



Leveraging
 America's Social &
 Economic Resilience

Agency Discussion Guide: Considering a Coaching Approach

This guide was adapted from the “Getting Started Guide to Coaching” written by Rachel Brooks and Susan Fitter Harris of The Prosperity Agenda; and developed based on the work presented by Fran Moore, The Prosperity Agenda and Mary Nelson, American Public Human Services Association at LASER TLC collective technical assistance sessions.

Every coaching model is a combination of mindset, knowledge, skills, and tools. Fundamental to all coaching models is human-centered design and a focus on creating a trusting partnership between the case worker and client that supports the individual in setting and achieving their goals. TA programs should assess their readiness for moving to a coaching model. TANF programs benefit from understanding the various coaching models and frameworks and how to begin thinking about what is best for their program. Specifically, it helps to recognize the environmental and operational changes required for successful coaching model implementation.

Mindset	Knowledge	Skills	Tools
A coaching mindset is a shift from “problem fixer” to “coach”—one who acts as a partner with participants to explore solutions and allow participants to have an active voice.	Coaching knowledge includes both the research behind coaching, such as Trauma-Informed Care, and the understanding of how to put this knowledge into practice.	Staff learn and master coaching skills, such as active listening and asking powerful questions without judgment, over time putting their mindset and knowledge to practice.	Coaching tools are worksheets, job aids, and other resources that staff integrate into their processes to aid both coaches and participants.

The following checklist was initially developed by the Prosperity Agenda and modified for this LASER TLC product. Use these questions to explore how ready your TANF program is in moving towards a coaching model. Knowing more about the “why” you might adopt coaching will best inform the model you choose, and how you might begin your change journey. Working with your leadership and your staff, you can determine which program or group would be best suited to test or pilot the chosen coaching model, and how you might modify training, staffing, partnerships, and evaluation.

Assessing Your Coaching Readiness

Coaching Mindset	
	What are your TANF program’s core values? How do they overlap with the core values of coaching?
	In what program services are these values most aligned?
	What do participant feedback and metrics indicate about the experience participants have with TANF services?
	Who—what type of participant—is experiencing the strongest results and why?
Coaching Knowledge	
	What do your TANF program staff already understand about coaching?
	What are likely assumptions about how the coaching might compare to the services the program currently provides?
	What coaching-related knowledge already exists within your TANF program?
	Is there an awareness of trauma-informed care or the impact of poverty and stress on participants?
Coaching Skills	
	What skills are already commonly practiced by staff who work directly with service participants?
	Has there been staff training or professional development on motivational interviewing among agency staff?
	Are coaching skills employed by the supervisory staff as part of any in-service or professional development?
Coaching Tools	
	Which tools do staff use to communicate with and support participants as part of TANF?
	Do these specific tools, such as worksheets or job aides, reflect a coaching approach?