



TANF at 15 Challenges and Changes Voices from the Field

*Region IX TANF Administrators
Innovative Solutions Workshop
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The Changing Context of Welfare - Post Reform

- “Ended Welfare as We know it.”
- Income Maintenance Support to Employment Program
- “Work First”
 - Not a Safety Net Program
 - Not a Poverty Reduction Program
- Time Limits on Benefits
 - Temporary Cash Assistance
- Block Grant to States
 - Flexibility to Determine “Needy Families”

The Changing Lexicon of Welfare

- Diversion Policies
- Cash Assistance and Non-cash Assistance
- Job Developers/Employment Counselors/Family Independence Workers
- Sanctions and Sanctioning Policies
 - Full family or adult only; various timeframes
- Work Participation Rates
 - Numerators and denominators
- Child Only Caseload
 - Parental and Non-parental; Caregiver Programs

Challenges To TANF Implementation-1997

- Data Gathering
- Transportation
- Substance Abuse Problems
- Post Employment Services
- Learning Disabilities
- Evaluation and Monitoring
- Culture Change
- Domestic Violence
- Mental Health Issues
- Child Care

Readying for Reauthorization – 2001 Challenges

- Organizational Change
- Hard-to-Serve/Clients with Multiple Barriers
- Federal Data Collection and Reporting Requirements
- Meeting Federal Work Participation Requirements
- Interaction of TANF with other Support Programs
 - Food Stamps and Medicaid Programs

Impact of DRA on Policies & Practices -- 2005

- More focus on WPR
- More focus on performance measurement of frontline workers and vendors
- More focus on family supports
 - Healthy marriage
 - Fatherhood programs

What Did the States/Counties Need?

- Technical Assistance
 - Peer-to-Peer Supports—Not to recreate the wheel
- Research about what was working
 - Study of leavers—what got them employed and kept them employed
 - How to effectively engage participants—incentives and punitive measures
- Leadership and guidance from the Federal government
 - Block-granted flexibility
 - Forum for exchange of ideas and solutions

The Three Waves of Change—15 Years

- Supports to get People to Work
 - Transportation
 - Child Care Support
- Barrier Reduction
 - Substance Abuse
 - Mental Health
 - Learning Disabilities/literacy
- Transitional Supports
 - Housing Supports
 - Post Employment Supports
 - Family Supports

Upcoming Challenges –2012 and Beyond

- Funding Cuts
 - Funding moved away from basic assistance to families
 - Real worth of Federal dollars/MOE has declined
- Caseload Dynamics
 - Deeper end families
 - Economic recession – increased caseloads
- Differential Metrics
 - Alternative performance measures for program success
 - Employment placement, retention, wage progression; family supports; self-sufficiency measures
 - Interim success benchmarks
 - Established metrics for caseworkers-not just WPR
 - Keeping your eye on the caseload—you might miss the real issues

Next Wave of Change for TANF

- Looking at Assessment at the Frontlines
 - Work Readiness
 - Appropriate service pathways for families
 - Accessing education and training needs
 - Strengths based
- Restructuring Case Management
 - Caseload Standards
 - Team Casing
 - Virtual case management options-technology
- Developing Partnerships
 - Cross-agency—multi-disciplined approaches
 - Community-based partners/place-based strategies
 - Solutions focused