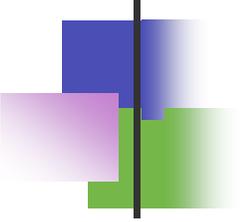


***The Family Employment Program (FEP)
Study of Utah:
Agency Innovation for
Improving Outcomes***

Prepared for:
2010 Heartland TANF Conference – Chicago, IL 2010

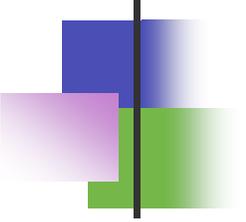
Helen Thatcher
Utah's Department of Workforce Services (DWS)
Mary Beth Vogel-Ferguson
Social Research Institute (SRI), University of Utah



Family Employment Program - FEP Study of Utah

- Five year longitudinal cohort study
- 2006, 2007, 2008: customer interviews
- 2009 – 2010: administrative data

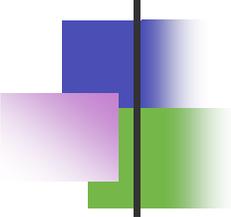
- DWS research questions/agenda:
 - Identify initial characteristics
 - Track client changes
 - Identify patterns of FEP usage over time



Method: Study Sample

- Wave 1 - Initial sample: Jan. – Sept. 2006
 - New case (had only received 2 – 9 months cash)
 - Participation type case
(no undocumented, specified relative cases)
 - Cash assistance open at Wave 1

	Sample size	Response rate
Wave 1	1144	65%
Wave 2	923	81%
Wave 3	813	88%



Waves 1 Surprises (N = 1144)

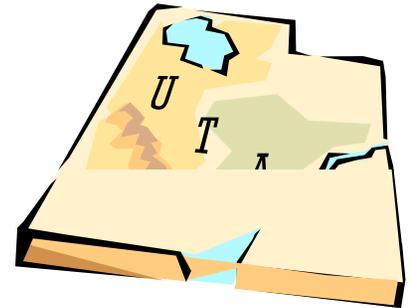
- Average age at first FEP entry: 28 years
- 58% are or have been married
- 65% grew up in a two parent home
- Average number of children = 2.1

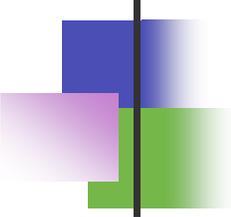
- 70% enter with a high school diploma/GED
 - 26% were in school when FEP started
- 64% had worked most of their adult lives
 - 29% were working when FEP started

Foundations of Welfare Policy

- Policy based on those who are:
 - Young (late teen, early 20's)
 - Single never married
 - Limited work and education history

- Respondents fitting criteria: 16%





Respondent's Perspective

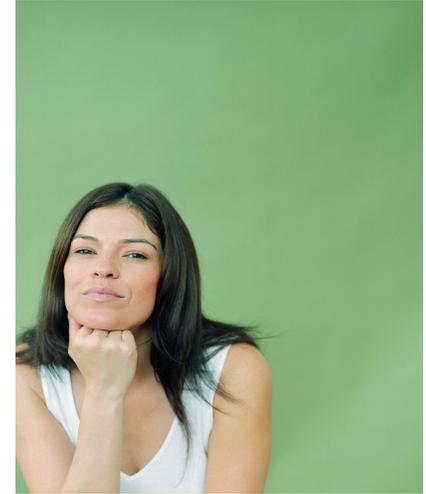
- *That very first time when you applied for cash assistance how would you describe your feelings?*
 - Desperate, scared, confused, hopeless: 25%
 - Embarrassed, ashamed, humiliated: 24.5%
 - Sad, mad, depressed, generally bad: 21%
 - Mixed: embarrassed but desperate: 12%
 - Grateful, relieved, hopeful, excited: 10%

Comments:

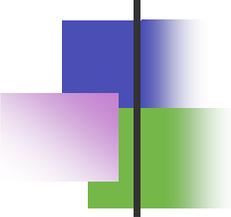


- “I was humiliated because I have never had to do it before in my life. Before my accident I was always independent and took care of myself and family.”

Comments:



- “In despair – I grew up thinking that people on welfare were less, my family looked down on people on welfare; Ashamed – I felt judged by my family.”
- “I just couldn’t believe it, I came from a good family, but through my mistakes I ended up needing it. I felt like there was something wrong with me, like a welfare mom.”



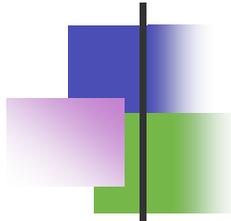
Wave 1: FEP Entry

- Primary factors leading to seeking cash assistance:
 - Change in customer's income 50%
 - Lost job
 - Physically/mentally unable to work
 - Maternity leave
 - Change in partner's income 35%
 - Spouse/partner lost job
 - Separation from Spouse/partner
 - Change in access to parent/family support 10%

Lessons Learned: Wave 1



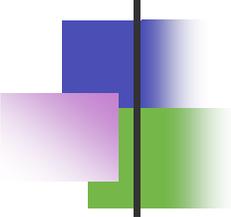
- Client characteristics vary greatly from typical perceptions of TANF recipients
- Many (about 1/3) participants arrived seeking minimal help to reconnect to employment
- Gratitude for services received mixed with frustration when system hinders taking personal responsibility for the future
- Relationship with employment counselor key to positive experience



Waves 2 and 3: General Trends

Personal barriers to employment

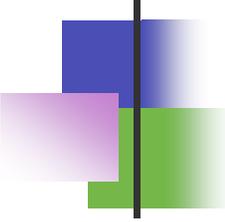
	W1	W2	W3
Physical health barrier	55%	32%	24%
Mental health barrier	30%	23%	17%
Severe domestic violence	26%	13%	12%
Partner inhibits working	21%	10%	6%
No high school diploma/GED	30%	27%	24%



Waves 2 and 3: General Trends

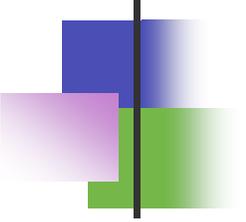
- Income and resources

	W1	W2	W3
Earned income	28%	61%	62%
Child support	4%	25%	29%
Cash assistance	100%	20%	12%
Adult receives SSI	4%	7%	10%
Adult w/o health care	5%	31%	32%
Child w/o health care	1%	11%	11%



Wave 3 Employment Profile

- Employed at all in past year: 82%
- Employed $\frac{3}{4}$ of the year or more: 57%
- Average hourly wage:
 - Currently employed: \$10.57
 - Recently employed: \$ 9.02
- Health insurance not available: 40%



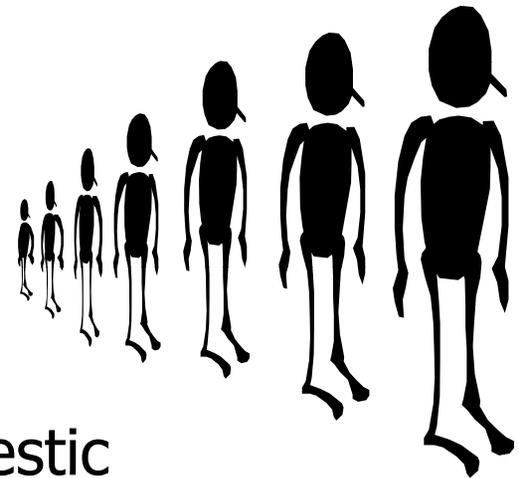
The “Disconnected”

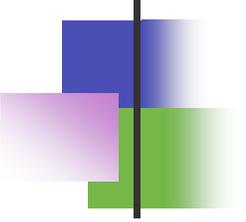
- Disconnected at wave 3: 155 (19.1%)

- Definition:

- Unemployed
- Not receiving cash assistance
- Unmarried and has not been in domestic partnership for 12 months

- Profile identify group as similar to former long-term recipients

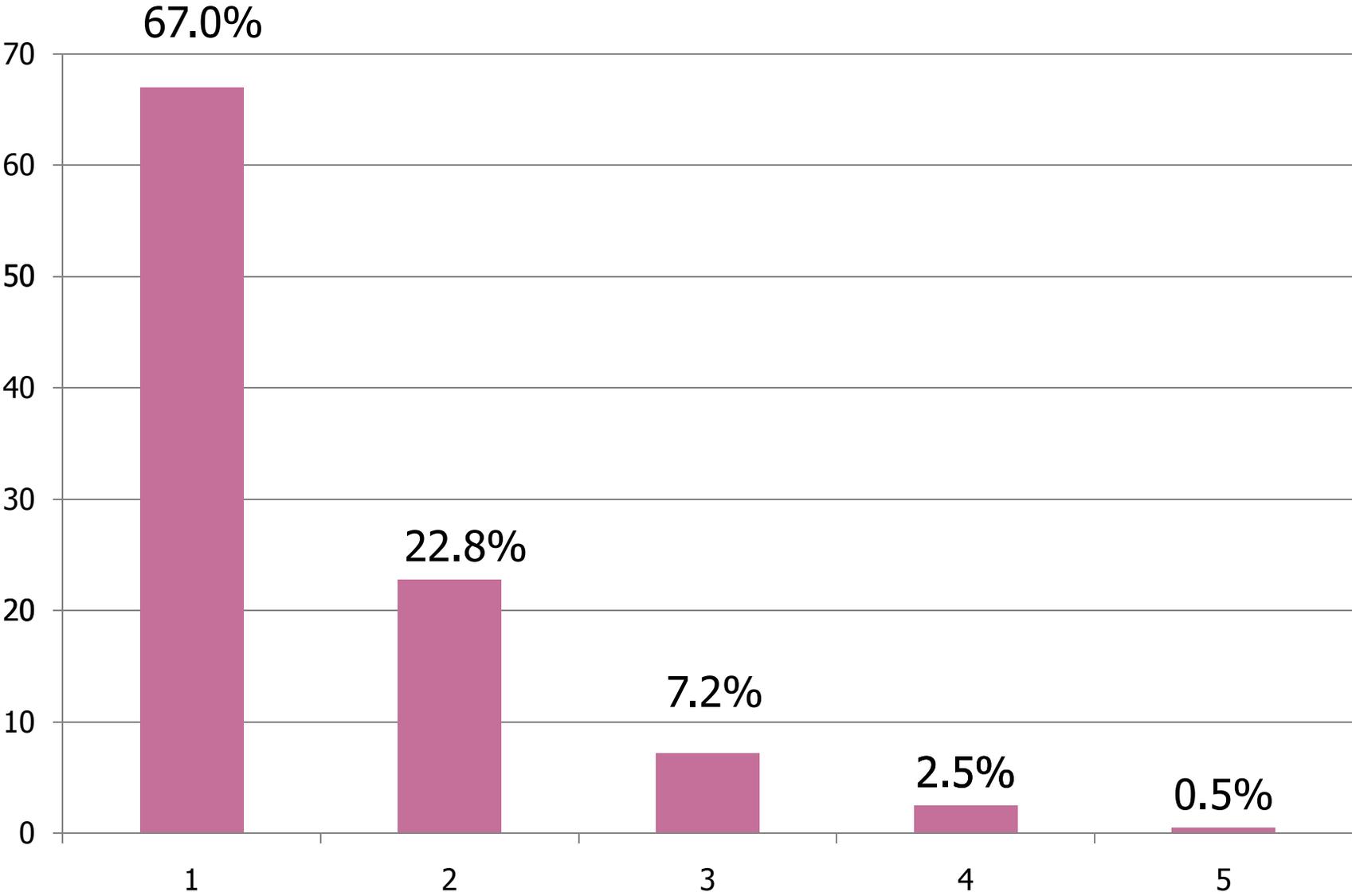




Wave 4 FEP Study (N=1375)

- Administrative case data review evaluating *patterns of FEP usage*^e
- Review of customers whose FIRST month of FEP fell between April 2005 and March 2006
- Data tracked through July 2010
 - Reflects 50 – 60 month period

Number of FEP Episodes Over 5 Years



**Number of
FEP Months**

Episodes

1

2

3+

2 – 12

50.0%

10.3%

1.2%

13 – 24

14.3%

9.4%

5.5%

25 – 36

2.3%

2.3%

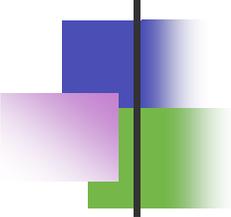
3.1%

37 +

0.5%

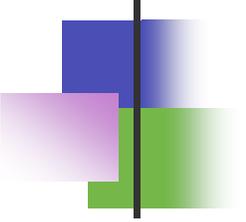
0.9%

0.4%



FEP Study: Additional Lessons

- *Appropriate* customer assessment is critical
- Number of months on assistance no longer related to number of employment barriers
- Those with most barriers to employment were most likely to be sanctioned
- Most FEP recipients never come near to reaching time limit of cash assistance benefits
- Longer-term assistance only related to:
 - physical/mental health issue
 - documented need of child or dependent



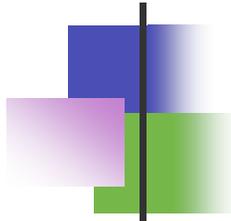
FEP Redesign: Philosophy

- Work First: Many participants come ready, able and willing to move into employment
- “Full engagement” – going beyond the minimum
- Engagement in multiple activities
- Early intervention key
- Mutual accountability; mutual ownership

FEP Redesign: Components

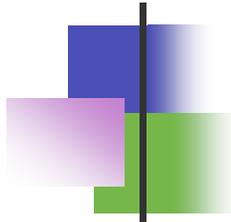
- Orientation communicates purpose
 - Clarifies program purpose and requirements
 - Conversational overview to facilitate choice
- Brief initial assessment to determine next steps
 - Diversion
 - Work Preparation
 - Work Ready





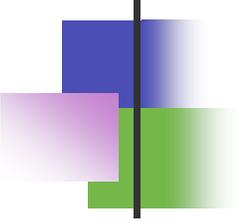
Education/work Combinations

N = 1144	No HSD/GED	Has at least HSD/GED
Has NOT worked in past year	70 (6.2%)	139 (12.4%)
Has worked in past year	258 (23.0%)	656 (58.4%)



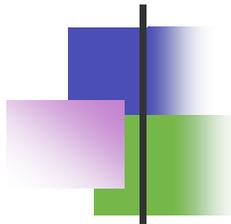
FEP Redesign Components

- “Work Success” Job Club
 - Mirrors full time employment
 - Participant responsible for all verifications
 - 40 hr per week program
 - Labor market test
 - Networking
 - Builds on participant’s strengths
 - Goal is long term employment success



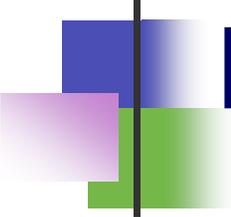
TCA: Program Outline

- Purpose: “Bridge transition from welfare-to-work”
 - Financial component:
 - 2 ½ month full cash assistance benefit for maintaining employment income above level to close due to earned income
 - Ongoing case management:
 - Employment supports
 - Budgeting education
 - Assist with job retention & advancement strategies
 - Opportunities for additional education/training



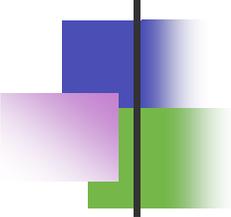
TCA: Program Challenges

- Impact on other benefits
 - Food stamps, housing, child support
- Employment insecurity
 - Economic downturn
- Lack of financial stability
 - Hours unstable and difficult to predict
- Lack of preparation for income change
 - More budgeting education needed



Lessons for TCA in FEP Redesign

- Improve communication with client
- Extend case management
 - Expand provision of employment supports
 - Expand retention/advancement services
 - Activity discuss long term plans
 - Explore resources needed to advance in career
 - Provide problem solving assistance
 - Enhance budget education services

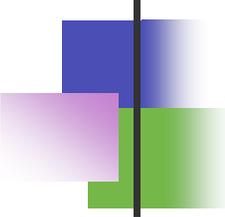


FEP Redesign Components

- Activity Review
 - Goal is re-engagement
 - Early intervention
 - Mutual accountability
- Expanded worker performance measures
 - 7 weighted measures
 - Participation rate maintained as measure
 - Also positive closures, increased earnings or hours, other income, job retention, HS/GED

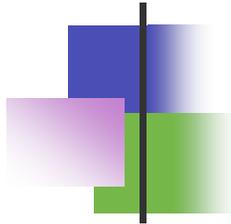
Education Pilot Program: Inveșt in You





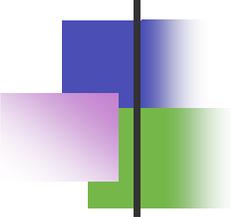
TANF and Basic Education

- The core question:
 - “work first” or “education first”
- Employing a mixed strategy
 - Strengthening entry into employment
 - Meet needs of the market
- Long-term impact of education deficit
 - Disconnected from upward mobility
 - Implications for the next generation
- Supporting TANF goals for welfare exits



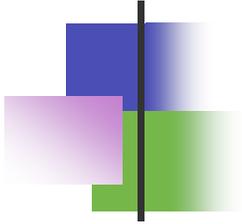
Education Pilot

- Spring 2008
- Initial charge:
 - Move customers into HSD/GED program
 - Assist with alternate education as needed
 - Pursue next level of education according to labor market demand
- Invest in You – the HSD/GED pilot



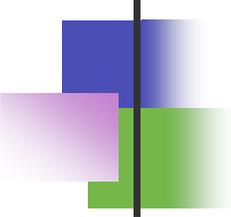
Designing Invest in You!

- Partners with adult education to design and place education component – 2 models
- Identify appropriate employment counselors
 - Locate employment counselors on site
- Set up system to address known challenges (childcare and transportation)
- Offer financial incentive for completing
- Used FEP Study data to profile participants



“Invest in You” Outcomes

		Total N = 164
Accepted, never started		20 (12.2%)
Left prior to completion		54 (32.9%)
	Avg. time in program	2.2 mns
Graduated		78 (47.6%)
	Avg. time in program	2.3 mns
Still enrolled		12 (7.3%)
	Avg. time in program	6.3 mns



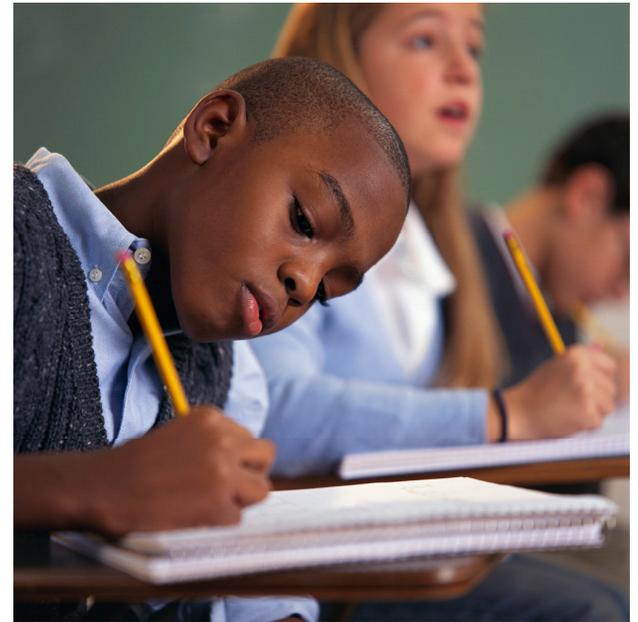
Invest In You: Exit Surveys

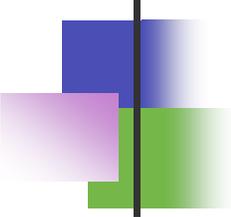
- Factors contributing to success:
 - #1 - Employment counselor
 - #2 – Financial Incentive
 - #3 – Celebrations
 - #4 – New found belief in self
 - #5 – Help with child care and transportation

Exit Surveys:

Impact on The Next Generation

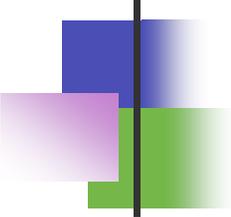
"Your kids notice that you've been struggling in life. Even though I dropped out, I went back and finished. I didn't finish on time, but at least they saw that I went back. They're proud of me for graduating. My parents didn't have their diplomas. Now I have mine. My kids will go to college. I think I broke the cycle!"





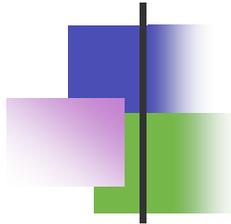
Invest in You: What Worked

- Strong case management focus (onsite)
- Mandatory participation in orientation
- Having standards for attendance and progress
- Offering an incentive to join the program
- Celebrations
- Intensive training of DWS workers to let go of participation focus
- Partnering with the adult education systems



Invest in You: What Worked

- Improved DWS worker morale
 - We can “do right by the customer”
 - This changes families forever
 - Lives are turned around and changed
- Improved customer self-worth
 - Altered view of self as successful with potential
 - They are “worth” investing in themselves
 - Being the role model they want to do



Thank you! Questions?

Additional DWS data from SRI available at:

<http://www.socwk.utah.edu/sri/dwsreport.html>

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