



Urban Partnerships for Welfare Reform: National Academy

*Tracking Work Participation through
Innovative Case Management
Strategies*

Kansas City, Mo.



Key Features

- **Create** a community system of services through local governance involvement in system design
- **Involve** community and business groups
- **Design** a pre- and post-employment case management system
- **Determine** collaborative roles and responsibilities including a willingness to collocate services and staff
- **Pool** finances to provide supportive services
- **Build** data collection tools; focusing on outcomes
- **Develop** performance-based contracting process



Successful Strategies

- **Local decision-making** – i.e. local control of contract dollars
- **Create a collaborative decision-making process** – state and federal government, local agencies, business, employers
- **Restructure TANF agency** – i.e. design three-tiered system of case management
- **Develop innovative initiatives** with multiple work components
- **Provide a comprehensive out-of-school time program** through the use of federal and state dollars



Surprises

- **GED testing:** Delay of 4-5 months from completion of GED classes to an opening in state system to take test and get results.
Surprise: Dept. of Elementary and Secondary Education made no adjustments in recognition of new demands placed by welfare reform.
- **Housing:** Kansas City area lacked sufficient Section 8 housing to meet the needs
Surprise: no special arrangement for TANF population.
- **Collaboration:**
Surprise: it works!



Challenges

- **Maintain** an integrated community-based system in light of state restructuring
- **Keep** everyone at the decision-making table even as the table may shift or move
- **Change** of state leadership shifts focus of program
- **Secure** funding for case management services
- **Know** program outcomes based on inadequate data system and reporting tools



Replication Advice

- **Understand** healthy conflict
- **Ensure** broad representation
- **Listen** to those most affected
- **Secure** continual feedback and measurement
- **View** barriers as opportunities
- **Change** plan(s) as needed
- **Avoid** “one problem-one solution” thinking
- **Keep** everyone’s eyes on the outcomes
- **Give** credit, credit, credit to others



Managing During Change

- **Change** organizational culture
- **Anticipate** changes in community, state and federal policies/needs
- **Convene** key local system staff with authority to make changes in operations and implementation
- **Keep** all staff informed and connected to community
- **Restructure** jobs based on system needs – with no additional staff or funding



Visions for the Future

- **Continue collaboration** and shared decision-making with community and participants
- **Create new strategies** to meet new federal mandates
- **Review current state policies** in light of new TANF legislation
- **Reinstate co-location** of staff
- **Approach community agencies** to provide case management for hard to place clients