplation, contemplation, preparation, action and maintenance. She asked small groups of participants to discuss, and then report briefly, on how their States serve clients with disabilities and where they see themselves on the stages-of-change continuum. She provided copies of issue briefs based on Mathematica's research in the areas of in-depth assessments, creating work opportunities, personal and work supports, specialized services and service coordination. She cited examples for each of those categories of innovative State practices drawn from her research.

Linda Johnson is the Assistant Commissioner at the Career Development Center, Georgia Department of Labor. Georgia's strategy, *GoodWorks!*, is a partnership among the State Departments of Labor, Human Resources and other public and private organizations. Their goal is to meet the needs of people who are chronically unemployed, with special emphasis on TANF applicants, recipients and non-custodial parents. She described the Intensive Services initiative, which provides transitional work opportunities for TANF recipients with identified barriers to employment. Each client works with a personal advisor, a job coach and individuals from partner agencies. The first 4 weeks is the Work Evaluation period. Work Adjustment, Phase 1 follows for the next 2 months. Phase 2 of Work Adjustment lasts for 3 more months and may include subsidized employment. The last phase, Job Placement and Retention, is tracked for 6 months. Georgia began the project in 2000, with a Welfare-to-Work-funded pilot in Augusta. The program was expanded statewide later that year with TANF funds. Ms. Johnson listed elements that make the program successful, including employer buy-in, focus on customers who have not succeeded in work programs, pooled resources and focus on relationships. Through the State's FY 2006 Intensive Services contract, 269 clients were enrolled. Sixty-one percent were placed in jobs, and 55 percent maintained employment for at least 30 days.

Sarah Brenna is the Program Manager, Utah Department of Workforce Services. Before the Deficit Reduction Act, Utah already had a universal engagement policy. She described initiatives designed to address mental health barriers in two regions, *Diversified Employment Opportunities* (DEO) in the North Region and *Connection Cottage* in the Central Region. Under the DEO initiative, the region brought together staff focus groups to address participation with an emphasis on mental health and employment. The agency partnered with Davis Behavioral Health to develop a subsidized employment program, which included temporary subsidized employment. Customers who had difficulty received additional support rather than being fired. Job coaches are licensed clinical social workers, who collaborate with mental health providers. Jobs include grounds-keeping, mail courier, cook, fleet coordinator and van driver. Customers have successfully increased their work hours, and over half count toward the work participation rate. *Connection Cottage* was designed by a Medicaid mental health provider in collaboration with Central Region staff based on the "Club Model" to serve clients with relatively severe mental health problems. The model includes an assessment of progress in emotional intelligence. Activities include community service, job readiness activities, supervised study time and treatment. Ms. Brenna summarized lessons learned: survey the community in advance to ensure the program will be flexible enough to meet needs, many community partners are willing to help and front-line staff must be included in decision-making.

Pamela Rosette is the Assistant Director, Office of Family Support (OFS), Louisiana Department of Social Services. She explained that all applicants receive an initial family assessment, which addresses family composition, education levels, skills, health issues, services needed, motivators and strengths and goals. Based on the general assessment, the OFS may refer a client to its partner agency, the University of New Orleans Training, Resource and Assistive Technology Center (UNO-TRAC) to provide in-depth clinical assessments. The University of New Orleans has developed an instrument to assess the most common development disorders, including learning disabilities, attention-deficit, hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), mental health disorders, and substance abuse. In the year ending June 2008, 791 clients received these assessments, and 562 were referred for services. Provider agencies include the Louisiana Rehabilitation Services and the Office of Addictive Disorders. In cases where clients had applied for Supplemental Security Insurance (SSI) or Supplemental Security Disability Insurance (SSDI), they were referred to Disability Determination Services.

Disability Program Navigator: Partnerships Enhance the Workforce System

David Baker, a Federal Project Officer for Employment and Training Administration (ETA), DOL, provided an overview of the Disability Program Navigator. He explained that the Disability Program Navigator (DPN) initiative began in September, 2002, and is a collaborative effort between ETA of the Department of Labor and the Social Security Administration (SSA) to promote comprehensive services and work incentive information for SSA beneficiaries and other people with disabilities, through the One-Stop Career Center system. Although the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) is not a signatory to this initiative, many of the disabled ACF TANF clients are included among the people served. The DPN is funded in 45 States, Washington, DC, and Puerto Rico. The initiative focuses on developing new and ongoing partnerships to achieve seamless, comprehensive and integrated access to services; creating systemic change; and expanding the workforce development system's capacity to serve customers with disabilities. DOL and SSA are currently working together to conduct a comprehensive evaluation of this Navigator pilot project.

DOL and SSA established the DPN initiative to better inform beneficiaries and other people with disabilities about the work support programs that are available at DOL-funded One-Stop Career Centers. These Centers provide information, training and other employment-related services at a single customer-friendly location to people that may be fearful of losing cash assistance and health benefits. Disability Program Navigators are hired and employed by the State or local workforce system. They do not usually work directly with the client, but they do provide guidance to the One-Stop staff in helping people with disabilities access and navigate the complex provisions of various programs that impact their ability to gain or retain employment. These Navigators also develop linkages and collaborate on an ongoing basis with employers, to facilitate employment for the disabled individual. Their basic task is to serve as a resource on programs that impact the ability of persons with disabilities to enter and remain in the workforce.

Janice Ferguson, from the Texas Workforce Commission and State-lead for the Texas project of the DOL-SSA Disability Program Navigator Initiative, provided some details of the initiative's operation. She explained how the two goals, of increased access to workforce services and increased employment opportunities for the disabled, were met. They were met by building workforce system capacity, strengthening collaborative relationships and providing information and support to employers and businesses. The 28 Texas workforce development boards do not directly provide services but contract for the services provided to all clients including the disabled.

The session concluded with comments from two Disability Program Navigators of the North Central Texas and Greater Dallas Area workforce development boards, respectively. They provided examples of their successful engagement with employers to hire and retain disabled individuals.

Strategies for Achieving Work Participation Rates

Mack Storrs, TANF Consultant, was the first of three presenters for this session. All three presenters provided PowerPoint presentations for the meeting's participants. Mr. Storrs' presentation reviewed many types of strategies. He spoke specifically about the Delaware strategy, solely State-funded programs, and Hawaii's exit retention bonuses. Mr. Storrs encouraged the meeting's participants to engage in a budget review because TANF monies are, for the most part, still being spent in very similar ways as they have always been spent. States need to be very strategic in their spending decisions and spend their TANF dollars on those activities that truly have positive impacts. Presenters discussed sources of maintenance-of-effort (MOE) funds and use of volunteer hours. Mr. Storrs' overall work participation rate (WPR) strategy is to market the benefit and value of our programs to legislators, our clients and the public in general. The public is often unaware of our program's successes and of the families whose lives have been improved by our programs. In closing, Mr. Storrs encouraged States to look at the performance of case managers. He believes that good, well-trained case managers, who are highly motivated, will increase results.

Cheryl Sparkman, Director of the Division on Economic Assistance within the Mississippi Department of Human Services, was the next speaker during this session. Ms. Sparkman's presentation very closely followed her PowerPoint presentation titled "Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) Blueprint". The TANF motto in Mississippi is "a request for assistance in the State of Mississippi is a request for help in finding and keeping a job". The State of Mississippi offers clients several transitional services such as child care, work stipends, job retention bonuses and transitional case management and job counseling services. Ms. Sparkman stressed the importance of getting State legislators on board with the TANF program. She believes that legislators and TANF program staff need to be collaborating more closely. In closing, she offered to provide a detailed copy of the Mississippi Blueprint through e-mail.

Linda Snedigar, Public Assistance Bureau Chief, and **Del Bock**, TANF Policy Supervisor, both from the Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services, and the final presenters for this session, introduced the Work Experience Program (WEX) in Montana. Ms. Snedigar provided a copy of her PowerPoint presentation for each of the meeting's participants. Montana is a State of great distance and few people, but "work first" has always been the focus in Montana according to Ms. Snedigar. Montana has twenty totally different contracted work agencies, and the Department closely monitors these contracts. The WEX in Montana provides the client a reference, a chance to change his or her reputation, and a chance to realize that one can balance work and family issues. Even in a failed WEX, when properly accommodated and case managed, helping the client pursue Supplemental Security Income (SSI) may be an appropriate outcome. Del Bock then answered questions about the Federal Labor Standards Act (FLSA) in Montana, assessments as a countable activity and Montana's Tribal caseload. Ryan Martin, OFA, confirmed Ms. Bock's statement that work experience/community service is an allowable and countable activity. A comment from the audience was made that work experience is training, but most States are having problems working with their Departments of Labor relating to the FLSA issues. The key, the audience member stated, is documenting what training is being accomplished. Montana and Utah both shared that they have a lot of documentation and detailed training plans for each client. In closing, Montana noted that they have recently added additional components to the TANF program, including a post-employment program, the National Directory of New Hire (NDNH) matching and stricter sanctions to increase their work participation rates.

Partnering with Faith-Based and Community Organizations in Helping TANF Clients become Self-sufficient

Federal representatives from the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), Center for the Faith- and Community-Based initiative and from the Administration for Children and Families (ACF), Office of Family Assistance (OFA) provided an update on the initiative. In addition, representatives from faith-based organizations in Wilson County, North Carolina, and El Paso County, Colorado, discussed their partnerships with local government agencies and how they have worked collaboratively to address specific needs of their communities.

Al Fleming, Program Specialist at ACF, OFA, and TANF Bureau served as the moderator as well as presented some of the material for this topic. Mr. Fleming focused on improving TANF services to recipients by using Faith-Based and Community partnerships to provide technical assistance. The goal of the technical assistance is to develop a workable model to attract a larger population of TANF recipients to seek work participation and to improve the number of hours of work participation. In terms of partnerships that work, Mr. Fleming provided information on five Faith-Based and Community Organizations: (1) Faith Connections – Wilson County, NC; (2) Rachel's House – Columbus, OH; (3) Faith Partners – El Paso County, CO; (4) Pathways – Petersburg, VA; and (5) Seedco – New York, NY.

Ben O'Dell, Associate Director of the Center for the Faith-Based and Community-Based initiative at DHHS, emphasized engaging all partnerships already existing as well as seeking new partnerships. Mr. O'Dell told the audience that just using large organizations failed to tap into a large group of smaller, privately funded groups or volunteer organizations for partnerships. It is important to document the activities of all groups, large and small.

Glenn Osborne is the Director of the Wilson County, North Carolina, Department of Social Services. The mission of his office is to help recipients make the transition from public assistance to work, sustaining work and increasing income levels. Unmet goals need to be identified, and there needs to be a building of skills based on the strengths of job skills. Many recipients coming through this program overcome financial and family crises. Program highlights of Faith Connections include (1) the inclusion of over 24 partnering churches; (2) maximization of Federal, State and local resources and funding; (3) increased growth of faith community program ministries as a result of Faith Connections; and (4) over \$100,000 of in-kind donations provided to families.

Jacqueline Jaramillo is the Executive Director of Faith Partners in El Paso County, Colorado. This group, who has a TANF contract with county commissioners, has three staff and 1,000 volunteers trying to meet the needs of people, exiting TANF, in developing a relationship with the work force. Funding is from county money; and monitoring teams tap into resources, services and other financial assistance in El Paso County. The organization is co-housed with the State Department of Human Services. Ms. Jaramillo discussed several programs with which the group is involved including mentoring programs, various service projects and marriage education initiatives.

Access to Care for TANF Families: Opportunities and Challenges

Representatives from the Afterschool Investments Project (AIP) and the National Infant & Toddler (I&T) Child Care initiative presented information on strategies for coordinating TANF and CCDF to support clients' participation in work activities and provide them access to quality child care services.

Oxana Golden, Policy Consultant, AIP, characterized school-age care as an emerging field, observing that it serves many TANF children, and that in 2005, 36 percent of children served under CCDF were school-age. Ms. Golden described the child care funding streams available for school-age care through both CCDF and TANF and provided information on child care spending levels in 2006, from TANF, both directly and through transfers to CCDF. She also summarized selected State strategies to increase access to quality afterschool programs and suggested that in using TANF funds, States should consider program requirements, the definition of "assistance," Federal and maintenance-of-effort (MOE) dollars, and the sustainability of TANF dollars. Ms. Golden discussed the challenges that coordination poses for families, providers and subsidy administrators, noting that there is limited evidence of true service integration between TANF and CCDF, which she thought could mean that the right questions are not being asked of the right people. However, she did cite CCDF and TANF coordination in Georgia as likely to yield affordable and seamless child care for TANF families transitioning to self-sufficiency, integrated service delivery, and child care for TANF-eligible clients opting not to receive TANF assistance. Ms. Golden referred attendees to AIP's publication, *Using TANF to Finance Out-of-School Time Initiatives*.

Valeri Lane, Program Analyst/Writer, National Infant & Toddler (I&T) Child Care initiative, described the I&T initiative, noting its commitment to collaborative quality improvement strategies. She summarized current statistics on access to CCDF-supported I&T care in all settings. Ms. Lane explained that in grasping the infant/toddler “perspective,” there are several key considerations: babies’ vulnerability, their dependence on relationships for early learning and development and understanding children from birth to age three as the foundation for future development. As a result, I&T care requires lower caregiver-child ratios, costs more, is less available and is less likely to be quality care. These realities pose unique challenges for poor families and other special groups. Ms. Lane stated that CCDF and TANF have different purposes and regulations, posing challenges to coordination but also providing opportunities for crafting an overall vision which includes both programs and coordinating approaches to policy-making.

During the interchange that followed the presentations, representatives from five of the States attending the forum served as discussants providing additional insights from their own experiences with issues related to access.

Data Collection and Reporting Issues

Patrick Brannen, Federal Contractor, presented updates on changes to the TANF Data Reporting (TDR) system and to the State Data Reporting (SDR) system necessitated under the Deficit Reduction Act’s final rule. Notable changes include: work activity definitions have been tweaked; the definition of work eligible individuals has been modified; and the counting of hours has been changed for participation in job search/job readiness, excused absence hours, holiday hours and deemed core hours.

The final rule also eliminated any references to 1115 Welfare Reform Waivers, added sub-elements to unpaid work activities to capture hours for excused absences and holidays; added data elements to capture deemed core hours for All Families (AF) and Two Parent (2P) rates; and under Separate State Program-maintenance of effort (SSP-MOE) Section 1, #10, added code to identify family also reported under TANF. Work eligible indicators (Item #48) have been expanded to 12 (up from 9 previously).

“Change in circumstance” (which is not defined in regulation) was explained, as this has been a point of some confusion and questions in the past. Mr. Brannen explained that when there is a change of circumstance and a work eligible individual (WEI) changes to non-WEI, or vice versa during the report month, a State must code the individual as WEI. The average number of hours per week of participation may be based on full weeks in the report month for which the individual was a WEI. This is based on the old AFDC model logic – when status changes, one should base work participation on the weeks a client actually participated. This premise also is used to address the issue when a WEI dies during a payment month.

Job search time limits have been converted under the final rule to hours. The 20 hour requirement has converted to 120 hours (in a six week time period); the 30 hour work requirement has converted to 180 hours (in a six week time period); and if a state is qualified as a “needy state,” the hours are 240/360 in a 12 week period, beginning October, 2008. The “not more than 4 consecutive weeks” rule is retained as it is set in statute. Since participation hours are connected to the age of the youngest child in a household, a child turning age 6 changes the

work participation hours; thus, is considered a change in circumstance. For data reporting, if the child turns six on the first day of the month, a State must make the change for that month. If the child's status changes after the first of the month, the change should be made in the next month.

Excused absences have been converted to hours. Ten days is converted to 80 hours in the preceding 12 months, and not more than 16 hours may be used in a month. Excused absence hours must be associated with scheduled unpaid work activities. Holidays have to be specifically named in a State's work verification plan (WVP), and no more than 10 holidays are allowed.

Mr. Brannen discussed the error flags that States receive. There are thirteen All Family (AF) error codes, seven Two-Parent (2P) error codes, and eleven time limit error codes. He also discussed some of the more common data problems and stressed the relationships of data elements that his edits look for. Some of the common errors include: zero payment cases (should not be in frame and not transmitted); type of family and WEI indicator should match; marital status and relationship to Head of Household (HoH) should match; hours of participation and employment status should match; a 2P case is indicated but only one WEI is coded; and coding indicates child care is received, but amount is coded as zero.

Mr. Brannen also emphasized the importance for States to check their data transmission records to make sure their transmission has been accepted and to check for rejected cases and to retransmit them. Using code "D" replaces all data and code "U" is used when you only need to correct a few select cases and it does a case-by-case overlay.

Strategies for Improving Work Participation: A Compilation of State Practices (OFA White Paper)

Representatives from the Administration for Children and Families (ACF), Office of Family Assistance (OFA) presented information from OFA's recently published "white paper": *Welfare to Work: A Selection of State Practices to Increase Employment and Meet Participation Requirements*, which is a compilation of State strategies reported as effective in moving TANF clients into jobs and helping States meet participation requirements. The paper contains information from State presentations at OFA Regional meetings, academic research and other promising practice resources and projects. Conceived as an evolving document, it will be updated routinely as new information surfaces. The paper will be posted soon on the OFA Web site.

Rachel Terry, Family Assistance Program Specialist, ACF, OFA, TANF Bureau, described the paper's development and its goals. Stipulating OFA's decision to refrain from endorsing specific practices, Ms. Terry mentioned that the paper does acknowledge successes supported by research and other outcome information.

In her comments on the paper's *Universal Engagement* section, Ms. Terry noted that a 2004 study by Mathematica Policy Research, Inc. (MPR), identified key engagement strategies: communicating a strong work message, tracking participation, imposing sanctions for non-compliance and holding staff accountable through performance standards. She also observed that study sites capable of analyzing administrative data in detail achieved the highest levels of engagement.

Ms. Terry discussed the paper's *Application Processes* section, describing State approaches for streamlining, automating information management and letting clients apply for multiple benefits. She stated that such improvements allow States to redirect staff time and resources to help clients participate in work and that expedited processes create positive results, including less focus on program administration, more focus on moving clients into jobs, electronic application exchanges between counties and online application and benefit tracking.

Ms. Terry concluded her presentation with summaries of the paper's other sections:

- *Partnering with Employers and Connecting to Employment* – lists key considerations for States including employer staffing needs and employer subsidies to encourage TANF hiring;
- *Education and Training* – describes strategies to improve job opportunities through short-term education activities, community college partnerships and job-specific training;
- *Employment Retention and Advancement* – features a major ACF initiative, the Employment Retention and Advancement project, which is evaluating strategies for moving clients into jobs and improving retention;
- *Strategies for Serving the Hard-to-Employ and the Disabled Population* – features resources to serve clients with employment barriers; and
- *Web-Based Resources* – describes online “hard-to-serve” employment assistance initiatives.

Ryan Martin, Management & Program Analyst, ACF, OFA, TANF Bureau, discussed the paper's *Tracking Processes* section. His comments centered on States' experience with the National Directory of New Hires (NDNH) and other methods, including tracking at the caseworker level, using county and State participation summary reports and using dedicated staff to verify hours. He noted several participating States' successes: achieving higher participation rates, increased employment matches and more overpayment findings. Mr. Martin also described one State's use of a computerized Worker Dashboard, which tracks relevant data on recipients' work activity.

Mr. Martin also discussed the section on *Using Work-Oriented Sanctions to Increase TANF Program Participation*, citing a September 2007 report by Mathematica Policy Research, Inc. (MPR), as the basis for the information provided. MPR's report describes sanction policies, procedures and re-engagement strategies to increase work participation. Mr. Martin noted that when changing sanction policies, States consider such issues as the effect of sanctions on grants, length of sanctions, using sanctions to bring clients into compliance and consequences of multiple spells of noncompliance. Mr. Martin listed five key research questions: (1) what are current policies, and how have they changed to encourage participation (2) how are sanctions implemented at the local level (3) what strategies are used to avoid sanctions (4) what strategies are used to re-engage noncompliant cases and (5) what future research could advance understanding of how sanctions increase work participation.

Engaging Employers to Employ and Support TANF Clients

Erica Mott, Senior Management Analyst Supervisor from Workforce Florida, Inc., presented on Florida's integrated model for engaging employers. Key components of that model include the following:

- know the employers;
- identify occupations that are in demand;
- identify skill sets required for specific jobs;
- identify employability skills required for jobs;
- identify resources;
- consolidate job search banks' access; and
- strengthen economic development.

Florida's integrated model for engaging job seekers includes the following components:

- assess job seekers;
- identify goals;
- identify skill sets of job seekers needed to secure or keep jobs;
- identify resources for job seekers;
- offer access to job training for job seekers; and
- connect job seekers with employers.

Florida's model addresses assessing emergency needs immediately such as child care and transportation concerns.

Key components for a successful program include encouraging flexibility of local implementation, establishing performance deliverables at the beginning of the program with ongoing evaluations, leveraging resources locally, assessing participants and employers effectively, evaluating the success of the program from the employer's point of view and holding participants accountable.

Brenda Jackson, Senior Recruitment Specialist for the FedEx Corporation in Memphis, Tennessee, works as a FedEx recruiter and shoulders some of the responsibility for the TANF First Partnership in Memphis, which is the corporate headquarters for FedEx. Ms. Jackson works with TANF participants to help them meet specific requirements necessary to become employed by FedEx. The entry level position for program participants is the package handling job.

Applicants must be able to lift and maneuver up to 75 pounds; must have a high school diploma or GED; be a resident of the United States for the past 5 years; be willing to work outside in all types of weather; complete an online application; and pass fingerprint, interview and drug tests.

This program provides part-time positions with full-time benefits including medical benefits after 90 days and continuing in-house training. There are also career advancement opportunities. FedEx encourages educational advancement with tuition payments, for its Tennessee Families First Program participants, up to \$3,000 per year.

In Fiscal Year 2008, FedEx hired 367 TANF participants. So far in Fiscal Year 2009, FedEx has hired 105 TANF recipients.

Colleen Cherrett, Director of the Climb Wyoming Program (Teton Office), noted that the innovative Climb program serves needy families in Wyoming who are under 185 percent of the poverty level. The program focuses on non-traditional occupations such as truck-driving and construction trades for women. One of the main goals is to get participants with children working in occupations that pay a self-sufficient wage and also decrease the gap between men's and women's wages in the State. Other services are offered such as assistance with substance abuse problems, mental health counseling and budget management.

Climb Wyoming started as a support group for women 20 years ago. It expanded to provide life skills and job training. The program has evolved into a sophisticated program that provides a wide range of services for low income women who are motivated to become self-sufficient.

There are seven centers throughout the State of Wyoming. Climb Wyoming has relationships with 200 business partners. When Climb Wyoming participants take positions with these partners, the businesses are reimbursed for the first 6 to 12 weeks of the participants' employment.

Climb Wyoming has an active post-graduate program. After graduation, former participants spend 1 day per week at their local Climb offices. This program has been so successful that local judges often "court order" women to Climb Wyoming.

Machelle Dabel, a Climb Wyoming graduate, spoke about her experiences at the program. From age 14 until the year 2004, Ms. Dabel was using methamphetamines. In 2004, she was arrested and placed on probation for possession and child endangerment. At that time, her children were removed from her care and placed in foster care. Prior to her arrest, her employment consisted as a part-time convenience store worker earning just above minimum wage.

Having graduated from this program, Ms. Dabel is now drug free, working as a salaried employee with medical benefits. She has received several promotions.

Taking Your Partnerships Home: Turning Knowledge into Practice

Darrel McGhee opened the plenary session asking participants why effective coordination between Child Care and TANF is critical in meeting the goals of welfare reform. Acknowledging the critical role that child care plays in enabling TANF clients to participate in mandated work activities, he asked his listeners to also consider the potential for quality child care to stop intergenerational welfare dependence, which was commonly seen in AFDC families and which he suggested resulted from AFDC rules that discouraged responsible behavior. Families were neither permitted to save for the future nor have fathers in the household, and benefits increased automatically when a new child was born into the family. Mr. McGhee added that AFDC children were often further disadvantaged by being born to teen mothers, who being children themselves could not have been expected to appreciate the devastating impact that stopping their formal education would have on their lives and their children's lives. He continued that if we do not prioritize quality child care for TANF children so that they enter school ready to learn, we

cannot achieve the TANF goals of improving their prospects for breaking the cycle of welfare dependence. Citing Mr. Juarez's keynote address which described DOL's mission as "finding economic liberty as a pathway to the American Dream," Mr. McGhee concluded by observing that Mr. Juarez's statement mirrors an unstated mission of TANF. That is, in requiring families to work and act in ways that move them toward self-sufficiency, we are in fact contemplating that they too should be able to aspire to the American Dream.

The National Child Care Information Center (NCCIC) team then gave the audience sheets containing a list of opportunities and a list of challenges, which were a compilation of participants' thoughts throughout the 3-day forum. Some of the "opportunities" identified during the course of the forum included:

- use of community resources;
- support Grandparents;
- use of CCR&R;
- use of TANF funds for child care;
- housing TANF and Child Care within the same agency;
- presumptive eligibility;
- communicate at all levels;
- coordination of job placement/work activities with child care subsidy;
- having consistent policies and training;
- coordinate services/meetings;
- support parenting skills;
- mental health training for all; and
- screen for depression.

"Challenges" identified during the forum included:

- reduction in child enrollments;
- lack of control over the budget;
- parents' choice of child care arrangement is not always stable;
- need to understand each other's programs policies and guidelines;
- consistent policy implementation;
- politics;
- need to cross train staff;
- communicate at all levels;
- lack of flexibility of funding streams;
- location of programs;
- over-worked staff.

Eva Carter, NCCIC Technical Assistance Coordinator, encouraged the participants to think about what it takes for us to talk to each other. After working individually, there was a discussion of ideas and activities among various States that addressed the various “opportunities and challenges.”

The final segment of the closing session involved NCCIC team members discussing various types of communication, including blogs and texting, with ideas such as setting up a regional blog or State blog. Several States commented on changes they wanted to make as a result of the session, including Colorado’s idea of setting up a blog with Survey Monkey for State Plan public comments.