



Urban Partnerships for Welfare Reform: National Academy

Utilizing Diversion and Emergency
Assistance Programs

Diversionary Work Program

Minneapolis







- Diversion From Traditional Public Assistance (MFIP – Minnesota Family Investment Program)
- Four Month Program (months do not 'count')
- DWP For Families Who Have Not Received MFIP/DWP in Last 12 Months
- Benefits Are Primarily Vendor Paid (rent and utilities)







- Employment Plan Must Be Completed Prior To Benefit Issuance
- Meet Employment Goals Quickly short term and intensive
- Goal: Cash Assistance Is Not Needed After Month 4
- Income Received after DWP is approved is disregarded

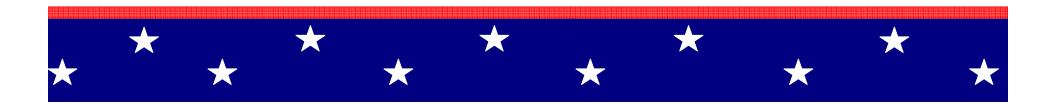






Immediate 100% Sanction For Non-compliance

- In Hennepin, 48.9% Of Families Are Not On TANF In Month Five (One month after DWP) – Statewide 57.5%
- In Hennepin, 50.6% Of Families Are Not On TANF In Month Twelve – Statewide 59.9%







 Median Hennepin DWP placement starting wage: \$9.50/hour Statewide \$9.00/ hour Source: MN DHS Program

Source: MN DHS Program Assessment and Integrity Division (4th quarter 2005 data)







- Close Cooperation Between Employment And Financial Staff
- System-wide Commitment To Meeting Tight Timelines
- Specialization On Employment and Financial Side







- From the beginning: strong connection among partners
- Mutual accountability and "ownership" of processes and outcomes
- Ensured services are equitable and consistent across all six Hennepin DWP locations







- Employment Plan must me completed prior to benefit Issuance
- Engage both parents in a two-parent household (regardless of ES exempt status) when developing the initial Employment Plan
- Support services immediate







- Rapid job search model
- DWP assumes employment readiness vs. recovery from unemployment
- Intensive program design







- Avoid lengthy assessment, training, or counseling
- "Strike while the motivation is 'hot"
- Address issues immediately
- Modeled on expectations of the workplace (attendance=mandatory)







- One ES staff serves one family unit
- Employment Services staff direct flow of services
- ES coordinate information flow among all partners by conveying "real time" information between/among partners







- Job retention and career advancement integrated throughout DWP services
- State-driven support for non-native English speakers through SRES
- Marketing, networking and job development are key





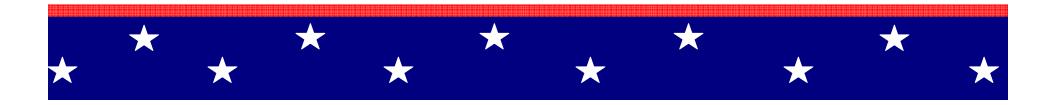


- Simplify accounting processes
- Remain focused on outcomes
- Strong team definition: result of specializing





- Continual assessment of and response to - rapidly-shifting, diverse DWP client base
- Define "what works:" practitioners share effective/progressive approaches







Surprises

- More Successful With Diversion Than Anticipated
- Drastic Effect On TANF Employment Services Caseload And Participation Rate







Surprises

- Continual fluctuation in demographics of population served
- Positive response from participants to short-term, non-welfare service and strategies







Surprises

- Expedited access results in expedited outcomes, in a short timeframe
- Synergy between/among systems is possible – given excellent planning and commitment from people delivering services

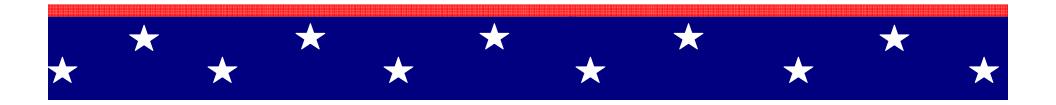






Challenges

- Far More Clients Than Expected Applied For DWP
- Communication Between Partners
- Effect On Traditional TANF Caseload And Participation Rates







Challenges

- Extensive training of staff new to DWP
- Data entry: continual monitoring and updating
- Identifying system problems is complex and demands time – but "worth the effort"







Challenges

- Continuously updating and augmenting services responding to jobseeker needs
- Short-term planning is "status quo"







Replication Advice

- Invest Significant Time To Planning
- Establish Easy To Use
 Communication Tools For All Partners
- Constantly Review Where Client 'Bottlenecks' May Be
- Educate Policy Makers On The Effect On TANF Participation Rates







Managing During Change

- Keep New Program Specialized
- Develop support from areas not involved in the change
- Recruit Staff Who are dedicated to the successful Implementation of the New Program







Visions for the Future

- One Possible Vision
 - Implement DWP For All New Clients (Federal Participation)





Visions for the Future

- High cost/benefit ratio
- Traditional TANF caseload-size reduction has been (and continues to be) substantial
- Pursue avenues to credit DWP success toward the federal participation rate

