
Understanding the Pillars of Change for the Systems to Family Stability National Policy Academy

The Systems to Family Stability National Policy Academy (Academy) is assisting eight sites of selected state and county Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) agency teams as they work to implement changes related to one or several of the below areas of interest:

- Using innovative approaches to assess TANF participant readiness and deliver more effective case management.
- Adopting job-driven training approaches, including career pathways, to provide participants with skills and resources to obtain and retain employment in promising occupations.
- Making improvements across the continuum of employment services from job search and job readiness to post-employment supports.
- Building programs that focus simultaneously on parental employment and child and family well-being.
- Improving TANF internal business processes and service delivery.
- Incorporating practices informed by growing knowledge about executive functioning and trauma-informed care.

The overarching focus of the Academy, as shown at Figure 1, is to assist these sites in building internal and/or collaborative systems within and across agencies that improve family stability and economic self-sufficiency. Underlying this goal are three primary, research and practice supported, pillars of change that will be the substantive foci of participating sites' work over the course of the Academy. These are:

- **Building career pathways through job-driven training and alignment between TANF and Workforce systems:**ⁱ Career pathways are a series of connected education and training strategies and support services that enable individuals to secure industry relevant certification and obtain employment within an occupational area and to advance to higher levels of future education and employment in that area. Critical aspects to designing meaningful career pathways for TANF participants are to ensure training and education programs are job-driven, as well as aligned with workforce systems and particularly in light of the recent passage of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA).
- **Improving business processes and systems coordination:**ⁱⁱ Business process re-engineering (BPR) provides opportunities for single and/or multiple systems to design, test, and implement more effective, streamlined, and integrated approaches to delivering key supports to TANF families.
- **Enhancing case management approaches by understanding brain science and applying two-generation approaches:**ⁱⁱⁱ Emerging brain science on the effects adverse childhood experiences have on children and adults suggest a greater need for human service systems, including TANF, to better understand and address the effects these and other traumatic experiences have on both child and adult functioning. Similarly, using two-generation approaches, whereby both the child and parent is served simultaneously, can both improve overall family stability and stop intergenerational cycles of poverty.

Figure 1
Systems to Family Stability National Policy Academy Framework Pillars of Change



Undergirding the above substantive foci of the Academy are process disciplines that are driven by and grounded in concepts of implementation science.^{iv} Those concepts, through coaching and facilitation both on-site and at in-person Academy meetings, through readiness assessments, logic models, and a variety of action planning tools will guide sites through understanding where they are along a continuum of systematic change and lead them through the stages of implementation, from exploration, justification and capacity building to piloting and implementation.

Over the course of 18 months, each participating team will work with coaches and expert faculty in a deliberate process focused on systems change. The Academy is not a meeting, conference or series of discussions. The Academy, rather, is a dynamic 18-month endeavor centered on helping state and county teams operationalize deep change. The Policy Academy is an extended long-term support program with both short-term process measures (work tools/agreements) as well as long-term outcome expectations.

ⁱ See, e.g., The White House (2014). *Ready to Work: New Actions to Expand Job-Driven Training and Broaden the Pathway to the Middle Class*. Washington, DC. Retrieved from: http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/docs/ready_to_work_factsheet.pdf; U.S. Departments of Labor, Commerce, Education and Health and Human Services (July 2014). *What Works in Job Training: A Synthesis of the Evidence*. Washington, DC. Retrieved from: <http://www.dol.gov/asp/evaluation/jdt/jdt.pdf>

ⁱⁱ See, e.g., CLASP. *Work Support Strategies: Streamlining Access, Strengthening Families*. Retrieved from: <http://www.clasp.org/issues/work-support-strategies>

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- ^{iv} See, e.g., Fixsen, D., Blase, K., Naoom, S., & Duda, M. (2013). *Implementation drivers: Assessing best practices*. Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.
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- See Romney, S., Israel, N., Zlatevski, Danijela, (2014). *Exploration-stage implementation variation: Its effect on the cost-effectiveness of an evidence-based parenting program*. *Zeitschrift für Psychologie*, Vol 222(1), 2014, 37-48. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1027/2151-2604/a000164>;
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- See Huang, T., Drewnowski, A., Kumanyika, S., Glass, T., (2009). *A Systems-Oriented Multilevel Framework for Addressing Obesity in the 21st Century*. *Preventing Chronic Disease* (6(3): A82). <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2722412/>; and Panzano, P. C., Seffrin, B., Chaney-Jones, S., Roth, D., Crane-Ross, D., Massatti, R., et al. (2004). *The innovation diffusion and adoption research project (IDARP)*. In D. Roth & W. Lutz (Eds.), *New Research in Mental Health* (Vol. 16). Columbus, OH: The Ohio Department of Mental Health Office of Program Evaluation and Research. [http://www.researchgate.net/profile/Rick_Massatti/publication/233935662_The_Innovation_Diffusion_and_Adoption_Research_Project_\(IDARP\)_Moving_from_the_Diffusion_of_Research_Results_to_Promoting_the_Adoption_of_Evidence-Based_Innovations_in_the_Ohio_Mental_Health_System/links/09e4150d20a634c141000000.pdf](http://www.researchgate.net/profile/Rick_Massatti/publication/233935662_The_Innovation_Diffusion_and_Adoption_Research_Project_(IDARP)_Moving_from_the_Diffusion_of_Research_Results_to_Promoting_the_Adoption_of_Evidence-Based_Innovations_in_the_Ohio_Mental_Health_System/links/09e4150d20a634c141000000.pdf)
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