CALIFORNIA COUNTIES
TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE ACADEMY

**FINAL REPORT**

CDSS
CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

# California Counties Technical Assistance Academy
# Office of Family Assistance
# Sacramento, California
# September 22 - 24, 2008

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## Background

In California, as in much of the country, the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)/California Work Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids (CalWORKs) welfare-to-work program has been highly successful in reducing welfare caseloads. California has reduced its welfare caseload by 50 percent since 1996 and has shown marked success in implementing employment services and supports that help TANF participants overcome barriers to work and become more self supporting. However, many California counties are currently facing greater challenges moving their remaining CalWORKs participants into the workforce and meeting the new federally mandated work participation requirements. A larger number of participants in the CalWORKs caseload are now considered "work eligible", including those previously sanctioned for not complying with program requirements. The state of California and its county partners are looking for new and effective programs and tools to aid them in reengaging sanctioned individuals; developing new opportunities for participants in the labor market; and linking these individuals to the skills training they need to become "work ready." Faced with this challenge, the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) partnered with the U.S. Department of Human and Health Services Administration for Children and Families (ACF) Office of Family Assistance (OFA), to develop the California Counties Technical Assistance (TA) Academy as a way to focus on solutions and strategies to enhance California's work participation rate.

The California Counties TA Academy was a facilitated two and a half day event designed to introduce staff from 18 California counties (see **Appendix B** for list of counties) to new programs, strategies, and ideas in order to strengthen their capacity to achieve higher levels of work participation rates. Working as a team in close collaboration with facilitators and content faculty, county representatives explored new strategies for improving work participation rates and developed action plans. These action plans will serve as guides in the implementation of pilot projects that integrate new knowledge acquired from the Academy at the local level. The following four content areas, which directed the selection of content faculty and the design of Academy curriculum, were identified by counties as being the most critical in achieving higher work participation rates:

- **Bridging Activities**. Strategies that seek to engage CalWORKs participants who are moving from one work activity to another, or for those who are only partially participating in work requirement activities.
- **Home visits and sanction reengagement activities**. Programs that engage sanctioned or pre-sanctioned participants through increased outreach.
- **Employer outreach and job development.** Programs that rapidly attach CalWORKs participants to the labor market.
- **Innovative services and incentives.** Strategies that can help California counties expand the scope of their current work through service streamlining or by directing resources in a different direction.

CDSS will continue to provide support to pilot counties as they enter the implementation and evaluation stages of their pilot programs. In addition to ongoing advice around policy and program design, CDSS will fund a third party evaluation of all pilot county programs. The following sections provide an overview of the sessions that were held during the Academy. Please see the Academy Agenda (**Appendix A**) for additional details.

## Opening Plenary Session

A panel of three speakers welcomed participants to the Academy: Lisa Washington-Thomas, Technical Assistance Branch Chief at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Office of Family Assistance (OFA); Dan Baker, Regional IX TANF Program Manager at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families; and John A. Wagner, Director of CDSS.

Ms. Washington-Thomas opened the session by thanking all participants for taking the time to attend this important event. With the largest TANF population in the country, and with over 20 percent of the national TANF budget allocated to California, the state plays a major role in the overall direction of the national TANF program. The outcomes from this Academy have the potential to affect TANF programming throughout the country. Ms. Washington-Thomas asked participants to focus on interventions that would help TANF participants enter and remain in work activities and help the state meet the federally required work participation rate (WPR) goals set by the Deficit Reduction Act throughout the Academy.

Mr. Baker addressed the audience next, thanking them for their attendance and stating that CDSS and ACF staff was there to offer assistance and to learn alongside county representatives. He stated that the focus of this Academy is to examine successful programming throughout the nation and think critically on what might work locally for each county. Mr. Baker closed by saying CDSS would be providing on-going support to counties post-Academy.

The final speaker during the plenary session was Mr. Wagner. He echoed Ms. Washington-Thomas's comments on the critical role California plays in the TANF population, stating that California serves an average of over 450,000 families at any point in time, which is approximately 25 percent of the national caseload. Mr. Wagner continued by detailing the mission and scope of CDSS, and listing the six focus areas of the Department: program integrity; workforce development; food stamps; safety and well-being; enhancing program performance; and increasing access to employment and employment supports. Mr. Wagner closed by emphasizing that as counties generate new methodologies and strategies during the Academy, they consider the critical role that cross-county and cross-agency partnerships play in improving the state's WPRs.

## Overview of the Academy and Content Faculty Introductions

Kent Peterson, the Academy facilitator, provided participants with an overview of the Academy's plenary sessions, content faculty, and team times. Mr. Peterson emphasized that there was no mandated process to the Academy; rather the agenda would be driven by county representatives. He encouraged counties to take advantage of the expertise present at the Academy, not only from among the content faculty, but also, and perhaps more importantly, from among their peers representing the other 17 counties. Mr. Peterson then introduced the Academy's content faculty, who each presented a brief description of their area(s) of expertise, past experience, and an overview of their current work. The following provides a brief overview of each of the content faculty members.

- **David Aguado –** Mr. Aguado is the Director of Operations for America Works of New York and America Works of New Jersey. America Works (AW) is a national private performance-based industry that contracts with area employers who hire TANF participants. AW specializes in helping TANF participants overcome their barriers to employment through job training, individualized case management, subsidized employment, and other supports.

- **Feliciano Alvarado** – Mr. Alvarado is an administrator in the Los Angeles Department of Public Social Services' Greater Avenues for Independence (GAIN) Program Division. GAIN is a home visit outreach program that, since implementation, has resulted in a 50% reduction in Los Angeles County's sanctioned CalWORKs population.

- **Daylan Beamon and David Buchholz –** Mr. Beamon is the Business Development Manager and Mr. Buchholz is the Director of Program Management for Business Access. Business Access is an in-home distance learning program designed for TANF participants. The program provides education and job training opportunities through the Internet, which includes GED and job skills development courses.

- **Robyn Cenizal** – Ms. Cenizal is the Executive Administrator for the Jacksonville Network for Strengthening Families (JNSF) Initiative. JNSF is a holistic program providing TANF participants with training, services, and support around effective parenting and child-rearing skills, financial self-sufficiency, child welfare, and healthy marriage and family relationships.

- **Frank DeCarlo** – In his position as the Director of Employment for the Eric County Department of Social Services in New York State, Mr. DeCarlo has implemented a unique subsidized employment program which annually places over 400 TANF participants into jobs.

- **Deborah Eisner and Anthony Ong** – Ms. Eisner is a Consultant and Mr. Ong is an Associate Manager with the Public Consulting Group (PCG). PCG is a privately held consulting firm that assists state and local health and human services programs develop new strategies to improve TANF agency performance.

- **Susan Hansen –** Ms. Hansen is an Employment Services Coordinator with the Orange County Employment and Training Administrator in Orange County, New York. Ms. Hansen oversees the Orange County Welfare to Work Unit which, through innovative outreach programs, has shown great success in reengaging sanctioned TANF participants.

- **Sandie Hoback** – Ms. Hoback is a Consultant with over 25 years experience assisting numerous states and cities in improving the delivery of their workforce development and human service programs.

- **Mark Hoover –** Mr. Hoover is the Executive Director of the Nicholson Foundation. The Foundation works to improve the lives of families and children through enhancing offender reentry, child welfare, education, and poverty reduction programs in counties throughout New Jersey.

- **Monte Murphy –** Mr. Murphy is the Project Coordinator for the Shasta College CalWORKs program. This program works to link participants with work preparation skills and job counseling, vocational and technical training, all within the environment of a postsecondary education. Shasta College has also developed a set of online curriculum to help participants who are entering or reentering the workforce build and develop essential job skills and values while simultaneously earning college credits.

- **Marsha Netus –** Ms. Netus is the General Manager for America on Demand, a temporary staffing agency, and the Work Experience Manager for America Works.

- **Paul Saeman –** Mr. Saeman is a member of the Turner Government Operations and works as part of the American Institute for Full Employment (AIFE) team. AIFE is a nonprofit, public policy research and development center that conducts research, studies promising practices, and develops strategies in the areas of unemployment insurance, workforce development, retirement income, and public assistance.

- **Jason Turner –** Mr. Turner is the President of Turner Government Operations, an organization specializing in improving management effectiveness and extending work-based reforms throughout human service programs.

Complete biographies of each content speaker are provided in **Appendix C.**

## Overview of the Pilots and Next Steps

Charr Lee Metsker, Deputy Director of the Welfare to Work Division in the California Department of Social Services and Frank Mecca, Executive Director of the County Welfare Directors Association of California provided participants with an overview of the pilot stage of the California Counties Initiative. Ms. Metsker stated that CDSS initially explored the option of having all 58 California counties participate in a technical assistance event in some capacity. After further review, CDSS decided that due to budgetary restraints, they would limit invitation to a group of 18 counties that represented the economic, geographic, and population diversity of the CalWORKs caseload. From amongst this group, eight (8) counties with the highest number of the CalWORKs participants, and thus the highest potential to affect the state's overall WPR, were designated as "pilot" sites. These counties were given the task of designing a comprehensive technical assistance plan at the Academy and would be provided with evaluation support once this plan was implemented. The remaining 10 counties were tabbed as "non-pilot" counties. While these counties were not obligated to design, implement, and evaluate any new programming, the hope of CDSS was that through the introduction of new partnerships, strategies, and models at the Academy, these counties would have new tools with which to help improve their local WPRs. See **Appendix B** for a complete list of pilot and non-pilot counties. Ms. Metsker also stated the importance of sharing the evaluation results of the pilot counties once this process was complete. Frank Mecca closed this session by describing the background to the CalWORKs system and the importance local flexibility plays in the design of welfare to work programs.

## Speed Networking

The Speed Networking session was designed to allow Academy participants to network and meet other State Directors and staff to discuss their current and future work, and provide the opportunity for participants to engage in peer-to-peer dialogue around their needs and challenges. Each county was provided with clues that once answered, indicated which counties they would be paired with during this session. Counties then spent the next 20 minutes meeting with their partners to discuss the particular challenges and successes of serving TANF participants in their areas.

## Team Time Sessions

The focus of the Academy was to provide counties the opportunity to work with colleagues from their own counties with the assistance of their facilitator. Therefore, the "bulk" of the time teams spent at the Academy were in "team time sessions". The team time sessions were designed to allow each county to meet with content faculty to discuss one of the four Academy topics: Bridging activities; Home visits/Sanction reengagement; Employer outreach and job development; and Innovative services/incentives. Through guidance from their facilitator, each team translated their learning and ideas into an outline for an action plan and a series of next steps they planned on implementing when they returned to their home site. Over the two and a half day Academy, county teams met a total of five times during these designated "team time" periods.

## TANF TechConnections Online Work Readiness Assessment (OWRA) Plenary Presentation

During this session, ICF International Program Managers Louisa Fuller and Christina Techico presented on OFA's resource — the Online Work Readiness Assessment (OWRA) tool. OWRA began as a partnership between Maryland and OFA in 2003 as an attempt to create a more responsive and effective online work readiness tool. OFA intends to pilot OWRA modules 1 and 2 nationally. Modules 1 and 2, currently in development, will focus on enhancing the program's barrier and strength assessment components. Module 3 will be in development in 2009, incorporating more in-depth work readiness assessments, planning and tracking of core and non-core activities and performance measurement and tracking. Ms. Techico and Ms. Fuller modeled the use of OWRA, using a case study example to show how the program records participant information such as demographics, employment and education history; housing and transportation resources available to the participant; and health, childcare, and child wellbeing status.

Further clarifying certain aspects of the OWRA program, Ms. Techico and Ms. Fuller told the participants that the program was available at no-cost, useable by Tribes, had the capacity to record additional case notes, featured different levels for

security depending on what set of data is viewed, and includes a summary page and recommendations for the case worker. Questions from the audience about the OWRA tool included whether or not it was culturally competent (it will be available in Spanish and will incorporate Tribal input around question design); if the text fields were expandable (affirmative); whether, in light of the fact that DOL has developed business credential/industry-led certificates, the program would incorporate at relevant attitudes and skills (the tool will be heavily workforce focused, including tools such as O-Net, ACT WorkKeys, and Career Readiness; and lastly if the assessment would be shared with vendors who have already developed similar tools in order to avoid duplication (OFA answered that they would consider this request).

Ms. Techico and Ms. Fuller welcomed feedback on the tool and also announced that piloting opportunities for states and counties will be available shortly. Interested counties should contact OFA. The session was moderated by John Coakley from the U.S. Department of Health Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Region IX.

## Panel Discussion: Promising Practices around Providing Adequate Engagement Data for all Counties

Andy Bush and Prashant Doshi, from Exemplar Human Services, presented on the overall importance of data in project management. While demonstrating their tools for data management and participation, Mr. Bush and Mr. Doshi emphasized a number of key factors. (1) The importance of seeing the overall picture of your caseload and its changes through time allowing the user to not only to see the TANF participant's current status, but also track their progress over a period of time. (2) The level of detail provided from this universal look at your caseload also helps to identify gaps in participant engagement. (3) By keeping a close account of participant engagement, agencies can also track the successes and failures of new initiatives and strategies. In so doing, the Exemplar data tools helps not only manage engagement, but also helps manage improvement. San Bernardino County, one of the participating sites in the Academy, provided their insight on using these tools to help raise their WPR from 37 to 88 percent in less than a year.

The Exemplar data management tools can input a variety of data sources and can be used across different county and state systems. While having cross-agency applications already in place, the tools can also allow for counties to map their own categories. With data access and reporting both major challenges for TANF serving agencies, Exemplar's data management tools also incorporate E-file and auto-reporting options which both speed up reporting and allow for easier communication of data.

## Plenary: Capturing the Learning

During this session, teams provided a brief presentation on what they had achieved, what challenges they anticipate facing, their ideas for remedying these challenges, and what ongoing support they may need from their local, State, and Federal partners. Teams with similar technical assistance plans were paired within their pilot and non-pilot groups. After convening for 20 minutes to discuss the similarities and differences between their action plans, the groups reported their findings to the entire audience.

***San Diego/San Bernardino***

Common similarities and strategies that were shared between these two sites included the need to increase partnerships, private sector participation, work readiness preparation, and a re-structuring of their individual job clubs. The biggest challenge they discussed was funding their proposed new programs. When posed with the question of how they were going to increase partnerships, the counties responded by stating they would work more closely with the business community and other stakeholders to increase the level of services to TANF participants. They also intended on creating stronger ties to the Chamber of Commerce to increase employment opportunities. Both counties also agreed on the need to improve relationships and increase subsidized employment services that meet needs of employers. San Diego stressed the importance of strengthening their relationship with the workforce development system, making use of the work readiness certificate and building stronger contracts to improve outcomes.

***Tulare/Yolo***

Common issues and challenges that arose from these two counties discussion included finding new funding sources, an inability to hire staff, and establishing buy-in from stakeholders and frontline staff. Unique steps that the counties intend on undertaking will be to strengthen linkages with stakeholders and staff and improving connections with employers that benefit their exempt populations and subsidized employees. Additional strategies include improving the application process and increasing the rapid track process for individuals seeking employment opportunities that need specific and targeted services; improving linkages with probation and improving other collaboration and linking services. When asked to expand on the status of their current worksites, the counties responded by stating they are working to ensure that individuals are better prepared for activities and to better educate people to ensure improved service delivery. Yolo also spoke about expanding their rapid track program by triaging services to new participants, improving service delivery, and coordinating job development connections with participants. As a way to increase buy in, both counties plan on making new workforce development strategies part of the typical staff activities, and increase administration buy-in by getting them involved in the decision-making process and strategic planning at the earliest stage possible.

***Alameda/Solano***

The common challenges shared by these counties were a general lack of resources and how to apply funding to new strategies. Both groups sought strategies around new ways to engage CalWORKs participants and to increase distance learning opportunities. They discussed focusing on reengagement, especially for previously sanctioned participants, and the importance of encouraging staff to provide more documentation and needs identification. Around the issue of increasing buy-in, the counties discussed the possibility of developing a buy-in matrix that includes staff, administration, and other relevant stakeholders. Both counties agreed on the importance of increasing partnerships with other counties and other State stakeholders.

***Kern/Tehama***

These two counties were both seeking ways to increase bridging activities by developing more distance learning activities and strengthening private sector linkages. Another strategy discussed was utilizing family strategy meetings to improve program outcomes and create more culturally friendly environments for participants. Through their conversations, Kern and Tehama discovered that while both counties had similar WPRs, and demographic challenges, they differed greatly regarding their sanction rates. An additional common challenge they shared was increasing buy-in by staff and the private sector. In response to the question of what cost strategies were under consideration for how to bring down cost of distance learning, the counties stated that they would work with WIA partners and other stakeholders to reduce total expenditures.

***San Mateo/Sonoma***

Some common issues staff from both counties were facing include using assessment tools improperly, difficulty linking with one-stops to increase participant outcomes, and problems securing sufficient funding for programming. Both counties stated they had similar WPRs. Some unique next steps they planned on implementing as part of their action plan include linking up with community colleges and other stakeholders to provide services not currently available; modernization of programs and processes; increasing the use of One-Stops; using business models from other similar counties both within and outside of California; increasing buy-in from staff and administration; working performance measurement into the development of a common message; the creation of expectations for participants, staff, supervisors and management to increase accountability; and improving participation of participants in the structuring of workforce development programs. In response to the question of how they would increase staff buy-in, the counties planned on increasing worker desire to increase WPRs, and shifting to a participant centered approach.

***Los Angeles/Merced***

Both counties expressed common concerns around moving participants from part-time to fulltime participation; and the challenges posed by the diverse demographics present in their service areas. Unique strategies that the counties intended on focusing on include focusing on their job development structures and program to ensure proper training and marketing

of participants to employers; and distance learning activities to increase participation among participants. Similar challenges described by the counties include funding for implementation; program management; and utilizing current resources to improve programs. Answering the question of what does a "right team" look like, the counties stated that it is participant focused, friendly, and focused on outcomes.

***Humboldt/Madera***

Common issues include working with sanctioned participants; integrating staff in welfare to work activities; and improving partnership and stakeholder participation. Humboldt and Madera also brought up the need to strengthen contacts with community stakeholders and employers and ensure that participants are matched to the needs of employers. Addressing the question of what next steps would be taken next, Humboldt described the need to define provider contact and activities and strengthen relationships with stakeholders.

***San Luis Obispo/Ventura***

During their discussions, these counties discovered they both extracted data from California Work Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids Information Network (CalWIN) and had similar concerns around the accuracy of CalWIN data. San Luis Obispo and Ventura both described challenges around sanction clinics, and getting participants who are practically meeting WPR to fully meet WPR goals. Common challenges faced by both counties include meeting their WPRs; developing status reports from CalWIN and testing improved systems and staff improvement activities. Both counties want to work together to improve stakeholder partnerships and bring activities in-house to improve program outcomes. For each county, staffing and funding remain significant challenges, as do reviving in-house contracting and program services. Among the priorities described by the counties include improving data management, tracking, bridging, and evaluation activities; creating open entry/open access programs to improve work experience; improving data tracking and management; and increasing the use of needed assessment tools.

***Monterey/Riverside***

Common issues addressed by these counties include strengthening the relationship between staff and administration; data management and data manipulation activities; and the need for user-friendly reports. Both counties were focused on improving the relationship between eligibility and line managers, making staffing more conducive to success, and streamlining data management and caseload management. Both groups were looking at streamlining case load management using data management services. Additional strategies that were discussed include using data to evaluate engagement; identifying strategies to use distance learning for partial participation and fuller engagement; reaching hard to serve student populations using distance learning activities; identifying resources to ensure improved program outcomes and performance; and refocusing staff to improve customer service.

## Wrap Up and Next Steps

In closing, Lisa Washington-Thomas thanked CDSS, Mr. Peterson, and ICF staff for helping to create a very successful California Counties Technical Assistance Academy. Ms. Washington-Thomas stated that she was very pleased by all the hard work and great ideas that emerged from the Academy and that she looked forward to hearing of county's results in the near future. John Wagner thanked Federal and State staff, Academy facilitators, and content faculty. He congratulated the county representatives for their hard work and expressed confidence that their good ideas would help the WPR situation in California. He also encouraged the counties to maintain the strong networks they had created with their peers and State staff. CDSS looked forward to hearing further input and feedback from the counties. Mr. Wagner acknowledged that California is facing great challenges around raising their WPR, but he encouraged counties to maintain positive attitudes and continue thinking creatively. He also stated that the most important thing to remember is that everyone here is focused on helping families to escape poverty, not simply raising WPRs. Mr. Wagner closed by saying he looked forward to hearing from everyone soon and was excited to see the results of the Academy.

## Appendix A: Agenda

**MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 22, 2008**

**Noon – 1:00 PM** **REGISTRATION** (Capitol Foyer)

**1:00 - 1:30 PM** **OPENING OF THE PLENARY SESSION (WELCOME)** (Capitol Ballroom B/C)

Speakers: **Lisa Washington-Thomas**, Technical Assistance Branch Chief, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Office of Family Assistance
**Dan Baker**, Region IX TANF Program Manager, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families
**John A. Wagner**, Director, California Department of Social Services
Moderator: **Kent Peterson**, ICF International

**1:30 – 2:45 PM** **OVERVIEW OF THE ACADEMY AND MEET THE CONTENT FACULTY** (Capitol Ballroom B/C)

*In this session, participants will be provided with an overview of the Academy's plenary sessions, content faculty, and team times. Each content faculty member will provide a brief description of their area(s) of expertise, past experience, and an overview of their current work.*

Moderator: **Kent Peterson**, ICF International

**2:45 – 3:00 PM** **OVERVIEW OF THE PILOTS AND NEXT STEPS** (Capitol Ballroom B/C)

Speakers: **Charr Lee Metsker,** Deputy Director, Welfare to Work Division, California Department of Social Services
**Frank Mecca,** Executive Director,
County Welfare Directors Association of California

**3:00 – 3:30 PM** **SPEED NETWORKING** (Capitol Ballroom B/C)

*This session will allow California Academy participants to network and meet other State Directors and Staff to discuss their current and future work, and provide the opportunity for participants to engage in peer-to-peer dialogue around their needs and challenges. Participants will gain knowledge of challenges, successes, and ideas around developing and implementing new programs in their counties.*

Moderators: **Louisa Fuller**, ICF International
**Christina Techico**, ICF International

**3:30 – 3:45 PM** **BREAK AND TRANSITION TO TEAM TIME ROOMS**

## MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 22, 2008

**3:45 – 5:00 PM** **TEAM TIME ORIENTATION AND CONTENT FACULTY SELECTION** (Team Break Out Room Names)

*Each Team is assigned one breakout room for use with content faculty and team meeting sessions throughout the Academy. Each team and facilitator will meet on the selection of content faculty and pilot topics for their team times on Tuesday and Wednesday.*

## TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 23, 2008

**8:15 – 8:30 AM** **CDSS MORNING WELCOME** (Capitol Ballroom B/C)

**REVIEW AND REENERGIZE**
*Kent Peterson reviews the feedback of Day One and outlines the format of Day Two.*

**8:30 – 9:30 AM** **TANF TECHCONNECTIONS ONLINE WORK READINESS ASSESSMENT (OWRA) PRESENTATION** (Capitol Ballroom B/C)

Speakers: **Christina Techico**, ICF International
**Louisa Fuller**, ICF International

Moderator: **John Coakley**, Region IX, U.S Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families

**9:30 - 9:45 AM** **BREAK AND TRANSITION**

**9:45 – 11:30 AM** **TEAM TIME AND CONTENT FACULTY CONSULTATION #1** (Team Break Out Rooms)
*In team times, each team and facilitator will meet with content faculty to discuss one of the following four topics: Bridging activities; Home visits/Sanction reengagement; Employer outreach and job development; and Innovative services/incentives.*

*The Team Time Sessions allow for each team to review what was discussed during previous Content Faculty meeting and prepare for their next Content Faculty consultation session. Academy Facilitator will work with the team to capture all work and thoughts into an outline for a strategic plan and action plan with next steps.*

## TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 23, 2008

**11:30 AM – 12:45 PM** — **LUNCH ON YOUR OWN**

**12:45 – 2:30 PM** — **TEAM TIME AND CONTENT FACULTY CONSULTATION #2** (Team Break Out Rooms)

*Each Team will meet with a second Content Faculty member, covering a second topic. The format for this consultation will mirror that of the first consultation. Additionally, team time will allow each team to review what was discussed during their previous Content Faculty meeting and prepare for their next Content Faculty consultation session. The Academy Facilitator will work with Team to capture all work and thoughts into an outline for a strategic plan and action plan with next steps.*

**2:30 – 2:45 PM** — **BREAK**

**2:45 – 4:30 PM** — **TEAM TIME AND CONTENT FACULTY CONSULTATION #3** (Team Break Out Rooms)
*Each Team will meet with a third Content Faculty member, covering a third topic. The format for this consultation will mirror that of the previous consultations. Additionally, team time will allow each team to review what was discussed during their previous Content Faculty meeting and prepare for their next Content Faculty consultation session. The Academy Facilitator will work with Team to capture all work and thoughts into an outline for a strategic plan and action plan with next steps.*

**5:00 – 6:30 PM** — **NETWORKING RECEPTION (GARDEN TERRACE)**

## WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 24, 2008

**8:15 – 8:30 AM** — **CDSS MORNING WELCOME** (Capitol Ballroom B/C)

**REVIEW AND REENERGIZE**
*Kent Peterson reviews the feedback of Day Two and outlines the format of Day Three.*

**8:30 – 9:30 AM** — **PANEL DISCUSSION: PROMISING PRACTICES AROUND PROVIDING ADEQUATE ENGAGEMENT DATA FOR ALL COUNTIES** (Capitol Ballroom B/C)

Speakers: **Andrew Bush,** Exemplar Human Services, LLC
**Prashant Doshi,** Exemplar Human Services, LLC

Moderator: **David Camporeale**, Program Specialist, U.S Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Office of Family Assistance

## WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 24, 2008

**9:30 – 9:45 AM** **BREAK**

**9:45 – 12:15 PM (break included)** **TEAM TIME AND CONTENT FACULTY CONSULTATION #4** (Team breakout rooms)

*Each Team will meet with a fourth Content Faculty member, covering a fourth topic. The format for this consultation will mirror that of previous consultations. Additionally, team time will allow each team to review what was discussed during their previous Content Faculty consultations. The Academy Facilitator will work with Team to capture all work and thoughts into an outline for a strategic plan and action plan with next steps. In addition, teams will work with Academy Facilitator to prepare for the team report out after lunch.*

**12:15 PM – 1:30 PM** **LUNCH ON YOUR OWN**

**1:30 – 3:15 PM** **PLENARY: CAPTURING THE LEARNING** (Capitol Ballroom B/C)

Moderator: **Kent Peterson**, ICF International

*Each team will provide a brief presentation regarding what they have achieved, what challenges they anticipate facing, their ideas to remedy such challenges, and ongoing support they may need from their Federal, State, and local partners going forward.*

**3:15 – 3:30 PM** **WRAP UP AND NEXT STEPS** (Capitol Ballroom B/C)

*Federal and State partners will give closing remarks and distribute evaluation forms.*

Speakers: **Lisa Washington-Thomas**, Technical Assistance Branch Chief, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Office of Family Assistance

**John A. Wagner,** Director, California Department of Social Services

## Appendix B: Pilot and Non-Pilot Counties

| Pilot Counties | Non-Pilot Counties |
|---|---|
| Alameda | Humboldt |
| Kern | Madera |
| Los Angeles | Monterey |
| Merced | Riverside |
| San Bernardino | San Luis Obispo |
| San Diego | San Mateo |
| Solano | Sonoma |
| Tehama | Tulare |
| | Ventura |
| | Yolo |

## Appendix C: Content Faculty Descriptions

**David Aguado** is the Director of Operations for America Works of New York and America Works of New Jersey. In this capacity Mr. Aguado is responsible for managing relations with the Human Resource Administration's, Back to Work program. In addition to the general public assistance population he has initiated new ventures with children aging out of foster care, non-custodial parents, food stamp participants as well as working with families living in homeless shelters. In New York City, Mr. Aguado manages three offices. This year he started up a new operation for Mayor Booker of Newark, New Jersey to employ returning prisoners. Prior to joining America Works two and a half years ago, Mr. Aguado had 12 years in management and marketing in the private sector. He is bi-lingual in English and Spanish.

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**Feliciano Alvarado** has been employed by Los Angeles County Department of Public Social Services since 1972. He possesses vast experience in developing highly successful programs. Currently, he is responsible for all GAIN compliance/sanction policies and procedures, which includes the highly successful GAIN Sanction Home Visit Outreach (GSHVO). Since implementation in October 2005, and through an outreach process, involving telephone contacts, letters, and home visits the GSHVO is responsible for reducing sanctions by over 10,000 or 50% in Los Angeles County.

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**Daylan Beamon**, Business Development Manager of Business Access, consults with workforce development professionals to design the most effective programs for their unique needs. Mr. Beamon has successfully overseen the planning, design specifications, staff training, and implementation of more than 60 distance learning programs since 2000. Business Access has implemented 106 Technology Based Learning programs for workforce development that have yielded over 1,000,000 hours of participation.

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**David Buchholz** is the Director of Program Management for Business Access. In this role he oversees the implementation and day-to-day operations of all of Business Access' in-home programs, which to date, include 106 different workforce development and TANF programs with online participation that exceeds 1,000,000 hours.

Working with populations that include people on welfare, people re-entering the community after being in prison, at-risk youth, people with disabilities, and others, Mr. Buchholz's department manages and monitors participant results while working closely with government programs as they work through the processes required to implement new and innovative programs. Under his purview, Business Access in-home programs have maintained stellar results such as an 85% employment rate more than 12 months after program exit and 84% off of welfare more than 24 months after program exit.

Prior to joining Business Access, Mr. Buchholz managed operations for the One-Stop Centers in Austin, Texas where he was responsible for meeting and exceeding state and federal performance measures. During his tenure, Mr. Buchholz managed an overhaul and re-alignment of programs and staffing

structures to increase efficiency and performance. Mr. Buchholz's early career also includes working with at-risk youth in residential treatment centers and four years of managing and operating his own business.

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**Robyn Cenizal** is a graduate of Southern Illinois University's Workforce Education and Development Bachelors Program, a nationally certified Family Life Educator, and a 23-year veteran employee of the City of Jacksonville. She has extensive experience in organizational development, human resource management, budgeting, public relations, and community engagement. Additionally, she served on the Mayor's Public Service Grant Committee for five years with oversight of approximately $12.5 million in grant funds distributed locally to social service organizations.

Ms. Cenizal developed the City's Office of Volunteer Services which serves as a human resources office for unpaid staff supporting programs throughout city government. She assisted with research and development of the Mayor's Office of Faith and Community Based Partnerships which opened in January 2005 and offered capacity building technical assistance to local grassroots organizations.
She is currently serving as the Executive Administrator for the Jacksonville Network for Strengthening Families Initiative, a program she co-developed and implemented in 2002. The program offers a holistic approach to strengthening families. Objectives of the program include increasing the number of prepared marriages, reducing divorce rates and encouraging financial and emotional support for children. These objectives are achieved through providing families with empowerment training using Dr. Stephen Covey's "7 Habits of Successful Families", a curriculum she worked with Dr. John Covey to customize for Jacksonville. Families are then connected to issue specific services offered through one of 54 Network Partners. Over 3,000 participants have successfully graduated from the program.

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**Frank DeCarlo** is currently the Director of Employment for the Erie County Department of Social Services. In this capacity, he administers employment services for 12,000 participants and manages a staff of 225 employees. Vital to his position is his ability to coordinate services with other governmental and community organizations involved in similar activities throughout New York State. Recently, he facilitated the complete reorganization of the Employment Division, centralizing functions that enable participants to better access both case management and employment services.

Mr. DeCarlo is directly involved with obtaining funds and planning numerous initiatives designed to assist participants in meeting the new federal TANF requirements. His tenure has been marked by his ability to problem solve and implement challenging programming and services that have yielded measurable results. He has implemented a unique subsidized employment program which annually places over 400 TANF participants into jobs. Over the past five years, this initiative has recorded a 75% retention rate for participants employed through this program. The emphasis of the program is to meet hiring needs of local employers and train welfare participants to become a viable part of the workforce.

In addition, community sites have been developed to accommodate required work experience activities and educational opportunities for TANF participants. These sites have proved invaluable for obtaining the current 41% TANF participation rate. The sites are located at various not-for-profit agencies and community

centers that are strategically located throughout the city providing better access to participants. This concept also provides hands-on training as well as additional supportive services at the sites including job development and intensive case management services. Mr. DeCarlo also serves on the Vocational Technical Advisory Council at EOC; a division of the State University of New York at Buffalo.

Mr. DeCarlo received his Bachelor's of Science Degree from the State University of New York at Buffalo in 1977 and his Master Degree in Human Services Management from Buffalo State College in 1990.

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**Deborah Eisner**, a Consultant at Public Consulting Group, has significant experience providing policy analysis, business diagnosis, program design, expenditure analysis, and implementation assistance for Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) programs and projects.

Ms. Eisner has advised several governmental agencies on responses to changes to the federal TANF law mandated by the Deficit Reduction Act of 2005 and the *Final Rule* published in February 2008. Currently, she is working with the County of San Diego to design and implement an upfront engagement program, with the States of Massachusetts and Michigan to access the TANF Contingency Fund, and with the States of Georgia and Utah to identify TANF MOE eligible spending. Her work in San Diego County included a review of current county practices and recommendations to help the county improve its work participation rate. The Contingency Fund and TANF MOE work includes the identification of existing state expenditures that can be leveraged to meet TANF requirements.

Previously, Ms. Eisner worked with the Tennessee Department of Human Services to transition its Families First TANF program off an AFDC waiver and to bring the program into compliance with new federal regulations. She has also performed general TANF consulting work for the Massachusetts Department of Transitional Assistance and Chicago Public Schools. In this capacity, she researched regulatory and compliance questions about TANF and the impact of the Deficit Reduction Act.

In August 2008, Ms. Eisner co-presented a discussion on "Approaches to Upfront Engagement for TANF Clients" at the National Association of Welfare Research and Statistics (NAWRS) annual workshop that highlighted the San Diego County diversion pilot project. She presented on performance-based contracting at the same conference in August 2007. Additionally, she has prepared and presented a training session for PCG employees about the Deficit Reduction Act and its impact on TANF policy and procedure.

Prior to joining PCG, Ms. Eisner was a community journalist in the Boston metropolitan area. She holds a Bachelor of Arts degree from Brandeis University and a Master of Science in Public Affairs degree from the McCormack Graduate School of Policy Studies at the University of Massachusetts-Boston.

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S**usan Hansen** is an Employment Services Coordinator with the Orange County Employment and Training Administration in Orange County, New York. She began working for Orange County Employment and Training Administration in 1995. She has coordinated the LIVES Program which links disabled TANF participants with Vocational Services for Individuals with Disabilities. The participants received

case management, skills training, job coaching, and placement. She also worked as a Job Developer to introduce Orange County employers to the various services provided by Orange County's One-Stop Employment Center. She counseled TANF and TANF 200% participants in the area of career/personal development and interviewing techniques. Career goals were met through a combination of On-the-Job and vocational skilled training programs. She has coordinated the Securing Prosperity Grant, a model pilot program that connected WIA One-Stop services with the training and placement of TANF individuals. She also coordinated the Educational Gain for Employment Program, a program that partnered Orange County Employment and Training Administration with Orange/Ulster BOCES, a vocational technical center. BOCES and ETA recruited TANF students, increased educational levels, obtained credentials, and placed and retained TANF enrollees in quality employment.

Ms. Hansen currently supervises one of the Welfare to Work Units in Orange County. This unit serves both TANF and Safety Net populations.

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**Sandie Hoback,** Consultant, has over 25 years experience in improving the delivery of workforce development and human service programs. As a welfare director for the state of Oregon, she led the state in one of the most effective and successful welfare reform efforts in the nation. Much of this success was dependent upon changing the culture of the agency, from one preoccupied with process to one focused on positive participant outcomes. Underlying this cultural shift was the development and use of performance outcomes and measures, as well as integrating needed services from a number of agencies into a comprehensive system. Additionally, Ms. Hoback has extensive knowledge and experience in developing and implementing private sector subsidized employment programs.

For the last several years, Ms. Hoback has been consulting nationally. She has assisted numerous states and cities in improving and integrating their delivery of workforce development and human service programs.

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**Mark Hoover** is Executive Director of The Nicholson Foundation whose mission is to improve the lives of families and children through enhancing the resources and program effectiveness in the city of Newark, in Essex and in other northern New Jersey counties. The programs include offender reentry, child welfare, the education system, and poverty reduction to name a few. He is also CEO of Hoover International Partners which provides consulting services exclusively outside of New Jersey to a variety of cities, and dozens of states, non-profits, and foundations.

Mr. Hoover is an accomplished international consultant. In the past four years, he has directed the consulting team engaged by the Israeli Government to implement a welfare-to-work reform. He has also advised a number of European governments, including Germany and Holland. He has a major engagement with the Labor Ministry in Denmark and has recently completed consulting service with the Jamaican Government.

Previously, Mr. Hoover worked for the Giuliani Administration for over four years as the First Deputy Commissioner of The Human Resources Administration for New York City functioning as The Chief Operating Officer. This organization consisted of 17,000 employees and a budget of over $18 billion annually. Extensive reform and development of unique and special programs were implemented to address

the many challenges of the over 2 million New Yorkers served by the agency's extensive welfare, health, work force, mental health, and substance abuse programs. Most notably, welfare caseloads decreased from around 1.2 million people to fewer than 500,000.

Mr. Hoover has over 30 years of high-level government experience in human services, welfare reform, and workforce development. He was one of the key principals in the Thompson Administration in Wisconsin in implementing a series of comprehensive human services, workforce development and welfare reform initiatives including W-2, which played a major role in shaping the Federal Welfare Reform legislation, passed by Congress in 1996.

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**Monte Murphy** is the Shasta College CalWORKs program Project Coordinator. He began his collegiate career at Shasta College in 1991 after working in the private sector as a Manager, District Supervisor, and Vice President for a major retail chain. Mr. Murphy's first assignment was with was the EOPS/CARE department where he worked for over ten years. For the past seven years, he has been the Project Coordinator for the Shasta College CalWORKs program.

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**Marsha Netus** has more than ten years professional experience in Workforce Development. She began her career specializing in the welfare to work population with America Works. Her passion for this field led her to help hundreds of TANF participants move from a dependency status to becoming self-sufficient. She is a true believer that when given the right resources, people will succeed.

Ms. Netus has worked for America Works in a variety of roles including; Corporate Representative, Orientation and Assessment Instructor, and Training Manager. She currently serves as the General Manager for America on Demand, a temporary staffing agency, and the Work Experience Manager for America Works. In her dual roles, she has designed and implemented creative initiatives to enhance client participation and improve overall Federal and State work participation rates.

Ms. Netus earned her Master's degree in Career Development at the College of New Rochelle, and her Bachelor of Arts in Speech Communication from Iona College. She is currently a doctoral candidate in Educational Leadership at the University of Phoenix. Ms. Netus served on numerous committees speaking on various topics related to workforce development. She served as a panelist specializing in retention and working with difficult populations. She is a member of the National Career Development Association, Society for Human Resource Management, and the National Association of Professional Women.

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**Anthony Ong**, an Associate Manager at Public Consulting Group (PCG), has twelve years of experience in the areas of policy analysis, business diagnosis, program design, program evaluation, expenditure analysis, and implementation of projects involving nearly all federal health and human services funding sources, including: TANF and TANF MOE, Titles II (SSA), III (OAA), IV-D (Child Support), IV-E (Foster Care), XVI (SSI), XIX (Medicaid), CCDF (Child Care), Food Stamps, and SSBG (Social Services). His expertise

of the various funding sources and their eligibilities has been critical for the development of new strategies to improve TANF agency performance in the most effective and creative manner.

Currently, in the County of San Diego (CA), Mr. Ong is managing the development and implementation of a pilot project for an "upfront" diversion program that will identify and channel the most work-ready individuals toward incentive-based short-term intensive job search and readiness activities as a way to help participants gain self-sufficiency and avoid long-term TANF assistance. Additionally, Mr. Ong manages a project with the Commonwealth of Massachusetts that draws $91.8M in additional annual federal funds from the TANF Contingency Fund and converts it to state general revenue. Mr. Ong also manages a project in the State of Georgia that is assisting in the identification of new state sources of TANF MOE, as well as the development of a 5-year business plan to manage these expenditures. In 2006-2007, Mr. Ong served as the Project Manager of a complete re-design of the State of Tennessee TANF program that updated the program from an expiring AFDC waiver to a full TANF structured program that meets the DRA and subsequent TANF Final Rule requirements. Mr. Ong worked on TANF and TANF MOE engagements dating back to 1999 with the states of Colorado and North Carolina as well as the Chicago Public Schools. In August 2008, Mr. Ong co-presented on "Approaches to Upfront Engagement for TANF Clients" at the National Association of Welfare Research and Statistics (NAWRS) annual workshop that highlighted the San Diego County diversion pilot project.

Mr. Ong earned a Master of Business Administration from Clark University in 2005, a Master of Science in Public Affairs from the McCormack Graduate School of Policy Studies at the University of Massachusetts Boston in 1999, and Bachelor of Arts in Political Science from the University of Massachusetts Amherst in 1994.

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**Paul Saeman** is a member of Turner Government Operations and works as part of the American Institute for Full Employment team. Mr. Saeman has over 26 years of experience in developing and managing welfare and welfare-reform programs in the Wisconsin State government and the New York City government..

During the development of Wisconsin Works, Mr. Saeman was the primary developer of the supporting IT system and has since held numerous management and supervisory positions responsible for systems development, analysis, federal reporting, and program evaluation. In both Wisconsin and New York City, he was responsible for leading agency-wide groups charged with increasing work program participation for TANF, FSET, and other work programs. He was integral to the development of Wisconsin's innovative W-2 program and New York City's welfare reform initiatives. He has degrees in government, administration, and business automation.

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**Jason Turner** is currently the President of Turner Government Operations, and specializes in improving management effectiveness and extending work-based reforms throughout human service programs. Mr. Turner served as the Director of the former AFDC program at HHS between 1989 and 1993. At that time, Mr. Turner was responsible for the Federal implementation of the newly enacted JOBS welfare-to-work program. From 1998 through 2001, Mr. Turner worked for New York's Mayor Giuliani as his Human Resources Commissioner. His continual efforts regarding work-based reforms across the country are widely respected. Mr. Turner holds a B.A. in History from Columbia University.

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## Appendix E: Evaluation Summary

### I. Overview

On September 22 – 24, 2008, the California Counties Technical Assistance Academy, a facilitated two and a half day event, introduced staff from eighteen California counties to new programs, strategies, and ideas to strengthen their capacity to achieve higher levels of work participation rates. Over 100 participants attended the Academy, including representatives from 18 county agencies in California, California Department of Social Services (CDSS), the California Welfare Directors Association (CWDA), the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Administration for Children and Families, Office of Family Assistance, and facilitators from ICF International, Inc. Content specialists from around the country, including California, Florida, New York, Texas, Wisconsin, and others, provided resources, technical assistance, and guidance to counties in creating and designing programs that promote greater self-sufficiency for CalWORKs participants.

Sixty-five participants filled out evaluations of this Academy, and their scores and sample responses are detailed in Section II. Eleven questions were asked, four being on a Likert type scale, and seven being open ended. The feedback of the Academy was overwhelmingly positive. Participants appreciated the design of the Academy, which enabled counties to specify which topics they wanted to focus on, who to meet with, and allowed for a great deal of individual attention. They also appreciated the wide range of knowledge shared by content faculty. Of the scores on the first four questions, adequate time allotted for action planning, although still high, was scored the lowest (4.12 out of 5). The appropriateness and relevance of the topics and sessions included in the agenda was scored the highest (4.58 out of 5).

Out of the four identified Academy content topics of bridging activities, employer outreach and job development, innovative services and incentives, and home visits and sanction re-engagement activities, 32 participants or 35% focused on bridging activities. Participants found the Business Access program in Dallas, Texas, an at home distance learning program, a new and innovative idea. Many counties focused on multiple activities, and these numbers are incorporated into each activity. Critical concepts participants learned were grouped into concepts around bridging activities (15), other (11), engagement (10), data (8), employment (7), and collaboration/partnerships (6). Concepts around bridging activities were the most cited because most likely it was the most focused on topic.

Issues requiring additional discussion were grouped into categories of specific content (14) (intricate, based on counties' discussions), none (7), funding (6), general action planning and implementation (5), evaluation (2), and other (1). Remaining challenges were grouped similarly into specific content (20), general action planning and implementation (12), funding (11), and evaluation (4), with the addition of collaborations/partnerships (3). For pilot counties, responses on additional resources needed to fully implement pilot projects mostly pertained to funding (19 or 73%).

Other categories included specific topics (3), general action planning and implementation (3), and evaluation (1). Lastly, other overall comments participants had about the Academy were grouped into comments on the Academy structure/model (14), general comments (14), content of the Academy (12), and facilitation comments (7). Sample responses that include positive and negative feedback, where applicable, are provided under each category. Sample responses are in verbatim and not edited. In some categories, where responses were individual, all are provided.

## II. Evaluation Scores and Sample Comments

1. **The Academy agenda included appropriate topics and sessions that are relevant to my county and the state.**

| Strongly Disagree 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | Strongly Agree 5 | Average Score |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | 2 | 23 | **40** | **4.58** |

2. **Speakers, Academy Facilitators, and Content Faculty at the Academy were well-prepared.**

| Strongly Disagree 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | Strongly Agree 5 | Average Score |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | 6 | 22 | **37** | **4.48** |

3. **Speakers, Academy Facilitators, and Content Faculty effectively engaged participants in interactive discussions.**

| Strongly Disagree 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | Strongly Agree 5 | Average Score |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | 3 | 24 | **38** | **4.54** |

4. **The Academy agenda allotted an adequate amount of time for each county's team to develop an action plan for implementing new ideas.**

| Strongly Disagree 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | Strongly Agree 5 | Average Score |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 9 | 25 | **27** | **4.16** |

5. **What did you find most useful about attending this Academy (i.e., any immediate or long-term benefits to you/your staff that you anticipate as a result of attending)?**

**Responses Pertaining to Academy Content (33) *(Sample Responses):***

- We have picked up many ideas that we want to implement in our county. We hope to make changes in three areas in order to increase WPR overall.
- The multitude of ideas presented. Ideas have re-energized me and will certainly benefit staff.
- I was extremely impressed with the caliber and wide range of knowledge presented by the content experts...outstanding.
- It was comforting to hear that participating counties struggle with similar issues. The strategies presented by counties similar to ours were great. It opened the possibility that they could be adopted in our county with positive results.
- Info on OWRA and Business Access.
- There were a number of great topics—it will take time to decide how valuable the next steps will be. It was useful to be able to concentrate on areas that we felt would benefit our county.
- Ideas for restructuring WTW engagement process to speed service delivery—can be applied immediately, and promote distance learning to "fill the gap"—long term.
- Excellent information on how to improve our ability to engage customers and help them move to self-sufficiency. We will take back some ideas to re-evaluate how we do business.

**Responses Pertaining to Academy Model/Structure (29) *(Sample Responses):***

- I liked being able to discuss/plan/work with my county—we don't seem to be able to do this when back at the office.
- Having the ability to interact and engage with specialists rather than having a lecture type environment.
- Amount of time devoted to county time—and the ongoing assistance of the facilitator.
- Good structure, good facilitation.
- Time set aside to brainstorm, talk with peers, discuss problems with consultants, and application of discussion into goals/action plan.
- Having other county members as content specialists, because with budget constraints utilizing vendors may not be feasible.
- Depth of information on strategies vs. general overview we usually get at the larger conferences.
- That our entire team was together and working on a common goal.

- Our facilitator was great. She helped us move through issues/problems and develop a plan.
- This event helped strengthen the partnership between OFA and the state, and promoted collaboration across counties—very well done.

6. **Please describe the most critical concepts or ideas you learned through this Academy that will best help your county or the state achieve higher TANF work participation rates.**

**Responses Primarily Regarding Bridging Activities (15) *(Sample Responses):***

- Business solutions, bridging solutions through the computer.
- Distance learning model.
- Distance learning to maximize participation and reduce barriers (transportation and child care). Expanding subsidized employment (sharing contract template, letters).
- Values of distance learning to bridge the gap for partially employed persons.
- Long distance learning that is great for our participants was a fresh idea—we have paid work experience but only use public entities. Here we found other states/counties are using private employers as well, some are going to explore this.

**Other Responses (11) *(Sample Responses):***

- Making a paradigm shift for TANF clients from "what we (state/county) make them do to what opportunities they have."
- Accountability of clients, staff, and managers—expectations need to be developed.
- Not to get bogged down in the plan details—keep our eye on the goal. Customers should drive our services, not us.
- Exemplar tools, funding structures/streams/sources, networking with employers—private, changing through paradigms.
- One idea/initiative is not enough. In order to be successful, we need to implement multiple ideas. This is in line with the varied populations we have.

**Responses Primarily Regarding Engagement (10) *(Sample Responses):***

- Restructuring intake process to maximize/speed entry into WPR countable activities.
- Looking at other activities as upfront engagement, also distance learning.
- Sanction engagement, dissecting the county's CalWORKS E/S caseload by category then analyzing what works for specific category.
- Rapid track idea for up-front engagement: pull out those work-ready applicant and get them immediately doing Job Search to find new employment.
- Focus on engaging immediately, bring up job development, develop One-Stop, develop WEX, and request that CalWIN project develop/fix ES system.
- Networking with other counties and collecting information on sanction rates and WPR just reinforced my belief that lower sanction % does not correlate to a higher WPR.

**Reponses Primarily Regarding Data Management (8) *(Sample Responses):***

- The most critical concepts were regarding harnessing of data in a way that is useful to staff to aid in keeping folks engaged.
- Efficiencies regarding data and how it impacts WPR.
- Data coordination and tracking for a QA tool and reporting needs.
- Status versus performance data, starting to think about creative funding, next steps for process improvement now that we completed our GAP analysis, and "functional assessment."

**Responses Primarily Regarding Employment (7)** ***(Sample Responses):***

- Subsidized private employment, increased client participation in goal setting/planning, distance learning to bridge activities.
- Engaging private sector to help us increase WPR through subsidized, unsubsidized employment.
- Having a mentor during WEX or when clients have started a new job is critical in their success and retention of the job.
- Performance-based contracting, re-thinking philosophies and approaches of getting families to work, and applying wrap-around or holistic approaches.

**Responses Primarily Regarding Partnerships/Collaboration (6)** ***(Sample Responses):***

- We need more partnerships and have to re-organize our priorities and re-focus our philosophies.
- Very important to work on collaboration with partners and the methods that can be used to do so.

7. **Please indicate whether your team focused on bridging activities, home visits and sanction reengagement activities, employer outreach and job development, and/or innovative services and incentives.**

- Bridging Activities (32).
- Employer Outreach and Job Development (21).
- Innovative Services and Incentives (18).
- Home Visits and Sanction Re-engagement (9).

**All Topics (6)** ***(Sample Responses):***

- We really looked at all. Focused on bridging activities and innovative services. Highest percentages of those who don't meet WPR are partial participation.
- Actually, we are interested in all of them in our county and also brought that focus here.
- State worker—I focused on all.

**Other (5)** ***(Sample Responses):***

- Focusing on message to clients and staff—non-pilot county.
- None of the above—we focused on expectations and accountability.
- We are a non-pilot county—we are going to focus more on our message.

- We did—least was innovative services/incentives because it is too much money.
- Internal redesign, shift motivation, develop staff and client relationships, and employer outreach.

8. **Were there issues or topics that required additional discussion at this Academy? If so, please describe.**

**Responses on Specific Content (14)** ***(Sample Responses):***

- Job development/outreach.
- Motivating staff and having staff buy-in. Getting the message out.
- Concern—tracking distance learning hours, if not using contractor who already has reports developed; how to engage local community colleges in distance learning expansion; how to engage existing colleges or universities who provide distance learning in the verification process.
- More information from counties that have actually implemented some of the programs that were promoted at the Academy.
- One question consistently asked of the speakers centered on full family sanctions and the effects on children and families in their area.
- Additional discussion on subsidized employment models, non-TANF funding sources from initiatives.
- Bridging activities.
- Practical considerations given fiscal environment.
- Specific strategies for engagement.
- Perhaps more truly operational strategies for implementation (larger county).
- It would be good to focus on standards/expectations for staff and accountability.
- With counties identifying the need to increase core hour activities—a discussion of funding for subsidized employment and grant-based OJT.
- What is the state doing to bolster the requirements and/or regulations to improve WPR? E.g. allow unannounced home visits to sanctioned families.

**None (7).**

**Responses Regarding Funding (6)** ***(Sample Responses):***

- Funding and consistent data collection for WPR.
- Funding sources/streams/how to secure resources for distance learning and consultants.
- Possibly the state-wide budget that was just approved and how it may impact our initiatives.
- How to accomplish what we need to accomplish with the available tools, even though we don't have funding or adequate staff to do so.

**Responses Regarding Action Planning and General Implementation (5)** ***(Sample Responses):***

- We thought we were headed toward bridging activities but once our goal was stated, it became innovative services and incentives. This meant we had to spend additional time deciding our action steps.
- I believe the academy served its purpose well. However, will take us a bit to digest the information, share with county—as we share we might identify topics/ideas requiring additional discussion.
- We appreciated the time with our facilitator. She really helped move us along—we may benefit from some guidance from her as we progress.

**Responses Regarding Evaluation Component of the Pilot (2) *(Sample Responses):***

- Evaluation, but that will be covered in a follow up conference call through individual state/county calls.
- Yes, it would have been helpful to know what data would be tracked/evaluated so we could correlate it to our goals/objectives.

**Other Response *(Sample Responses):***

- The final exercise seemed fairly uncomfortable.

9. **What remaining challenges would you like addressed through ongoing technical assistance?**

**Responses on Specific Content (20) *(Sample Responses):***

- How to move partial participation to full participation; and hearing what is working for other states and counties.
- Job retention, support, mentoring to help family remain self-sufficient while remaining on aid.
- Data evaluation, collections, and methodology.
- Many of our challenges are internal—getting staff buy-in and consistency. We have a lot of good ideas, but are frustrated with the implementation of new ideas.
- Full family sanctions to help increase our WPR.
- Improve CalWIN (ES).
- WPR is not a valid measure of self-sufficiency—let's look at placement, wages and job retention at the state and federal levels as measurements of self-sufficiency.
- WPR—state alignment with fed expectation. Low WPR, low engagement, reduced funding.
- Pilot counties were encouraged to focus on a topic, therefore, limited exposure to other topics/speakers—would like the opportunity for discussion on employer outreach and innovative services.
- Gaining worker/employer "buy-in." With so many challenges and implementation of new programs, workers are not as excited about the subject and initiative as we are!
- Need more practical applications—proven strategies to improve WPR.

**Responses Regarding Action Planning and General Implementation (12) *(Sample Responses):***

- Refining actions plans and implementation plans.

- Additional contact/guidance from experts as the project evolves.
- Assistance with implementations and assistance in locating sufficient funds with which to operate a robust pilot that can generate meaningful results.
- Ongoing technical support for solicited pilots. Additional expectations and advice.
- Progress, challenges, results from meeting.

**Responses Regarding Funding (11) *(Sample Responses):***

- How to leverage or find funding.
- More information on funding opportunities.
- Funding and coordination with business access for larger discounts.
- We would benefit from more info on FSET $ (several experts suggested this as a funding source) and WOTC info (so as to better market it).

**Responses Regarding Evaluation Component (4) *(Sample Responses):***

- Assistance on data collections and project evaluation.
- Developing the new program, designing the evaluation component at time of developing program to help guide programs.

**Responses Regarding Collaboration/Networking (3) *(Sample Responses):***

- Strengthening partnerships, ideas on changing staff mentality to "we have to help the patient" and "we want to help the patient improve their situation."
- How about letting us bring out potential and existing partners so they can see what we're all about at the unified, higher level.

10. **If your county is a pilot county, what additional resources would you like to assist your county in fully implementing your pilot project?**

**Responses Regarding Funding (19) *(Sample Responses):***

- Funding to implement the program, i.e. distance learning and consultants.
- Financial assistance, continued contact with experts and staff. A chance to talk and network with the pilot counties later in the process.
- Funding (we understand that none is available), and continue meetings at state level with Chancellor regarding cooperation of colleges in providing required verifications.
- Pilot measurement, funding sources for pilots, and technical assistance calls and/or visits.
- Measurement of pilot, assistance in locating additional funding, assistance with consultation with vendors/subject matter experts (distance learning).
- We would like assistance (money) to bring a consultant/trainer to our county to address culture changes and internal relationships. Content specialists' availability when funding does not exist. A commitment to assist/provide additional information beyond the Academy (when funding does not exist).

**Responses Regarding Resources on Specific Topics (3) *(Sample Responses):***

- Collaboration among counties to save $ on distance learning, etc.

- System gap analysis, development of survey tools and evaluations, will know more once we get into the planning and implementation.
- To be able to have consistent data collection process for WPR.

**Responses Regarding Action Planning and General Implementation (3) *(Sample Responses):***

- Discussion of final goals/action steps/measurements with our facilitator.
- Ongoing technical support for solicited pilots. Additional expectations and advice
- Ongoing information sharing.

**Responses Regarding Evaluation Component of the Pilot (1) *(Sample Responses):***

- An evaluator because we don't have funding to hire one, let alone the time it takes our county to go through the contracting process to acquire one.

11. **What other comments would you like to share regarding your participation in the Academy?**

**Academy Structure/Model Comments (14) *(Sample Responses):***

- I'd like more time available for counties to discuss their practices in regards to the four areas we have focused on. I'd like to see more presentations from California on successful practices.
- A great amount of good information to process and develop. Love the idea. Should take this approach over time.
- Like the set up of the Academy and the opportunity to share with other counties.
- It was wonderful to pick and choose the topics that are interesting to our counties.
- This individual attention was fantastic. I am taking more away and actually plan to use more than at any conference I have attended in 12 years.
- I really liked the format of counties determining which content experts they wanted to hear from and the content experts came to the counties which allowed the county to continue to work within their teams.
- The team time was extremely valuable for gleaning ideas and concepts from the experts, but could have used more time to develop our county action plan.
- We would have liked to hear county/non-vendor content specialists speak longer during plenary/team time.
- Helpful, perhaps dragged out just a little, just a little drawn out for non-pilot counties. Thank you!
- I have received a number of positive comments and expressions of appreciation for this event—from individual counties as well as CWDA representatives. Logistically, it was very well carried out.
- Content experts were invaluable. Facilitators made the process work.

**General Comments (14) *(Sample Responses):***

- Loved it!!
- This was an awesome event and tremendous opportunity for California and the participating counties.

- This had been extremely helpful in sparking ideas for change in our county. Thank you for putting this together!
- This was an excellent experience for our county team. We appreciate the opportunity to participate and look forward to implementing our pilot.
- Good investment of our time. Thank you!
- Nicely done! Thank you all for having this academy. Great job!
- This was a great idea. Than you for inviting us. Please continue to being other states' ideas to California.
- Very friendly folks who make everyone feel welcome.

**Academy Content Comments (12) *(Sample Responses):***

- Good discussion, good networking.
- Excellent in both content and organization.
- I really liked hearing from other practitioners at the Academy. I didn't feel as much value from the "for profit" vendors.
- Enjoyed the information. Appreciated the technical assistance from the state and federal agencies.
- This conference was a good idea especially because of out of state speakers sharing info instead of our own counties talking about our issues—new ideas.
- One session not as information, rather than share specific examples of successful practices that could be adopted, felt like selling service.
- Outstanding faculty assigned to us—just great in every respect.
- I enjoyed talking to other counties, listening to what they have implemented, what worked, what needs to be changed.
- We are as a county gained valuable ideas to consider and possibly implement these ideas to increase the WPR.
- This has been beneficial—a lot of new ideas and good contacts.

**Facilitation Comments (7) *(Sample Responses):***

- Our facilitator was awesome! She kept us on track and moved us forward.
- Appreciate the support but facilitators need to guide discussion but also allow teams to have discussion in a flow pattern that works best for them—not necessarily what the facilitator has in mind.
- Facilitators need to be stronger and standard/across the board. Some were better than others. Facilitators should not leave team time discussions. Should be there to help feed questions and improve the flow of sessions. Presenters need to be stronger about connecting the dots and circling back about how county can implement the strategies at home.
- We really appreciated our facilitator. She kept pushing us and helped us re-focus when we have trouble getting to our goals.
- Good opportunity. Could use a little more discussion time in small groups with other counties, not just experts. Thanks to our facilitator.