



**Reflecting on the Past:
Looking Forward to the Future**

OFA Regions I, II, III, and IV
East Coast TANF Directors Meeting



JULY 12-14, 2016 | PROVIDENCE, RI

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July 12-14, 2016**

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Overview

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), Administration for Children and Families (ACF), Office of Family Assistance (OFA) Regions I, II, III, and IV hosted the *2016 East Coast TANF Directors Meeting* on July 12-14, 2016, in Providence, Rhode Island. This year's theme, *Reflecting on the Past: Looking Forward to the Future*, was an opportunity for Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program directors and other key stakeholders to engage with peers about innovative ideas, strategies, and collaborations that promote economic and social well-being for individuals, families, and communities.

The key concepts, strategies, and phases of human-centered design were integrated with presentations by subject matter experts to provide participants with a framework for adopting innovative strategies to improve TANF participant outcomes. The meeting offered opportunities for participants to learn about promising and evidence-informed approaches to drive better outcomes for children and families in the areas of career pathways, TANF/Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) coordination and implementation, and integrating executive functioning skills into services, especially for "hard to serve" populations. Meeting participants had the opportunity to engage and network with OFA leadership, their state and territory colleagues, and experts in the field to share innovative ideas, strategies, and collaborations that promote economic and social well-being for individuals, families, and communities. Sessions focused on:

- Two-generation approaches to breaking the cycle of poverty;
- TANF/WIOA coordination and implementation;
- Career pathways and apprenticeships;
- Human-centered design as a framework for improving TANF participant outcomes; and
- Integrating executive functioning skills into services, especially for "hard to serve" populations.

Day One

Welcome and Introductions

Carol Monteiro, Acting Regional Administrator, Administration for Children and Families and TANF Regional Program Manager, Region I welcomed participants and highlighted the meeting objectives, the human-centered design focus of the agenda, and an overview of sessions for the two and a half day meeting. Ms. Monteiro asked that participants leave the meeting having engaged with their colleagues and with ideas they can take home to their TANF programs.

Setting the Context: Human-Centered Design

Eileen Friedman, TANF Regional Program Manager, Region III, and Damon Waters, Family Assistance Program Specialist, Office of Family Assistance, provided a two and a half hour overview of human-centered design (HCD), which is also known as design thinking, and reinforced its key principles and steps through an interactive hands-on activity.¹

Overview of HCD

HCD is a practical, repeatable approach to improving customer outcomes by putting the customer at the center of program design, policies, implementation, and improvement (i.e. re-design). HCD provides a framework to come up with ideas to operate differently, think outside of the box, and solve problems by focusing on the person at the center of the decision. At its heart HCD is a creative approach to problem-solving via a set of tools that encourage empathy for the end-user (in this case, the TANF participant). HCD can take users out of their comfort zones, but this allows you to go deeper and put yourself in another person's place to express genuine compassion. A successful HCD approach to problem solving requires: 1) Being open-minded; 2) Being collaborative; and 3) Being adaptive.

The HCD model includes five steps to work on a design challenge (i.e. the problem you are addressing):

- 1) **Empathize.** In order to create meaningful innovations, you need to know your users and care about their lives. This includes the work you do to understand people within the context of your design challenge by seeking to understand the way they do things and why, their physical/emotional needs, how they think about the world, and what is meaningful to them.



- 2) **Define.** Framing the right problem is the only way to create the right solution. Empathy is typically how you connect with others. It is necessary to bring clarity and focus to the design space. This is in order to define the challenge you are taking on that is based on user lessons and context.



- 3) **Ideate.** This third step stresses that design is not about coming up with the right idea, but about generating the broadest range of possibilities. Idea generation represents a process of going wide in terms of concepts and outcomes that provide fuel/source material to building prototypes and getting innovative solutions into the hands of your users.



- 4) **Prototype.** This step captures the need to “build to think and test to learn.” A prototype can be anything that a user can interact with so feedback can be provided and questions can be answered that gets you closer to your final solution.

¹ A full-length HCD training can take 3-4 days.

- 5) **Test.** Testing is an opportunity to learn about your solution and your user. This allows you to understand the challenge you had and test the solution/prototype and see if it really addresses the challenge. This allows for testing within the real context of a user’s life and soliciting additional feedback.



Interactive HCD Activity

A Ted Talk video featuring Roman Krznaric, *The Six Habits of Highly Empathic People*, was played for participants to highlight how people can be empathetic in practice. Mr. Waters took meeting participants through a reflective exercise, reading aloud a story about a TANF participant and some of the life challenges she faced. Then a discussion was held around the need to re-establish “humanness” when talking to participants rather than making assumptions, since as caseworkers we may not know a person’s back story. This exercise demonstrated the importance of framing real problems and creating real solutions to them—rather than creating solutions to the problems we assume exist.

Ms. Freidman and Mr. Waters went through several similar reflective exercises to set meeting participants’ understanding of assumptions that are made about others from a simple interaction or glance, which lack understanding of context. Discussion was held around how to move towards a different mindset using the HCD framework and how this can improve participant outcomes and be used as a practical, repeatable approach in service delivery.

Facilitators engaged meeting participants in a HCD interactive activity that applied HCD principles to a practical TANF administrative challenge. Participants worked in pairs to figure out how to incorporate the TANF participant’s experience into the decision-making process of their partner’s organization, and to ensure that the design would help their partner gain empathy for TANF participants. Each pair captured their discussion and findings, defined a problem statement, and identified and generated prototypes/alternatives to test that would meet the end-user’s needs. Using craft supplies, participants designed physical prototypes of the solutions. The physical prototypes were then shared with the group; selected pictures of the prototypes can be found in **Appendix A**.

Plenary: Learning from the Past and Creating Opportunities for the Future

Panelists for this plenary were **Mark Greenberg**, Acting Assistant Secretary, ACF; **Dr. Ron Haskins**, Senior Fellow, Brookings Institution; and **Dr. Luke Shaefer**, Associate Professor of Social Work and Public Policy, School of Social Work and Ford School of Public Policy, University of Michigan. Moderator **Susan Golonka**, Acting Director of OFA, ACF, opened the plenary discussion by observing that welfare reform is typically perceived as either a total success or an incredible failure due to the extreme views around the topic.



From left: Susan Golonka, Mark Greenberg, Dr. Luke Shaefer, Dr. Ron Haskins

To frame the plenary discussion, a *New York Times* video entitled “Welfare and the Politics of Poverty”² was shared with meeting participants prior to the meeting and also ran during breaks. This video highlighted the history of welfare reform in the 1990s, including the passage of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Act (PRWORA) in 1996. It shared the positive trends that followed the introduction of TANF, including a reduction in caseloads and an increase in employment. However, it also highlighted that

celebration around those successes was largely short-lived. While TANF came of age during an economic boom when many jobs were available, that boom did not last—particularly once the Great Recession hit in the late 2000s. One of the primary issues underscored was that, once given greater flexibility, states started allocating TANF funds for other purposes (reducing the amount provided for cash assistance) and imposing stricter time limits on participants. However, the debate over TANF’s legacy continues. While one interviewee in the video describes TANF as a “bold experiment that failed,” others describe TANF as a good model for other social programs. It is in this context that Ms. Golonka led the panelists in a discussion of welfare reform from the 1990s to today.

Question for Panelists: What forces led to welfare reform?

Dr. Ron Haskins responded that in the run-up to the 1996 Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunities Reconciliation Act (PRWORA), Republicans had convincingly made the case that single mothers were dependent on welfare. This view was supported by research that showed that the average duration of welfare receipt was eight years (when measured at a single moment in time), though Dr. Haskins noted that the average duration was less than eight years when calculated over a period of time. Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC, the program that preceded TANF) was a New Deal program, and in the 1990s Republicans were motivated to replace New Deal programs with their own versions.

Further, President Bill Clinton was focused on creating a new welfare law, beginning with his campaign slogan to “End welfare as we know it.” Mark Greenberg noted that President Clinton’s campaign

² <http://www.nytimes.com/video/us/100000004377970/welfare-and-the-politics-of-poverty.html>

pledge added to the expectation that welfare recipients would be required to work, and that the government would give them opportunities to do so. This sparked discussion among the panelists if this welfare reform slogan was vague or valuable, and how the slogan and the resulting legislation was shaped by the political forces such as the increasing presence of women in the workforce in the early 1990s.

Mr. Greenberg also discussed the role that research played in public discussion in the 1990s and reiterated that the public felt providing assistance for raising children was insufficient—that AFDC should also help people gain employment. The unexpected increase in caseloads following the 1988 passage of the Family Support Act (FSA) added a sense of urgency to the national conversation.

Question for Panelists: What were the major issues surrounding the creation of TANF?

Dr. Shaefer stated that work was a critical issue, as was the passage of a major expansion of the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC). Since it is conditional on earnings, EITC increased the benefits of work, and the federal government now spends more on EITC than ever before. Dr. Haskins stated that the single biggest change from AFDC to TANF, which facilitated all of the other changes, was that the reform law explicitly stated that there was no entitlement to benefits. This was one of the main conflicts between Democrats and Republicans, who clashed over whether it was better to guarantee benefits versus provide benefits that are conditional on meeting work requirements.

Mr. Greenberg said that the biggest change between the two pieces of welfare reform legislation was the change in wording from “Aid to Families with Dependent Children” to “Temporary Assistance to Needy Families.” Under AFDC, the state had a legal duty to provide assistance to individuals that met the eligibility criteria. Ms. Golonka added that the legislation was pivotal for Democrats. President Clinton vetoed the first two versions of the bill (which, as Dr. Haskins noted, included Medicaid as part of the TANF block grant), but Clinton did not fight the loss of individual entitlement. Ms. Golonka explained that caseloads were already decreasing, so governors were in favor of a block grant that would give them more money and more flexibility. She added that, given the work requirements, caseworkers would likely not have supported the bill.

Dr. Shaefer pointed out that there is now an issue with the block grant. Since there was not agreement at the time on a funding level at the time, legislators decided to lock in on the current time period and settled on funding welfare at 1994 AFDC spending levels. Today, this has led to discrepancies, for instance, some states get \$3,000 per child and some get \$200 per child. As Ms. Golonka explained, governors were willing to take the risk on the new program in 1996 because they believed that there would be additional funds available if any states got into trouble. But while TANF’s success was initially more dramatic than expected, the situation started to change after 2000.

Question for Panelists: What has happened with the caseload since 2000, and what do decisions made by the states have to do with the current state of TANF?

Dr. Haskins responded that while TANF has problems, it resulted in a permanent change in work participation rates among unmarried mothers. About 90% of single mothers had received AFDC funds,

and Democrats were concerned that these mothers would not be able to work and could not earn enough money to support their families. However, due to changes in Medicaid and other programs, the poverty rate fell considerably within five years of the passage of TANF, and the work rate among single mothers remains higher than it was pre-TANF. The system of low-wage work and work supports introduced through welfare reform has reduced the poverty rate among single mothers by 50%. Dr. Haskins stated that the welfare system that was put in place has been the most effective yet in reducing poverty, with the exception of Social Security.

Dr. Shaefer echoed the importance of considering the total package of programs, rather than just TANF. The idea that many people would go to work if the benefits of employment were raised turned out to be right, and it helped to raise work participation rates. Dr. Shaefer noted that since 2000, there have been mixed results—while some families are doing better (with EITC), progress is uneven and work costs more. There is a group of families doing much worse post-2000.

Mr. Greenberg noted the importance of historical context. In the 1990s, the nation experienced dramatic increases in single parent employment and dramatic declines in single parent poverty. There were numerous factors pushing in that direction: TANF, EITC, child care, healthcare, child support, and an increased minimum wage—plus a great demand for labor at the bottom of the market. He concluded that it is difficult to disentangle and isolate any single component of the initial success, although he added decisively that there has been little or no progress since 2000.

Dr. Haskins countered that the number of employed single mothers increased by about 35%, which no one predicted, and has never fallen to pre-1996 levels. He noted that low-income parents are sensitive to the economy. When an economic downturn decreases their hours and wages, the benefits of EITC are reduced or disappear, making work less beneficial. When the economy improves, hours and wages increase, EITC income rebounds, and work rates go up. Dr. Haskins added that all of the programs being discussed truly are entitlements; they do not require a vote in Congress and individuals can count on them provided they qualify.

Dr. Shaefer stated that welfare reform was successful in part because families want to work, and added that EITC is not a safety net. Dr. Haskins responded that individuals that meet the EITC qualifications (i.e. employment) get the benefit. He added that he was part of a bipartisan group of researchers that worked on a package of poverty reduction reforms. They agreed that guaranteeing jobs to TANF participants that could not find them would help states meet work goals, and they are going to pilot this approach in a couple of states.

Ms. Golonka concluded this portion of the discussion by noting that only one-third of eligible families are currently receiving TANF, which is a smaller proportion than the number of AFDC-eligible families receiving benefits in 1995.

Question for Panelists: How can TANF be improved?

Mr. Greenberg suggested that leaders should focus on providing work opportunities and effectively using TANF funds. He noted that TANF funds are going to services, activities, and expenditures far from

the core TANF activities. Basic assistance, child care, and work assistance accounts for less than half of TANF spending in some states, and far less than half in certain states. Ideally, block grant funds would be directed to the core activities of assistance, work, and child care. In the absence of federal requirements regulating use of TANF funding, Mr. Greenberg recommended that states treat block grant dollars as precious. In states where the governor has decided to redirect money, agencies should make the case that it is important to instead use the money for core TANF functions.

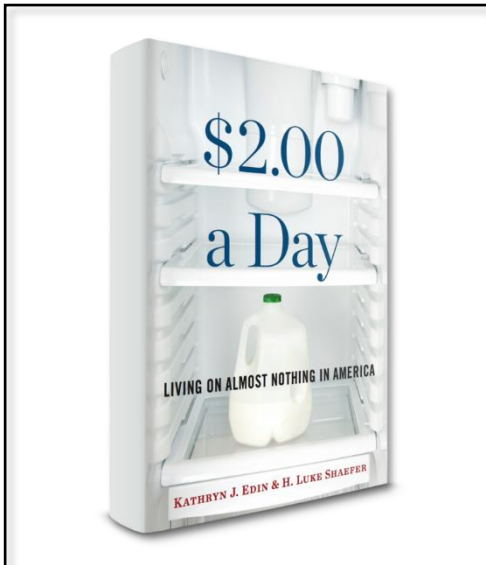


Exhibit 1: The cover of Dr. Luke Shaefer and Dr. Kathryn Edin's book about Americans living in extreme poverty

Dr. Shaefer shared that decreased spending on core activities has impacted children and families by creating disconnected mothers—there has been a big increase in the number of single mothers who are neither working nor receiving TANF benefits. When he and Dr. Kathryn Edin were researching and writing *\$2.00 a Day: Living on Almost Nothing in America*, they had discussions with people who were living in extreme poverty, and found there are more people in the United States today who are deeply poor than in the past. The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) has good coverage for the extremely poor, and some extremely poor families have a housing subsidy. Still, Dr. Shaefer's data analysis shows a large increase in the number of families living on \$2.00 per day or less. When doing fieldwork, Dr. Shaefer met many individuals who were donating blood plasma—one of the only ways to make money at a good hourly rate. His analysis of SNAP administrative rolls revealed that the number of families reporting no income has

quadrupled over the past 15 years. Public school records showed that the number of children reporting that they had no place to live has doubled over the past 15 years.

Drs. Shaefer and Edin visited Chicago, Cleveland, Tennessee, and the Mississippi Delta for their book, and consistently saw that people in the lowest socioeconomic tier, families with children are moving in the wrong direction. Surprisingly, TANF was not seen as an option by some of these families. People thought that TANF had gone away, or they went to apply for TANF and were turned away, and some had not heard of TANF at all. Dr. Haskins agreed that there is a problem at the bottom, which is partly the states' fault. States have a large block grant and know that if they do not spend the money Congress will not continue to fund the grant at that level. As a result, states are spending TANF funding in other areas. Once money has been moved to a non-TANF budget, it is hard for TANF programs to get the funding back. Change is needed; if states cannot change spending, then the statutes governing that spending have to change so that states can only spend money on cash benefits, work-related programs, and services.

Question for Panelists: Have states made TANF difficult to get by creating requirements that are hard to meet? Is that part of the problem, not just the budget diversion?

Dr. Haskins affirmed that part of the problem are barriers created by states, adding that the legislation should have included an adjustment for inflation, because now about one-third of the value of the TANF grant has been lost due to inflation.

Dr. Shaefer suggested that some states put up barriers because they can either use the funding for core TANF activities (which are stigmatized among the public), or they can keep caseloads low and use the cash on other programs. He predicted that TANF offices would continue to be strapped for funding, and recommended refocusing on TANF as a cash assistance program and work support.

Mr. Greenberg added that measuring progress has always been a challenge with TANF. He explained that apart from the Work Participation Rate (WPR), the law has struggled with measuring performance. Performance is currently measured by caseload number because there is not anything else to go on.

Question for Panelists: The average American does not view him/herself as a direct stakeholder in welfare. What can we do to change that?

Dr. Haskins replied that the direct stakeholders (i.e. TANF participants) are less likely to vote, and there is a lack of organization among this group. Indirect influence can be exerted by others, but low-income individuals do need to vote to effect change.

Mr. Greenberg stated that nothing would be gained by debating who was right or wrong in 1996. He noted that there is bipartisan agreement about the effective use of TANF funds and the role of evidence in informing changes. Yet generally, he has seen many areas where people should be able to reach agreement and cannot. Dr. Haskins responded that there have been areas of agreement (e.g. the Education Bill), and that Congress has reauthorized TANF with two important provisions.

Dr. Shaefer stated that both data and stories are needed to spark a conversation; stories on their own can be disqualified and data on its own can be boring, but the two together paint a complete picture. He encouraged agencies to look at SNAP rolls and see if there are TANF-eligible families that are not receiving TANF benefits.

Question for Panelists: Has there ever been a discussion of expanding the activity codes for work compliance? Many individuals have barriers that they have to overcome, so they aren't going to engage in work until they do A, B, and C.

Mr. Greenberg shared that while there have been many discussions on this topic, it is a complex issue with many contentious points (e.g. work participation rate calculations). Changes could result from a more comprehensive TANF reauthorization, but it will otherwise be difficult to make progress. Dr. Shaefer added that there are current efforts to relax the requirements and count more educational activities toward work requirements, but it is challenging to get legislation to the floor for consideration.

Question for Panelists: What successes have we had with increasing the child support collections of absent fathers in TANF families?

The panelists responded that collections are flat overall. Mr. Greenberg stated that strengthening and supporting the child support system as it relates to TANF has been a major area of discussion, and that the relative role of child support has changed. Primarily, its role is transferring funds from noncustodial parents to custodial parents. He shared that states have improved collection from workers through wage withholding, but have not improved collection from parents in the underground labor market. Unemployed parents currently present a challenge as well. Mr. Greenberg mentioned a pending modernization bill that would make numerous changes in the child support system. He added that there is a need to strengthen the earning capacity of noncustodial parents who are not paying child support.

Question for Panelists: It seems unlikely that we will see TANF reauthorization this year, so as we think about how things could be different on the ground, what advice do you have?

Mr. Greenberg advised agencies to make good use of every available dollar. He urged participants to make changes without legislation by going to the governor's office and making a case for directing money back to TANF, supported by research.

Dr. Haskins predicted that there would be a reauthorization at some point since there are a number of recommended changes from both Republicans and Democrats. Dr. Shaefer urged meeting participants to make their voices heard within their states and to the federal government, and to use their data to find underserved families and try to make incremental improvements.

WIOA Implementation: Where does TANF “fit” moving forward?

LaMonica Shelton, TANF Regional Program Manager, Region IV, moderated the afternoon plenary discussion. The panelists were **Tim Martin**, Director, U.S. Department of Labor (DOL), Employment and Training Administration (ETA); **Susan Golonka**, Acting Director, OCF, ACF; **Sara K. Muempfer**, Director of Workforce Development, Family Investment Administration, Maryland Department of Human Resources; and **Vera Krekanova Krofcheck**, Chief Strategy Officer, 3 Rivers Workforce Investment Board.

Question for Panelists: What are some highlights of WIOA, especially as relates to TANF?

Mr. Martin noted that when WIOA was passed almost two years ago, there was consensus among legislators and stakeholders that they had gotten it right. He explained that a number of major themes run through the legislation, including partnership. Prior to WIOA, different agencies that served similar populations ran independent programs. Now, some states have unified state plans that include the workforce agencies and six core partner programs, and others have combined plans (which are essentially unified plans with an additional partner or partners included—TANF is one of these optional partners). Thirty states have submitted combined plans, and half of these states included TANF as a partner. Mr. Martin expressed the hope that, going forward, additional states would include TANF or incorporate them into One-Stop Centers.

Mr. Martin emphasized that WIOA is focused on the hardest-to-serve populations which states define differently. He stated that career pathways are an important piece of WIOA that targets these groups, and that priority service must go to these hard-to-serve populations. Considering the youth funding stream, Mr. Martin noted that WIOA established that a minimum of 75 percent of State and local youth funding must be used for out-of-school youth (OSY), and raised the upper age limit for OSY to 24 years old. Therefore, workforce systems have an incentive to connect with education and TANF agencies in order to identify and serve OSY.

Question for Panelists: We often hear that this is a DOL program. What does it mean to TANF?

Ms. Golonka stated that on average, a participant receives TANF for only 12 months, and then gets a job and leaves TANF. So TANF and WIOA are serving the same participants, just at different points in time. Ms. Golonka recommended that TANF staff work with employers to get a strong feel for what is happening in the workforce and where there are employment opportunities for TANF participants. After a year or two, a former TANF participant may want a promotion or lose a job and return to TANF for further training or assistance—so collaboration with workforce systems makes sense since fundamentally TANF and workforce programs share a goal of getting participants into sustained employment.

Ms. Golonka shared that OFA has participated in three or four conversations per week with DOL since WIOA was passed to carry out the necessary coordination at the federal level. She suggested TANF agencies not wait to be invited to the table and advised them to proactively show how they add value. This could include skilled in working with individuals with limited work experience and education, as well as barriers such as substance abuse, lack of transportation, and lack of child care that TANF administrators have expertise in addressing. She concluded that there is a role for TANF agencies to play in career pathways, particularly in advocating for entry points into the workforce that are accessible to workers with relatively low levels of education and/or experience.

Participants Question: We have heard the federal perspective. At the state level, what has been your organization's experience?

Ms. Muempfer responded that Maryland was one of the 15 states that opted to include TANF as a WIOA partner. The state created nine different workgroups that fed recommendations into Maryland's combined plan. Ms. Muempfer added that Maryland does not necessarily have a clear or defined roadmap; and has developed its approach over time. One of the state's workgroups is the WIOA Alignment Group, which is working across agencies to make sure the state is adhering to its plan. Maryland has developed and is continuing to develop joint guidance around areas such as Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs), performance, data-sharing, and infrastructure costs.

Maryland has been fortunate to participate in OFA's Systems to Family Stability National Policy Academy, which includes TANF/WIOA coordination as a possible area of learning and technical assistance for participating sites—and this opportunity was taken up by Maryland's state-administered, county-run programs. A survey was issued to all counties and 12 workforce development areas with questions about TANF/WIOA co-location, shared performance goals, cross training, involvement with local workforce development boards, preparation to implement partnerships, and partnership vision.

After evaluating the survey results, a “phased-in” three-year approach was incorporated into the State Plan.

Maryland’s Family Investment Administration developed a profile of an average TANF participant and shared it with local workforce developers, and also created similar profiles of a youth TANF participant and typical TANF participants in each of Maryland’s 12 workforce development areas. A memo about the partnership between WIOA and Temporary Cash Assistance (TCA, Maryland’s TANF program) was shared with meeting participants. The memo stipulated that TCA should: 1) contribute to Local Workforce Development Plans; 2) enter into Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) with local workforce boards and the local area’s service delivery systems; 3) provide access to TCA services through the American Job Centers (AJCs); 4) contribute to AJC infrastructure costs; 5) participate on the Local Workforce Development Board; 6) maintain the WPR and develop a collaborative process of tracking it; 7) share necessary and relevant data; and 8) test and evaluate innovative interventions that are tailored to the needs of local area TANF participants.

Eventually, a TANF expert will meet with the workforce agencies in each of Maryland’s workforce development areas to better inform them about TANF and its participant population. There will also be a Maryland State WIOA Convening, which will bring together all 12 workforce development areas and State Plan partners on July 21st, 2016. Ms. Shelton added that she sees tremendous value in setting up time for conversations with local workforce development staff in states and counties.

Ms. Krofcheck feels that Pittsburgh, where she works at the 3 Rivers Workforce Investment Board, waited too long for WIOA. When WIOA passed, Pittsburgh was most interested in the emphasis on innovation, and decided to maximize innovation in every aspect of its workforce system, which required partnerships. Ms. Krofcheck recalled the excitement of being able to offer transitional job training. Pittsburgh was already using 75% of its youth funding for OSY, but did not know how to serve the hardest-to-serve. They knew that they needed partners with that knowledge and experience. Without a direct connection to frontline staff or to others who were active at the local level, the 3 Rivers Workforce Investment Board started with small populations and used trial and error to learn some early lessons. Ultimately they decided to bring all of the workforce stakeholders together to discuss WIOA and began to establish trust.

Through this exchange, the new partners learned that the workforce development board was very data-oriented, and the Department of Human Services (DHS) was very adept at data analysis—creating foundational value that each partner could bring to the other. They also discovered that 60% of people receiving WIOA services were currently or previously engaged with DHS. Further, the most successful of these individuals had received DHS support for three to six months before engaging in workforce services. When comparing eligibility across programs, they discovered that 90% of participants were eligible for both TANF and WIOA.

Ms. Krofcheck and the 3 Rivers team decided to collaborate with DHS on a small, joint program that focused on one hard-to-serve population: participants with criminal backgrounds. They aimed to connect these individuals with employers in the construction industry. DHS provided referrals and case management, and the workforce system delivered training. The pilot had a 90% placement rate,

though there were challenges. The new coalition had to determine how to keep newly employed TANF participants from losing their benefits, and figure out how to fund services for the families of OSY (although services to OSY were funded).

Question for Panelists: As we listened to the earlier panel talk about TANF over the past 20 years, many of us may have thought about the many iterations of workforce legislation. What makes WIOA different? Sometimes we hear that workforce offices turn away TANF participants and do not want to serve them. How do you envision that WIOA will be different?

Mr. Martin answered that partnership was the defining difference. WIOA gave Congress the opportunity to articulate what needed to change from the Workforce Investment Act (WIA). Congress was clear about the focus on the hardest-to-serve, as well as on youth. DOL looks at labor market data and at demographics when negotiating state levels of performance—so if a state is working with a large hard-to-serve population, DOL expects the outcomes to be slightly lower. He added that once a state has implemented programming, DOL re-runs its statistical model in order to ensure that states are not creaming (i.e. focusing resources on the participants that are easiest to place).

Ms. Golonka noted that the economy is currently strong, resulting in a need for lower-skill workers. She emphasized the importance of state-level implementation and federal-level modeling of effective partnership and technical assistance. Though WIOA is “unprecedented” compared to other federal legislation, Ms. Golonka cautioned that there are no guarantees—so partners and potential partners need to join the discussion, offer their expertise, and share who they are serving. She described WIOA implementation as a learning process and mentioned the unresolved issue of performance measures, and stated that it would be very interesting to learn how TANF participants do in the workforce system.

Question for Panelists: What challenges have you experienced in your TANF/WIOA partnership?

Ms. Muempfer said that she encountered a somewhat rigid staff mindset. Maryland is encouraging innovative thinking and continually testing, re-evaluating, and shifting. They are trying to balance a need for statewide consistency with gradual implementation. She shared that they have had some painful, contentious conversations across the state. However, she concluded that they are getting people energized and helping them to think differently.

Ms. Krofcheck stated that her main challenge is the persistence of silos between agencies. She expressed respect for frontline staff but observed that everybody has a different system and that they do not communicate well. She is concerned that without communication, even the best system or idea will not be implemented. She complimented the commitment of leadership, who have limited time and are still investing in these issues. Overall, Ms. Krofcheck expressed excitement about the WIOA framework, although she worries that the emphasis on return on investment (ROI) could be discouraging at the local level.

Interactive HCD Activity on TANF/WIOA Implementation

Ms. Shelton introduced an interactive activity to help participants assess and share their successes, barriers, and strategies related to TANF/WIOA implementation. Groups were instructed to write TANF/WIOA successes on red sticky notes; write challenges on blue sticky notes; and write

opportunities on green sticky notes, along with needs, resources, and critical partners. After completing the activity, each group reported out.

- Table 1 considered two opportunities: having a virtual presence and creating an integrated system. For creating an integrated system, the first steps would be identifying system components and determining what information is available within each of the individual systems that will be integrated into one.
- Table 2 identified the opportunity to bring all partners together in an integrated system and expressed a desire for systems that could work together. The group shared that the Department of Social Services and DOL already partner very closely in their state, but they would like to incorporate other stakeholders.
- Table 3 discussed data sharing across programs to ensure that the participant service system is accountable and upholds WIOA standards.
- Table 4 perceived opportunities to: collect more data to support outcomes-based decision making, increase transparency among partners, and develop core programs.
- Table 5 saw the opportunity to expand resources for participants and for the agency by compiling and disseminating a WIOA resource guide. Staff could use it (and would receive training on it) so they can best inform participants about WIOA opportunities.
- Table 6 saw an opportunity to develop cross-training between workforce and TANF staff. Staff could participate in job shadowing to understand what their peers are doing. Staff could also sit in on orientations facilitated by their partner agencies. Time would need to be allocated for these trainings/orientations, and staff buy-in and participation would be crucial. TANF, the Department of Education, Vocational Rehabilitation, DOL, and TANF families would need to be included.
- Table 7 discussed opportunities to learn how to work with the hard-to-engage and get rid of common stigmas participants face. The group would start by looking at media, statistics, and other resources around these issues. The group also recommended providing ongoing support to all service locations and encouraging co-location of services. They identified the need for buy-in from all partners, including human services providers, DOL, the Department of Education, contractors, and others.
- Table 8 discussed using shared data systems to improve participant services. This would give partners a better sense of what each participant was engaged in across networks. The group added that this would require additional training and funding. OFA peer support teams would need to be involved, and they would need buy-in from each agency head and director.
- Table 9 identified the opportunity to create a priority service policy and develop standardized assessments. They would first collect data to understand service populations, both locally and regionally. They would then assess current policies and gain partner consensus around priority services. All WIOA partners, including DOL, community based organizations, community colleges, etc., would need to be involved.
- Table 10 perceived an opportunity for additional collaboration—while their state is already doing well with the collaboration there is potential for more partnership. They would need a solid plan, staff time, and the participation of all WIOA/combined plan partners, including workforce partners.

- Table 11 described an opportunity to implement a TANF/WIOA task force through a MOU and charters. Task force goals would include aligned outcomes and better spending of TANF dollars. The group identified the need for points of contact at each agency (“barrier busters”). They also recommended involving all WIOA partner agencies, CBOs, economic development boards, chambers of commerce, and TANF participants.

Day Two

Highlight: Apps

Ms. Vera Krekanova Krofcheck, Chief Strategy Officer, 3 Rivers Workforce Investment Board provided an overview of The Pennsylvania Department of Labor and Industry’s three new work readiness apps developed by youth in October 2015. These three apps – **Get Prepared!**, **Get Dressed!**, and **Get Hired!** – are user friendly and were designed by youth to help youth practice realistic decision-making skills related to time management and preparation for interviews. Three interactive kiosks were available in the meeting foyer throughout the 2½-day meeting for meeting participants to explore each of the three apps. These work readiness apps were developed in partnership with Carnegie Mellon University and a private company- Simcoach. Twenty-five youth were funded out of a combination of workforce development and TANF dollars to develop the apps and to make them realistic, fun, and be user focused.

Lab One: Using Two-Generation Approaches to Break the Cycle of Poverty

LaMonica Shelton, TANF Regional Program Manager, Region IV, moderated this lab that provided an overview of two state and local 2Gen programs, including policy components, tools, lessons learned, implementation strategies, and specific resources that may be applicable to TANF programs. 2Gen is a tactic that states have been using for quite some time. The goal of the lab is to have participants leave with new strategies and connections to TANF, new employment, education, and training strategies. Panelists included: **Tracy L. Bell**, Chief Officer of Workforce Development, Employment, and Transformation, Tennessee Department of Human Services and **Dr. Carolyn N. Graham**, President and Founder, The Elizabeth Ministry.

[Dr. Carolyn N. Graham, President and Founder, The Elizabeth Ministry](#)

The Elizabeth Ministry formed after Dr. Graham spent a year mentoring a woman who was aging out of the welfare system in DC (age out is 21 years old). On the eve of her 21st birthday, this woman was concerned about the next day as she did not know where her or her child would live now that she had aged out of the child welfare system. The Elizabeth Ministry (TEM) is a nonprofit organization, started in 2006 and fully operationalized in 2013, with 15 teen mothers and their children in its Northeast quadrant of Ward 7 in the District of Columbia.

TEM’s mission as a 2Gen body of work is to provide comprehensive, stable, quality housing and social supports to teen mothers who are near aging-out of the child welfare system, and who have transitioned out of the system. TEM’s commitment is to guide and support the young women such that they become loving and nurturing parents, and empowered young women. TEM also focuses on the

healthy development of the children of the young women. Through the AsA Early Learning Academy, TEM provides quality early childhood development programming to the children (six weeks to three years of age) who reside in TEM's Talitha Khoum residential community. Tuition for this program averages \$50 a week which is covered by a voucher supported by TANF through the Office of the State Superintendent of Education in the District of Columbia. TEM's goals with these children are multi-faceted: ensure they are ready to learn when they enter school, and to reduce the amount of toxic stress that they are exposed to which research shows can negatively impact brain development and decrease a child's success in school.

TEM's business model focuses on available foster care data. Children and youth are placed in the foster care system primarily because of abuse, neglect, uncontrollable behavior or dependence (i.e. there is no one else to care for them). Foster care is intended to be a temporary service, with a goal of reunifying children with their biological parents whenever possible. Increasingly, though, children and youth who enter the foster care system do not achieve reunification with their parents; they live in foster care until they reach the age of majority (18 or 21 years of age). There are approximately 400,000 children and youth in foster care in the United States; approximately 24,000 age-out annually and attempt to live independently. In 2012, the United States had approximately 255,000 children and youth enter care, 240,000 children and youth exit care, and 100,000 awaiting adoption at the end of the year. The average age of those entering care was 8 years old. The average time in care for the vast majority of children was 2.5 years, approximately 18 percent were in care for 3-5 years, and 25.3 percent experienced four or more placements. In 2012, the District of Columbia had approximately 1,600 children and youth in the child welfare system; 500 enter care, 726 exit care, and 300 awaiting adoption at the end of the year. Fifty-two percent of those entering care were between the ages of 13-21. The average time that children in DC spend in care is 45.4 months or approximately four years; 28 percent were in care for more than five years and 24 percent aged-out of care at 18 or older in 2012.

Thirty years of research suggests and TEM's work supports the contention that many of the young people aging out of care are not prepared for the transition to independence. As a group, they fare more poorly than their peers across a variety of domains, including education, employment, and housing stability. They are more likely to experience adverse outcomes such as early parenthood, criminal justice system involvement, economic hardships, and are more likely to receive public assistance.

TEM's approach has focused on housing as the door through which to enter with its 2GEN work with youth near aging out and those who have aged-out because of the prevalence of homelessness and housing instability. It also has focused on the impact that housing instability has on other risk factors as it pertains to the youth and their children. Research and TEM's experience show that safe and stable housing can function as a platform that promotes positive outcomes across a range of domains from education to employment to physical and mental well-being. Stably housed young people find it easier to access needed health care and social services.

Dr. Graham discussed three key studies of homelessness and housing instability among former foster care youth to understand what happens to foster care youth when they age out. These studies led TEM to focus on two key barriers to stable housing:

- 1) the characteristics of the child welfare system leave former foster care youth ill-prepared for living independently, and local housing market characteristics typically limit housing options; and
- 2) individual level characteristics (impacted by the structural issues in #1) such as poor education, child(ren), no marketable skills, insufficient identification, etc., make it more difficult for former foster youth to get a job and earn an income sufficient to cover rent payments; and

The ability to achieve self-sufficiency is directly tied to success in the labor market. A significant number of youth age out of foster care without a high school diploma or a GED and for a variety of reasons are unable to complete high school once out of foster care. TEM's population is between the ages of 16 and 24 years. There are 11 youth in care with 13 infants and toddlers between them.

Families are important resources for young people as they transition to adulthood. Parents and other family members serve as substantial supports to young people and often assist with rent payments. Youth aging out of foster care cannot count on their families for such assistance and therefore have a limited family safety net. A number of TEM youth still have relationships with their birth families. However, economic barriers that many of the families face preclude them from taking on the youth who have children. Nevertheless, TEM encourages and makes provisions for the youth to maintain family relationships while residing in the TEM community – siblings and occasionally mothers of the youth are allowed to stay overnight or spend the weekend.

Living in foster care makes it difficult for young people to develop lasting relationships with adults who will continue to provide support during the transition to adulthood. Each young woman in TEM's program has two mentors – one peer mentor and a more senior mentor, who commits to supporting her development during her transition to adulthood. The rate of teen pregnancy is much higher among youth in foster care than among other adolescents. Though the rate of early parenthood is high for both young men and women in care; young women are far more likely to be the custodial parent. Youth in both TEM's in-care and out-of-care programs are either pregnant or parenting. Their infant/toddler children are in TEM's onsite early childhood development program. Parenting classes are offered and required for both parenting and pregnant residents.

The TEM property is located on two lots, and in two apartment buildings, with 27 two-bedroom apartments, which were created with a \$7 million investment from both the public and private sector. Their current operating budget is about \$2 million annually. TEM has two programs on its campus: one program for youth near aging out-of-care; and one for youth who aged out of care in the last year and were facing homelessness. Each resident family is provided a two-bedroom, fully furnished apartment. They are required to work diligently to keep their units clean and ready for inspection at any time. Each building has a housemother who maintains a relationship with the young women in her building and works closely with them pre- and post-intake, and when emergencies occur, especially when they are transported to the hospital for delivery. TEM's psychosocial program component is staffed by a group of professionals (including a psychologist and registered nurse) who support the young women with school enrollment, employment/workforce development, financial management/literacy, health and wellness classes, mentor identification and assignments, and counseling.

TEM sets guidelines such as no smoking in the facilities and no tolerance for drugs and alcohol. They set the bar high for community-based norms and successful outcomes, so young women in their care can work to achieve their dreams and concrete goals. TEM is both developmentally-based and outcomes driven. To demonstrate this, TEM presented a logic model that included a 2016 Benchmarks and Outcomes matrix. Education and Training are at the top of the list, as a means to gain work readiness knowledge and experience. This includes the application process for jobs, job training programs or education programs. Residents also must participate in parent training workshops, build healthy relationships with their children (and avoid negative behaviors/outcomes such as child abuse), and attend to a child's development through meetings with their child's teacher, appointments for physical, dental, and other medical appointments, and through story-telling (reading nightly to their child). The spiritual development component of the matrix does not advance or promote any specific religion; it is based on research that asserts spirituality assists in overall health and well-being. TEM also looks to fill gaps and teach skills that participants did not learn or were not taught such as household maintenance, food and nutrition, budgeting and spending planning, saving money, and shopping, among other activities. Each family in both programs must attend these life skills classes and are rewarded for their attendance and participation. The family with the highest rate of attendance is rewarded with a gift card, certificate, and a bouquet of flowers.

Upon acceptance into TEM's program, each young woman signs a Covenant Agreement, and makes a commitment to her own development and the development of her child. An individual development plan (IDP) is created soon after the resident arrives. The IDP outlines the young woman's goals and the timeline that she intends to achieve them. When a Resident Family cannot commit to their plan or stay on task, they can be placed on probation and are closely monitored during their probationary period. During the screening for the program, residents are introduced to the child development center. If the child is accepted to the center, they are assessed around three to four months old and the Center uses this information as a baseline to compare to an assessment done the following year and twice a year each year thereafter (while the child is with TEM) so TEM is able to report the progress a child has made in learning readiness skills. TEM uses the Abecedarian curriculum which is an evidence-based teaching/learning model that places emphasis on the interaction between the child and their caregiver.

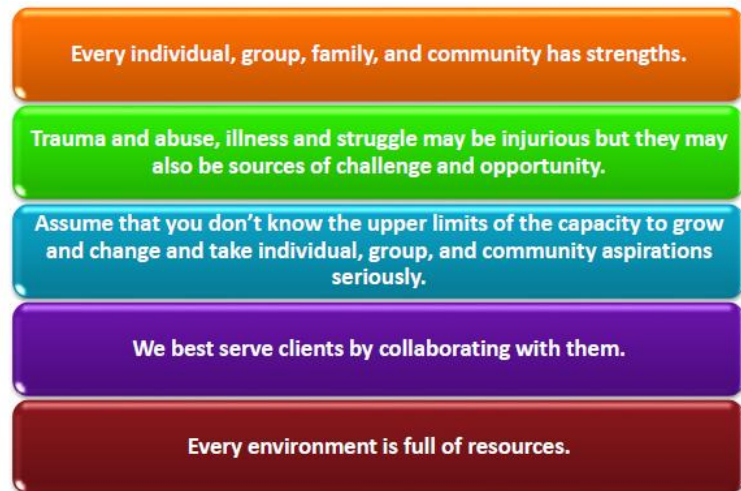
Parents engage monthly with the Center staff as volunteers, and are shown ways to interact with children that acknowledge them as evolving, inquisitive people. TEM introduced a *Mommy Will You Read to Me* program about a year ago, which encourages the mothers to read to their children nightly from a book furnished weekly by the Center. Parents attend parenting classes in the Center on a weekly basis. The classes are designed to teach appropriate ways to discipline children so they are not traumatized, ways to play and laugh with children to understand the value of play and laughter, and ways to teach children how to be patient and persistent in learning how to problem solve.

Question: What about birth control; what is taught to women? **Answer:** By signing the Covenant Agreement, women commit to not having a second pregnancy while at TEM. The nurse teaches birth control and birth control options, and encourages them to have safe sex not just to avoid pregnancy but also to prevent HIV and STDs.

Tracy Bell, Chief Officer of Workforce Development, Employment, and Transformation, Tennessee Department of Human Services

Mr. Bell spoke about “2Gen for TN,” a program of the Tennessee Department of Human Services (DHS). DHS’s purpose and mission is to offer temporary economic assistance, work opportunities, and protective services to improve the lives of Tennesseans. DHS’s vision is to be a leader in creating partnerships with human service customers to establish or re-establish self-sufficiency to create a better quality of life. This includes a strengths perspective as seen in **Exhibit 2**. It is about tapping into strengths to help people move forward. Mr. Bell showed a video and noted a few takeaways: (1) if you ask people to look for their deficits, people will usually find them and focus on this; and (2) the converse is true for strengths. A shift to a strengths-based perspective changes the way of working with people. In the case of 2Gen approaches, it is about impacting the entire family.

Exhibit 2: DHS Adheres to Strength Perspective

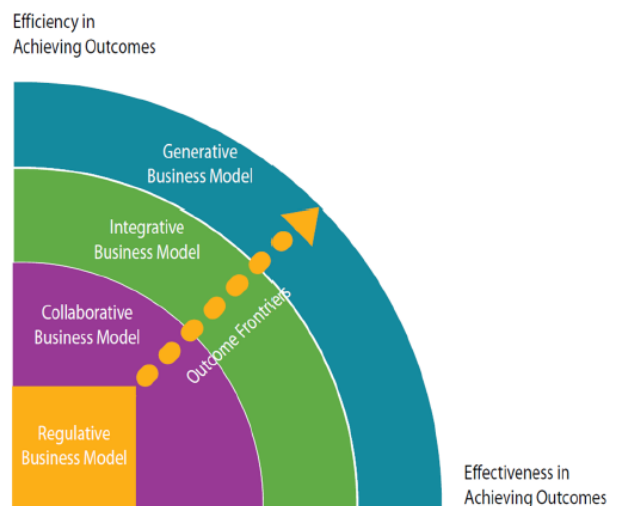


Background and Building of the Model

The Human Services Value Curve, as shown in **Exhibit 3**, was developed by Harvard University and shows four stages: 1) regulative; 2) collaborative; 3) integrative; and 4) generative business models in relation to the efficiency and effectiveness in achieving outcomes. The regulative focus is to serve citizens who are eligible for particular services while complying with policy and program regulations. This stage serves as a baseline; all human service organizations start here and must meet this level in order to comply with program requirements.

The collaborative business model focuses on supporting citizens in receiving all the services for which they are eligible by working across agency and programmatic boundaries. This stage expands programs beyond “silos” and finds intersections where agencies and programs can collaborate in order to improve outcomes and create outcome goals that include multiple programs and organizations. This particular stage will allow and enable caseworkers across programs and organizations to collaborate on solutions and help move participants to self-sufficiency faster.

Exhibit 3: Human Services Value Curve

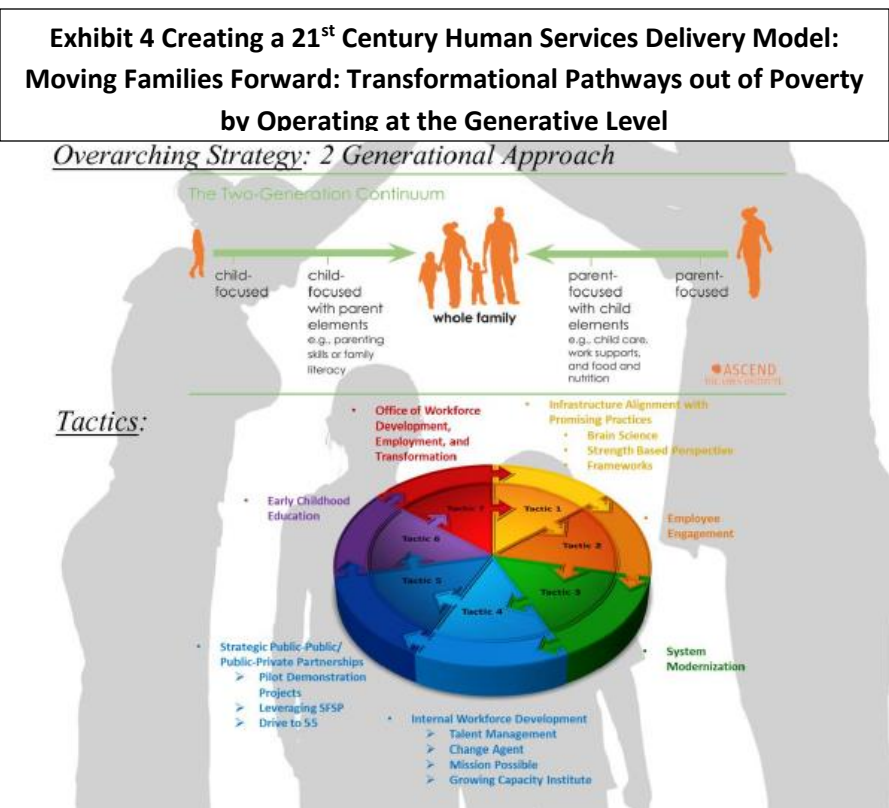


The Integrative Business Model stage addresses the root causes of participant needs and problems by coordinating and integrating services at an optimum level. This stage promotes strategic and operational ways to address family centric outcomes through seamless, cross-boundary collaboration. This stage includes the implementation of an integrated, single-view system for case management across programs and organization and the formulation of a human services model that connects desired outcomes to overall community priorities. The fourth stage, Generative Business Model, focuses on creating healthy communities by co-creating solutions for multi-dimensional family and socioeconomic challenges and opportunities. This includes fostering an adaptive organizational culture that can anticipate changing community and participant circumstances and shift priorities to maximize outcome achievement, and synthesizing information enterprise-wide to support predictive analysis and policy and program innovation. This stage also enables co-creation of policy and program modifications in response to real-time conditions.

The 2GEN for TN Program

The 2Gen continuum focuses on the entire family unit as a whole leading to “family-focused solutions.” A number of tactics are used in the 2Gen strategy and approach, as listed in Exhibit 4. Employer engagement is key, as well as internal Workforce Development such as investing in frontline staff through training (i.e. motivational interviewing). The intended outcome is that staff are better engaged with those whom they serve.

There are four components of 2Gen: education, economic supports, health & well-being, and social capital. 2Gen for TN has supported the education component in a number of ways. They launched Drive to 55 which is an initiative to get 55 percent of Tennesseans equipped with a college degree or certificate by 2015. Tennessee Promise was also launched to provide free access to two-year or technical colleges. Tennessee Reconnect is another program to help adults reconnect and go back to a two-year or technical school for free. The goals of these programs have been to connect or reconnect individuals to education that would have not gone to school otherwise. The Imagination Library is an initiative that provides books to families (for adults to read to children), and the Summer Foods initiative aims to prevent malnourishment of children by providing free and reduced lunches to make sure that no Tennessean child goes hungry.



The Workforce Development and Employment Component has been supported by Workforce360 which follows a three-step (intertwined) process.

1. Participants first get referred, complete a needs assessment and engage in employment monitoring.
2. Participants develop an individualized plan for employment (IPE) and participate in job skills training, community service, or receive work experience, which leads participants to their job search.
3. Participants work on their resume writing and interviewing skills which lead to job placement, and ultimately these activities intertwined lead to the success of the participant. The TN Department of Human Services follows the Bridge to Self-Sufficiency model that stresses health and well-being through brain science informed practices.

The Action Research pilot sets out to address both the practical concerns of people in an immediate problematic situation and to further the goals of social science simultaneously. With that in mind, there is a dual commitment in action research to study a system while at the same time collaborating with members of the system in changing to a desirable direction. Accomplishing this collective goal requires the active collaboration of researcher and participant, and thus it stresses the importance of co-learning as a primary aspect of the research process.

In order to create cycles of success for the Tennessee TANF population in Shelby County, the department realizes that there is a need to increase efforts around case management in order to effectively partner with customers to assist them in reaching self-sufficiency. The poverty rate in Shelby County and the Memphis poverty rate are amongst the highest in the country. The high school graduation rate is the lowest in the state. These and other factors create challenges for the Shelby County TANF population to realize economic well-being.

Tennessee uses a number of indicators to measure progress for each of the four key components of 2Gen. For education, this includes parents enrolling in post-secondary education, youth enrolling in Tennessee Promise, and children participating in the Imagination Library, among other activities. For the economic supports component, this includes improved housing, consistent reliable transportation, securing job placements and employment with meaningful wages and benefits, increased assets building, and other activities. The health and well-being component measures success in terms of reduction of the following: substance abuse, domestic violence, learning disabilities, emotional well-being, and child behavior. For the final component, social capital, Tennessee measures progress in terms of well-developed support systems.

The pilot is not an empirical study; in an effort to provide a framework to understand the variables of influence, DHS has identified key elements to apply to the case management approach. The independent variable for this Action Research pilot is building internal capacity (investing in staff development). The dependent variable is the effect on customer outcomes. The hypothesis or basic premise is

Exhibit 5: Leading Organizational Change



that “changing how we deliver and engage the customer will yield better overall outcomes for the family unit.” There must be a mind-shift, or a shifting in how DHS thinks about how they provide services. In order to lead organizational change, implementers must follow eight steps (as shown in **Exhibit 5**):

1. Establish a sense of urgency and articulate a powerful rationale and business case for change;
2. Create a guiding coalition that has enough power and influence in the organization to lead the change effort;
3. Develop a clear shared vision that is compelling and guides the direction of the change;
4. Communicate the vision through multiple vehicles and role-model new behaviors;
5. Empower people to act on the vision by removing obstacles to the change such as changing systems or structures that undermine the vision;
6. Create short-term/quick wins and recognize and reward employees involved;
7. Consolidate and build on the gains by changing policies and procedures that don't fit the vision and recruit and promote employees who can implement the vision;
8. Institutionalize the change by continually articulating the connections between the new way of working and corporate success, and weaving the new corporate style/structure into the leadership development and succession planning.

Question and Answer

Question: Have you engaged non-custodial parents in 2Gen programs?

Answer: Dr. Graham: For fathers of women in programs, they are invited to monthly dinners. Many men are hesitant, particularly because of child support issues. They do play with children and take children out to play but it is a very slow process. **Tracy Bell:** Tennessee focuses on educating fathers at town hall meetings to understand which and what organizations are trying to do to help them. They are trying to help men put their defenses down.

Question: For Tennessee, how many customers are you serving? How much did budget increase for these programs?

Answer: Tracy Bell: The budget has not increased. What has changed is how they are doing things. Currently they are doing an analysis to see if they need to increase the number of staff to ensure that caseload per caseworker is correct.

Question: Is Drive to 55 a means tested program?

Answer: Tracy Bell: The program is for anyone in the state and is not a means-tested program.

Question: What is the enrollment process like for TEM?

Answer: Dr. Graham: For the in-care program, if they come at age 16, they can stay until they are 21 but under the condition that they are in school or working. They must also be enrolled in the life skills classes and must be committed to their own development.

Lab Two: Career Pathways and Employment Outlook

Eileen Friedman, TANF Regional Program Manager for OFA ACF, Region III moderated the lab. Three speakers discussed their programs including: **Tamila Lay**, Director of the Division of Employment and Training at the Pennsylvania Department of Human Services; **Elisabeth Sachs**, Executive Director, Jobs Opportunity Task Force; and **Ana-Maria Garcia**, Data Dissemination Specialist, Data Dissemination Branch, Customer Liaison & Marketing Services Office, U.S. Census Bureau.

Tamila Lay, Director of the Division of Employment and Training, Pennsylvania Department of Human Services

Ms. Lay discussed the Keystone Education Yields Success (KEYS) program which started in 2005 as an incubator program for community colleges. Ms. Lay and her staff visited the program and met with participants, staff, and students to determine the reason for the program's success. They were also interested in seeing if it could be replicated in other colleges by bringing together workforce agencies and other partners to try to develop a similar program. During their visits, they identified challenges including how to answer questions such as "if the program is community college focused, what do you do about the work requirement?" and "what should the time limit of the program be?" The answer to these questions determines an agency's ability to execute the program upfront.

Sharing some lessons learned, Ms. Lay said that during pre-implementation, it is important to determine who your participants will be (TANF, SNAP, or both), and how the referral process will work, including the data system requirements. It is also important to determine the approach for tracking of participation time and outcome measures, and the method of program recruitment.

KEYS has served almost 12,000 TANF and SNAP recipients since 2005, with 11.7 percent of all of their students graduating from community college within 2 years. KEYS majors are set up to lead to careers. Fourteen percent of all KEYS students leave the program with employment, and 21 percent of KEYS students attend a four-year institution upon graduation. KEYS is funded by annual grant agreements with community colleges for funds derived from TANF and SNAP. KEYS budget for the 2016-2017 fiscal year is \$3,350,261.

The student facilitator role is key in this program, which is in essence a life coach employed by the college and funded by KEYS. They are essential as some students do not know how to navigate the college system. Student facilitators serve as friends and liaisons between students and the college or any other agency. They also make sure students are meeting the required hours to receive safety net benefits. KEYS is an open enrollment program; students are often referred before the semester has begun. To serve those students, KEYS programs provide three weeks of intensive case management services and career counseling after they have been referred and before they have enrolled in classes. Pre-enrollment services include financial aid counseling and a college aptitude assessment. KEYS helps students meet TANF and SNAP employment and training requirements, such as job searching, GED, job readiness/preparation, paid work experiences, and more.

The KEYS program was expanded in 2015 by legislation to include all 14 state universities and 78 career and technical schools in addition to the 14 community colleges. TANF and SNAP students are eligible to

participate in the KEYS expansion policy. Students attending the state universities and career and technical schools are eligible to use the 24 month vocational exception policy and the six-month extensions. Additionally, legislation expanded the time available for participants to complete their education as it takes an average of three years for students to complete a degree or certificate. The Vocational Exception Policy allows students to use Vocational Education time as their core activity for 24 months. Thereafter, it is possible to qualify for six-month extensions if the student meets the extension policy criteria. This criteria states that a student: must be engaged in a degree/certificate program that will likely lead to a High Priority Occupation as defined by the Department of Labor and Industry; must not be enrolled in any remedial courses; must have a cumulative Grade Point Average (GPA) of 2.0 or above; and must have completed an average of eight credit hours per semester. If students do not meet the extension criteria at 24 months, they must engage in another core activity until the criteria is met.

Elizabeth Sachs, Executive Director, Jobs Opportunity Task Force

Elizabeth Sachs presented next on Industry Sector Partnerships and Pre-Apprenticeship Training. The Job Opportunities Task Force (JOTF) is a nonprofit that aims to increase the skills, job opportunities, and incomes of low-skill, low-income workers and job seekers. JOTF does research, publishes issue briefs, conducts advocacy work, and also provides a training program in construction trades. They focus on three main areas: (1) apprenticeships/pre-apprenticeships; (2) industry sector partnerships; and (3) addressing barriers to employment.

Apprenticeships are supervised, paid, and provide on-the-job training. They also include formal postsecondary classroom instruction. Construction is the traditional industry for these programs, but there is increasing interest in healthcare and information technology for this mode. Apprenticeships provide numerous benefits: they can meet current and anticipated skill shortages and can incrementally replenish the retiring workforce; they offer custom-designed, industry-driven training to meet specific employer needs – both the needs for a certain number of workers and for particular skills; and they create career pathways which instill loyalty and reduce turnover.

Industry sector partnerships convene multiple employers, education and training providers, and community-based organizations, to address the local skill needs of a particular industry. Employers and trainers determine the curriculum of a program together, and the employer also engages by interviewing students and selecting some as employees. Industry sector partnerships are a proven strategy for helping workers prepare for middle-skill jobs and helping employers find skilled workers. As of one year ago, 21 states had an industry sector partnership model, which involves engagement with nonprofits and community based organizations. The number of states with that model will likely increase as states implement WIOA. One example of an industry sector partnership is EARN Maryland: it has 40 sector partnerships in a range of industries including healthcare, construction, information technology, manufacturing, and transportation and logistics.

Ms. Sachs shared four essential steps necessary to create industry sector partnerships: 1) convene all partners; 2) determine the level of jobs to be considered; 3) have employers identify current and future job openings; and 4) have employers identify key elements of jobs, such as essential and

technical skills. Ms. Sachs emphasized that partnering with community-based organizations is key. These partners (as well as employers) can help with recruiting, screening, training, placement, and follow-up to address people's needs once they start employment or while they are on the job.

Ms. Sachs shared information about Project Jumpstart, an 87-hour pre-apprenticeship construction training program. The program addresses the high unemployment in Baltimore City and the large disconnect between motivated Baltimoreans and entry into the building trade through various strategies including apprenticeships. The program is a partnership between the Job Opportunities Task Force, Associated Builders and Contractors (ABC), and community partners (Center for Urban Families and Catholic Charities – Our Daily Bread). JOTF manages the program, ensuring funding expectations are met and that the program has continued funding, while ABC provides the training and job placement services through their broad network of construction industry employers. The community partners assist with recruitment, screening, and case management.

The program curriculum was originally developed with industry employers. To date, 150 different employers have hired JumpStart graduates and over 50 have hired more than one graduate. Eleven employers are members of the Employer Advisory Committee that reviews the curriculum, discusses industry trends, and works to find opportunities for graduates. The program is designed to provide two three-hour classes a week for approximately 14 weeks. During this time students receive:

- case management to assist with barriers to success in training and employment;
- heavy math remediation including a bridge math program that allows Project JumpStart to consider more residents with lower math competencies at assessment;
- a \$25 stipend each class based on punctuality, attendance, and adhering to program policies;
- hard-skills training in basic construction and entry-level carpentry, electrical, and plumbing; and
- OSHA 10, CPR, and First Aid certification (a requirement for many entry-level construction employees).

Graduates of the program receive case management to assist with any barriers to training and employment; job placement assistance; a set of starter tools once they are employed (a \$250 value); driver's education (if needed); and a financial sponsorship to a local program, Vehicles for Change, that will provide them a quality used car and small loan if a vehicle is needed; public transportation is usually not enough to get participants to construction sites.

In order to apply, potential participants must take a basic math test as part of the application process. They must have a high school diploma/GED, want to work in construction and be able to physically perform those types of jobs, complete an interview, and pass a drug test.

The program design includes running the classroom like a job site: students must be on time and are not permitted to use cell phones. It is expected that participants are ready for the training like they would be ready for work. If participants are late twice, they are kicked out of the program. In addition to running the classroom like a job site, the program expects that students have the right mix of vocational, math and job readiness/essential skills to move to entry level construction work, and have the right attitude, aptitude, and level of attendance.

Ms. Sachs shared student demographics of the program: 95 percent are African-American males, the average age is about 34, and 75 percent are unemployed at enrollment. The 25 percent who are employed at enrollment on average earn approximately \$10 an hour and tend to have no access to benefits. Most have a thin work history with little construction experience. Participants also face a number of challenges: roughly 80 percent have no access to reliable transportation and 20 percent do not have a driver's license. Many that do have access to transportation still have issues regarding child support, fines, insurance violations, etc. Seventy-five percent have a criminal record and 31 percent have self-identified as non-custodial parents. The program has tried to do more to help individuals expunge their criminal records, expand their financial capability assistance once they are placed in a job, and help with their driver's licensing issues.

Since the program's inception in 2006, 80 percent of students graduated, and 75 percent of graduates were placed into construction careers. The average starting wage for graduates is \$12.30 an hour. Twenty-five percent of job placements led to apprenticeship enrollment and 100 graduates have been enrolled in a formal apprenticeship. Of those eligible, 34 percent have completed a four-year apprenticeship.

Ana-Maria Garcia, Data Dissemination Specialist, Data Dissemination Branch, Customer Liaison & Marketing Services Office, U.S. Census Bureau

Ms. Garcia from the U.S. Census Bureau discussed trending occupations in states by region, and shared information about various data sources regarding employment at the state and county level. The American Community Survey (ACS) started in 2005 as a long-form (75 pages long with 69 questions). The survey was administered every 10 years, which was not quick enough to produce useful results. Now, the ACS is conducted every month. One-year estimates are released in September and five-year estimates are released in December. This survey is helpful because it includes social data such as the number of people who are SNAP recipients, educational attainment, median income, demographic data, household information, and housing data. There are more than 930,000 geographic areas included.

Table S2301 on the ACS website displays employment status by age (see presenter PowerPoint for more information). It shows the percentage of individuals who are employed and includes various years of data, going back to 2009. Each table can be downloaded to a CSV file and users can produce a trend line from the data. You can view Table S2301 from the county level, or even the city or town level, but this data can get less reliable the further you drill down. Table S2402 also displays median earnings by occupation and sex. Practitioners can look for occupations that pay women close to what men make, so if they are looking to place people, they can be placed in an occupation in which they are likely to see success faster.

The ACS website also provides tables with other information, such as the industries in each geographic area. This information is helpful when creating programs; it is not ideal to design a career pathways program for an occupation that is not needed. Other tables include Table S2405 (industry by occupation), S2406 (Occupation by Class of Worker), S2407 (Industry by Class of Worker), S2408 (Class of Worker by Sex and Median Earnings), to list a few.

The Economic Census (www.business.census.gov) is also useful to look at data on employers themselves. This data can give insight into the growth (or potentially stagnation) of industries. This website provides industry snapshots that capture the number of establishments, the number of employers, types of jobs available, etc. in an industry. Increases in these numbers may indicate a good area in which to create a program. The Economic Census also provides a database search and trend charts (customizable to the year, industry, report series and geographic level), and data which communities can use to define themselves and decide how they are going to move people to self-sufficiency. All the data can be converted into charts to show pictures of the data (bar, line, or scatter charts).

Question & Answer

Question: *(for Ms. Sachs):* Criminal backgrounds are a major barrier. What strategies do you use to deal with them? Also, can you provide more information on Vehicles for Change?

Answer: Ms. Sachs: The advocacy side of the JOTF has tried to expand the number and types of crimes that can be expunged. But it is also necessary to have support for people to make this process usable. People need help with expungements for example or accessing legal services. JOTF is also looking to law and legal aid sites for help. The JOTF website has more information about Vehicles for Change, and other states have similar programs (like West Virginia).

Question: *(for Ms. Sachs from Ms. Shelton):* How do you actually access apprenticeship programs?

Answer: Ms. Sachs: It stems from the employer need. JOTF builds the front end of the services that people need, then they help with the paperwork for getting into the apprenticeship program too.

Question: *(for Ms. Lay):* There have been successful stories of women making \$15+ dollars an hour. Did they retain benefits for children?

Answer: Ms. Lay: Pennsylvania has transitional benefits but there is still more work to do around that.

Comment from Ms. Golonka: OPRE has also put out some great data that compliments Ms. Garcia's presentation on U.S. Census Bureau data. OPRE developed a table for each state that shows demand in certain industries. Practitioners can share this with participants to show them that in X amount of time they could be making X amount of money. Also, it is incumbent upon TANF programs to reach out to apprenticeship programs.

Question: *(for Ms. Sachs):* Was there an intentional decision around participant age that you were targeting for the construction program? It could work for opportunity youth.

Answer: Ms. Sachs: In the last year, there has been more focus on opportunity youth. Recently, we received a grant for the 18-25 year old population. Now, we are piloting a mentoring program which yields graduates trained to be mentors for younger students.

Question: *(for Ms. Sachs from Carol Monteiro):* Have you looked at WIOA funding for targeting opportunity youth?

Answer: Ms. Sachs: Good advice. We are working with Sara Muempfer and others at Maryland's Human Services Office to try to find more stable federal funding streams.

Interactive HCD Activity

During the afternoon interactive HCD activity, Mr. Waters led meeting participants in building on the content of the two morning labs by designing their own two-generation and career pathways programs. There were a total of six groups (three groups focusing on two-generation and three groups focusing on career pathways). Each group received a prompt then developed a name for their project, outlined the context in which they were developing this particular program, identified potential benefits and outcomes of the program, developed value statements/concepts, and created costs/timelines. The session concluded with each team having the opportunity to share with the group and receive peer input and reflections on their programs. Then each of the four Regional Program Managers played the role of the “Governor’s Office” to provide administrative-level feedback on the projects.

Two-Generation Presentations to the “Governor’s Office”

The Little 2Gen That Could. This project focused largely on non-custodial parents (NCPs), starting with a strengths-based assessment for dads as well as their children (to see where children are developmentally). The project would test progress periodically through assessments, and aim to serve 1,000 NCPs annually. The Little 2Gen That Could will cost approximately \$10,000 a year. Desired outcomes would be increased child support, decreased TANF, and increased special education spending. The program would try to negotiate down child support arrears and hope to also see a reduction in criminal justice involvement among noncustodial parents in the program, and in the longer term aim to encourage healthy relationships and reduce toxic stress. **Question from the “Governor:”** How would you identify NCPs? *Answer:* The project would reach out to community partners (e.g. local domestic relations offices, criminal justice systems) and review TANF and SNAP caseloads. The real incentive for designing this program is to support the well-being of the whole family.

Families to Future. This project was described as a wraparound service package based on the needs of the family with core goals of improving housing situations, child care, health, and the overall family dynamic. The program would touch families from assessment to case closure across a group of partner agencies. The program proposed spending \$12 million over a five-year implementation period for a minimum of 60 families, although the overall goal would be to provide services to 185 families. Services would include: 1) weekly workshops with experts that would be held for participants of all agencies; and 2) monthly health screenings (also an opportunity to measure progress). There would be a flex fund for additional supportive services that families might need, and measurable outcomes will be established to track the progress of families. The project would need three full-time employees (FTEs) as points of contact for case workers. **Question from the “Governor:”** What is new about this? Could this be done without additional funds? *Answer:* Too many of our participants go from agency to agency with no consistency—the three new FTEs are what is going to really make a difference.

2 G’s. The purpose of this program would be to alleviate intergenerational poverty, improve employment outcomes, establish parenting groups (classes for adults and a social environment for children), and both reduce toxic stress and develop social capital for adults and children. The intended

benefits are to support stable living environments, help participants obtain housing subsidies, reduce out-of-wedlock pregnancies, and simultaneously improve academic and employment outcomes. The program would first hire competent staff—including a director whose first job is to plan the program design and implementation—then develop partnerships with government and non-government entities.

Development indicators would be measured through an initial assessment, and then the team will establish measurements to see how successful and cost effective the program is. An action plan would assist with implementation and a committee would be assigned to support the new director. The program would aim to serve 45 families per year per county (the state has 100 counties) for a total of about 4,500 families per year. The program would request \$25 million per year (\$5,500 per family, i.e. approximately the same amount as TANF grants). **Question from the “Governor:”** How would you identify families that are “at-risk?” **Answer:** We will determine certain factors that define at-risk—so at-risk would include individuals with domestic violence involvement, substance abuse issues, etc.

Career Pathways Presentations to the “Governor’s Office”

Pathways to Prosperity. This effort would be a \$25 million project for 5,000 participants. Partners include the Department of Labor and Career One Stops, Adult Basic Education, the Department of Social Services, and other collaborators and innovators who could assist in transitioning individuals and families from TANF to prosperity through training and certification in a high-tech field. Funding would be for a five year effort, and partners would also use existing resources. Activities for program participants would include certifications, cross-training, and supportive services to facilitate the building of career pathways.

Pathways to Self-Sufficiency. This program would cost \$7 million over six years to meet the needs of 7,000 participants. Participant strengths and challenges will be evaluated to provide gainful employment that fits the participant. The program would target construction, healthcare, and hospitality industries and partner with employers, local government, legal aid, and other stakeholders. The program would include comprehensive case management and focus on participant barrier reduction. When a participant comes into the program they will self-evaluate their strengths and challenges, as well as consider the facts of their situation (e.g. do they have a GED?, etc.). The program will focus on participant self-motivation and finding a career pathway that participants are actually interested in, since that will help lead to self-sufficiency.

Family Core. This program was loosely modeled on Job Core. The idea is to work on career pathways for approximately 5,000 participants over five years. This would be a residential program; families will have many services they need offered in-house—for example, to address challenges that might arise when attempting to go to school (e.g. transportation, day care, and child care). Parents will live in residential housing with their children. The program would have connections with universities who have space available for this. A thorough initial assessment would take place at the beginning of each participant’s residential period to go over their career goals and possible employment opportunities in the region. After two years, each participant will have obtained a credential that moves them closer to their goals. Then they have the option to stay for another two years to obtain their bachelor’s degree. The program would be fairly expensive at \$150 million per year. **Question from the “Governor:”** Will you have any type of job training or subsidized employment to go along with the education piece? *Answer:* The idea is to offer participants a thorough assessment process where we determine what specialized pathway that person will move along. The pathway could be a combination of supports depending on the individual’s interest and skill set. **Question from the “Governor:”** What about fathers? *Answer:* We will allow men to live in the residential units with their families.

Round Robin Tables

During this session moderated by Carol Monteiro, Acting Regional Administrator and TANF Regional Program Manager, Region I, participants had the opportunity to spend approximately 20 minutes at each of four topic tables. Every table had a facilitator, most of whom were plenary or lab presenters, which gave participants the opportunity to dig deeper into the content covered by these presenters earlier in the meeting. The four tables and corresponding facilitators were:

- **WIOA/TANF Partnership and Implementation in Massachusetts.** Table Facilitator: John Stella, Director, TANF/Cash Department of Transitional Assistance, Massachusetts.
- **Setting up Apprenticeship and Pre-Apprenticeship Programs for TANF Participants.** Table Facilitator: Elisabeth Sachs, Executive Director, Jobs Opportunity Task Force.
- **2-Generation and the Tennessee Experience.** Table Facilitator: Tracy L. Bell, Chief Office of Workforce Development, Employment, and Transformation, Tennessee Department of Human Services.
- **WIOA/TANF Partnership and Implementation in Maryland.** Table Facilitator: Sara K. Muempfer, Director of Workforce Development, Family Investment Administration, Maryland Department of Human Resources.

Day Three

Knowledge Share

Frank Ceruto, TANF Regional Program Manager, shared his observation that devolution of the program has resulted in a limited sense of urgency on getting resources to needy families. This has occurred due to diversion of TANF funding to other than the core activities (assistance, work and child care). While initiatives on 2 gen, career pathways, and WIOA that were addressed yesterday attempt to break the cycle of poverty, more needs to be done in terms of funding. Instead of letting another generation go by “we” should do whatever we can do to reduce intergenerational poverty. Meeting participants had the opportunity to note strategies and solutions they were going to take home including some noting the relevance of housing and integrated housing approaches to working with TANF participants; the need to find additional resources and partners similar to 2-GEN TN; and focusing on the people “we” want to serve and not WPRs.

Interactive HCD Activity

Mr. Damon Waters, Office of Family Assistance, facilitated this final interactive activity that was designed to focus on understanding the life circumstances and economic realities of TANF participants and the hardest-to-serve populations in preparation for the final meeting plenary. An interactive activity allowed meeting participants to review personal stories and reflections from actual TANF participants and to gain a better understanding of the different circumstances that these individuals are navigating. Meeting participants were split into pairs, and then reported out on their observations.

Observations from Meeting Participants on Review of Personal Stories/Reflections

- The rules around TANF benefits do create barriers for TANF participants. That frustration can be seen including the judgment and disconnect between what administrators and caseworkers observe and causes miscommunication.
- We all have different values and need to keep that in mind when communicating with TANF participants.
- For a lot of the individuals we serve, there is a high level of desperation.
- Spending time with participants allows you to find out their strengths, interests, and goals.
- Even though there is frustration at all levels, our hope is that there is hope across the board. These groups really need help keeping kids out of foster care. Values are ultimately at work in this case since they are with familiar family and in a familiar, safe environment, instead of getting into foster care. We try to do the right things for our families but the system does not necessarily support it.
- In regards to the “scared child handout;” we saw a child as an innocent bystander with no control over the situation and recommend the 2-gen approach. The metaphor conveyed is for a child to be seen not heard. For both staff and participant, there is a narrow focus on what is needed and what is in their life. The caseworkers and the participants see what they immediately need to get done.
- While staff can be trained with social work skills, there needs to be more focus on social service type training that is top-down driven. Agency and staff mindset need to change.

- There is a lot of frustration depicted in the pictures in the workbook and staff are doing the best with what they can do with the resources they have available and training. There has been such a focus on technology replacing the human being.
- The value the group sees in the pictures is compassion and understanding of participants' values. There needs to be more focus on what participants are saying and the stigma still exists. Participants are overwhelmed by the system and the system we created for families do not work very well.
- Poverty is about social inequality and administrators/caseworkers need to do their part in changing the system.
- Values of equity, compassion, dignity, and compassion showed through these stories. Administrators/caseworkers can be advocates for participants and see families as in transition.
- As the hook for a story—it is all about connections and relationships. Each of the stories speaks to the value of human centered design. The stories showed how a participant appreciated job coaches, a child writing to the president speaks to the trauma of what children go through; and someone with 18 years of work experience and focusing on those unique strengths versus taking a traditional approach. Many of these scenarios shows a failed process with no human centered design—no regard to having the human at the middle. Takeaways from this meeting should focus on ways to improve systems and incorporate the human centered design into the process.
- The characteristics of determination and persistence in individuals' stories is something a design team needs to pay attention to putting the participant first.

Working with the Hard-to-Serve—Developing Executive Skills with TANF Participants to Set and Achieve Goals

Frank Ceruto, TANF Regional Program Manager, Region II, moderated this session. The session presenters were: **Deborah Joffe**, Associate Manager, PCG CalWORKs Welfare-to-Work Program, Public Consulting Group (PCG) and **Yekaterina (Kate) Probert Fagundes**, MFIP/DWP/SNAP Employment Services Division Manager, Ramsey County Workforce Solutions.

Deborah Joffe, Associate Manager, PCG CalWORKS Welfare-to-Work Program, Public Consulting Group

Ms. Joffe noted the difficulty of defining “hard-to-serve” families, particularly because the definition varies across programs. It could include people who have been on TANF beyond the time limit; individuals with disabilities; those struggling with substance abuse, mental health, and/or legal issues; people searching for a job who are unable to find one; people who live in rural areas and cannot transport themselves to available jobs or childcare; individuals without a high school degree or equivalent, or those that read at an 8th grade level or below; and single mothers with babies and/or multiple children (i.e. many individuals on TANF).

Ms. Joffe spoke about the importance of shifting focus from individuals' problems to their strengths, and asked states about their definitions of “hard-to-serve.” In **New Jersey**, it means individuals who are “chronically unemployable.” The state has a substance abuse initiative, family employment initiative, family violence assessment, and counseling to address their needs. **D.C.** is still struggling to define its

hard-to-serve population. The District does not currently have a time limit for TANF, but soon will and it needs to define criteria for hardship extensions.

Ms. Joffe defined hard-to-serve individuals as those with multiple barriers to self-sufficiency, reminding participants that it is important to address those barriers and capitalize on individuals’ strengths at the same time. She introduced the concept of executive functioning, which she likened to the “traffic controller of your brain,” and explained that components of executive functioning can be thought of as characteristics that can help someone get and keep a job. Some examples include:

- **Ability to be flexible, to switch gears, and to multi-task.** *We no longer have factory jobs where employees are doing the same thing all day, every day. Even the most entry-level retail job requires workers to handle multiple tasks.*
- **Working memory.** *An individual understands an instruction, goes back to his/her desk, and does it.*
- **Inhibitory control.** *If your boss is making you mad, can you stay calm and go back to work without yelling at your boss? Ms. Joffe gave another example, “stress eating,” where people eat when they feel stressed. This example illustrated that everyone can have issues with executive functioning at times, depending on circumstances.*

Individuals chronically struggling with poor executive functioning skills may have experienced traumatic stress as a child that led to impaired development of these skills. The Harvard Center for the Developing Child and other researchers and scientists have led the way in recognition of this phenomenon—science shows that prolonged exposure to toxic stress (severe and persistent stress such as that associated with poverty, hunger, child neglect, etc. that is unmediated by the presence of a caring adult) changes brain chemistry. Ms. Joffe shared that the brains of individuals who grow up exposed to high toxic stress levels may develop differently, resulting in impaired executive functioning.

Ms. Joffe explained that there are adults in the TANF program who have been experiencing toxic stress for their entire lives, and that the provider community can help them overcome its effects. She clarified that executive functioning is not related to IQ levels. Rather, it is about using basic skills like time management and decision-making, especially under stress—and since these skills are not innate they can be built and improved.

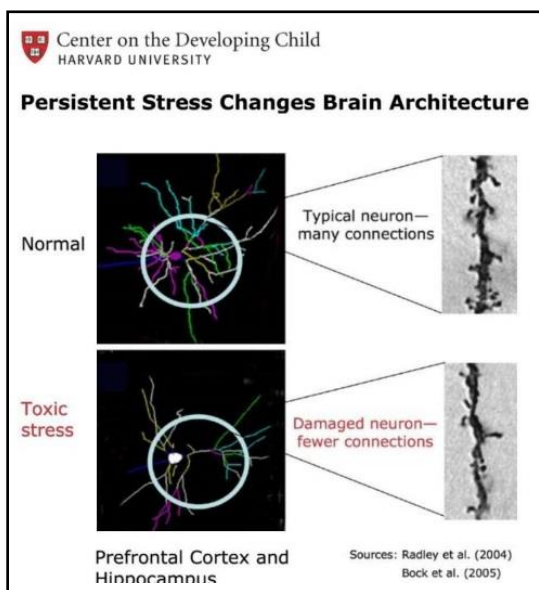


Exhibit 6: Illustration of the impact of stress on the brain

She shared that Ms. Fagundes and Ramsey County call these “essential skills.” Ms. Joffe invited participants to share examples of times when they had seen a lack of essential skills impact participants’ lives. One participant shared that she witnessed a participant bring a margarita to an on-site employer interview (the participant was later referred to a drug and alcohol center). Another representative recalled a participant who landed a great, stable job with the state and immediately asked her caseworker: “But how am I going to do my laundry now?”

The participant was unable to see how she could do her laundry at a time other than during the work day, because thinking about budgeting time and work/life balance requires essential skills.

Question: What is the order of services to address these issues? This cannot be a one-size-fits-all approach. When do you address toxic stress, and when do you address executive functioning?

Answer: Executive functioning will be discussed more. It is not a new concept, but rather a new way to look at human services. There needs to be more research done about the length of time it will take to make improvements with participants.

Ms. Joffe continued by explaining that issues with essential skills and executive functioning should not be thought of as solely a concern among low-income individuals, because they appear across all socioeconomic groups. Since these issues appear throughout society, care should be taken not to unfairly label people, which is a particular danger with TANF participants. She emphasized that an executive functioning lens can help agencies make intake forms more user-friendly, offices and waiting rooms more approachable, and other such improvements. Ms. Fagundes added that Ramsey County changed the language it uses partly to avoid stigmatizing people. She explained that the concept of essential skills is not about judging the person who brought a margarita to her job interview, but about understanding why she did it and did not think it was a bad idea.

As an example, Ms. Joffe shared a story about meeting a caseworker in San Diego who thought that a participant was failing to turn in paperwork because he did not like her. In reality, it likely had nothing to do with her. Thus, using an executive functioning lens allows staff to reframe behavior and think about participants differently.

Question: What do you recommend doing when you have staff lacking some of those same essential skills? Although they have arguably done well (e.g. graduated college, gotten a job), they still grew up in stressful environments and have some of these same challenges.

Answer: Create a culture of coaching and training across staff levels. Equip supervisors with the right tools to have difficult conversations with staff and do not let a “bad attitude” pervade the office. Supervisors can give staff the tools for time management and other skills. For example, one TANF office takes one day per week for “down time” where they do not take participant walk-ins so they have a day to regroup. Ramsey County makes use of staff training for this purpose, and develops staff expectation plans: one-page documents that outline the norms that staff agrees to follow, which gets everyone on the same page. The plans can become a lot of work for supervisors, because they have to hold staff accountable to the expectations that they set for themselves. However, use of the plans has improved communication and collaboration.

Ms. Joffe also shared a practical example of the importance of considering executive functioning and essential skills in the layout of a TANF program. She recalled visiting a state TANF office and walking in to see no one at the reception desk, and one line of participants forming under a sign that read “TANF,” and another line under a sign that read “Cash Assistance.” It was unclear what the difference was between the lines, which created unnecessary stress for participants. Considering the needs of participants would have resulted in more participant-centric signage and a warmer reception for visitors.

Ms. Joffe and PCG have worked with **Rhode Island** to make the physical environment of their TANF office less stressful and lighten participants' cognitive loads. Agencies can also do this by making public assistance forms less busy, easier to understand, more streamlined, and non-repetitive. A Massachusetts meeting participant shared that a lawsuit over office accessibility required them to redesign their space, which also made them rethink their forms. For example, most caseworkers had struggled to explain benefit calculations, and it was even harder for participants to understand. They solved this challenge by writing in plain language on forms, e.g. "This is how many people you said are living in your household, this is who is eligible for benefits." The meeting participant said that it was a daunting task, but worth it because there are now fewer questions on the form, caseworkers spend less time explaining the questions, and participants feel less stressed. Ms. Joffe added that agencies could do something as simple as color-coding the mail sent to program participants, depending on whether it is a "negative notice" or a "positive notice."

Massachusetts also has an online "My Account" page that participants have become accustomed to checking every day instead of waiting for a notice to come in the mail. They have found it much easier to use with younger generations. She pointed out that everyone uses text messaging, and asked why it was not being used to give participants important, critical information about their cases.

Yekaterina (Kate) Probert Fagundes, MFIP/DWP/SNAP Employment Services Division Manager, Ramsey County Workforce Solutions

Ramsey County is the second largest county in **Minnesota**, and has a lot of autonomy over how it runs its programs. Minnesota pays attention to WPR, but it is not a performance driver. The county has room for innovation, and it focuses on the individual. As a result, Ramsey County is a good environment to start introducing systems change and new ideas for case management. Ms. Fagundes added that Ramsey County has the most diverse population in the state (primarily African-American families). Many different community providers sit at the table to help develop Ramsey County's mission and vision statements, along with its scope of work.

The county actually asks people, "What do you dream of?" when they come to the agency for assistance. The focus is on what a participant wants and needs. Instead of talking about job searches right away, the conversation might start with a participant saying, "I really need some bins to get my home organized." Caseworkers focus on activities that build essential skills – this could be anything, not just job activities. If someone writes their dream down, then it becomes a goal. A goal broken into action steps becomes a plan, and is very focused on individuals creating their own paths.

During orientation, families learn that the ultimate goal is employment although there is a very individualized approach in terms of how a family reaches that goal. Caseworkers try to minimize talk about sanctions and instead focus on available services. Ramsey County uses the My Bridge of Strength Executive Skills Questionnaire, among other tools. A participant describes where they are in terms of stability and then picks one thing from a list that they want to address. Staff try not to impose their own personal perspectives or standards of success. For example, a family's priority may not be buying a home, even though that would be a staff member's next step.

Ms. Fagundes explained that coaching is about asking a lot of questions and allowing families to arrive at their own answers. In a typical intake process, caseworkers are focused on typing up answers, but families will remember that caseworkers looked them in the eye, asked genuine questions, and had a conversation with them.

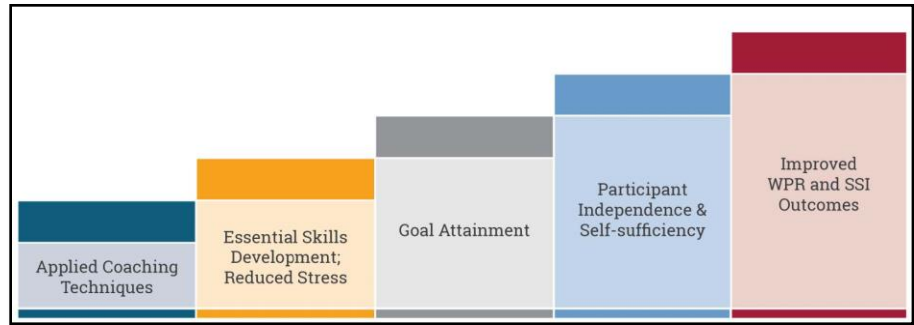


Exhibit 7: Ramsey County Service Model

Ms. Fagundes elaborated on the implications of the county’s shift from a case management model to a coaching model. The coaching model emphasizes building a collaborative relationship and understanding an individual’s background, goals, and strengths. Ultimately, she said, the county may not send a participant to any job search workshops if they feel that a resume class would be more beneficial.

Ms. Joffe explained that the overall goal is to create a relationship between the participant, the caseworker, and supervisors. Motivational interviewing gets people to want to make a change, and coaching shows them how to make that change. Ramsey County’s WPR and its other goals have improved since adopting this motivational interviewing/coaching model. So even if WPR is ultimately what a state is trying to reach, coaching is not taking away from it, it is actually helping. Ms. Joffe added that PCG initially held focus groups with Ramsey County staff to ensure that they were ready for coaching and a new form of case management.

Question: Do you have any data/evaluation?

Answer: Ramsey County is working on something more formal, but it is not quite final. They have exceeded target growth in the Self-Sufficiency Index and seen an incremental increase in participant program engagement. There is a detailed overview on the Ramsey County website, as well as personal stories from families that point to a positive difference.

Ms. Joffe concluded that an important lesson from PCG’s Ramsey County focus groups was to offer participants advice, but not tell them what to do. Continuous training is facilitated through monthly coaching circles where caseworkers can talk about their experiences; the dissemination of a monthly “Coaching Tips” sheet; and eventually staff “coaching champions” will take over the trainings.

Closing Remarks

Carol Monteiro thanked everyone for their participation, and encouraged attendees to take away lessons and apply them to their work with participants. There were three goals/approaches to this meeting: (1) Human Centered Design; (2) Promising, evidence-based approaches such as integrating

executive skills into services; and (3) Engaging and working with state and territory colleagues to share strategies and ideas to promote economic and social well-being for families. The Regional Program Managers thanked everyone for travelling to the great state of Rhode Island, and thanked the states, ICF, and Mr. Waters and Ms. Friedman for leading the human-centered design activities. **Ms. Shelton** stressed that these meetings happen for a reason and challenged attendees to, before next year's meeting to reconnect with someone from this meeting and think about a strategies or ideas attendees might implement and make relevant in their state or community.

Appendix A

HCD Prototypes

Appendix A

The HCD Interactive Activity held on Day One provided meeting participants with the opportunity to generate physical prototypes/alternatives to meet the end-user's needs. Below are selected pictures of the prototypes.



Appendix B

Agenda

Reflecting on the Past: Looking Forward to the Future

OFA Regions I, II, III, and IV
East Coast TANF Directors Meeting



JULY 12-14, 2016 | PROVIDENCE, RI

Agenda

Meeting Objectives

- Learn about and integrate the key concepts, strategies, and phases of human-centered design as a framework for infusing alternative strategies to improve TANF participant outcomes.
- Learn about promising and evidence-informed approaches used by peers to drive better outcomes for children and families in the areas of career pathways, TANF/WIOA coordination and implementation, and integrating executive functioning skills into services, especially for “hard to serve” populations.
- Engage and network with state and territory colleagues and share innovative ideas, strategies, and collaborations that promote economic and social well-being for individuals, families, and communities.

Day 1

Tuesday, July 12, 2016

Time

Session Description

7:30 a.m.–8:30 a.m.

Registration

7:30 a.m.–5:00 p.m.

Interactive Kiosks – Foyer

The Pennsylvania Department of Labor and Industry released three new work readiness apps developed by youth in October 2015. These three apps – Get Prepared!, Get Dressed!, and Get Hired! – are user friendly and were designed by youth to help youth practice realistic decision-making skills related to time management and preparation for interviews. Three interactive kiosks will be available throughout the 2½-day meeting for meeting participants to explore each of the three apps.

8:30 a.m.–9:00 a.m.

Welcome and Introductions

Speaker:

Carol Monteiro, Acting Regional Administrator, Administration for Children and Families; TANF Regional Program Manager, Office of Family Assistance, Administration for Children and Families, Region I (Boston)

Time	Session Description
9:00 a.m.–11:45 a.m.	<p>Setting the Context: Human-Centered Design</p> <p><i>Human-centered design (HCD) (also known as design thinking) has emerged as an approach to improving customer outcomes. Facilitators will provide an overview of HCD as a practical, repeatable approach for putting TANF participants at the center of program design, policies, implementation, and improvement, or re-design, as well as engage meeting participants in an interactive activity to apply the principles of HCD to a practical challenge they may face in their work administering the TANF program. HCD strategies will be used throughout the meeting.</i></p> <p>Speakers:</p> <p>Moderator: Eileen Friedman, TANF Regional Program Manager, Office of Family Assistance, Administration for Children and Families, Region III (Philadelphia)</p> <p>Damon Waters, Family Assistance Program Specialist, Office of Family Assistance, Administration for Children and Families</p>
11:45 a.m.–1:00 p.m.	<p>Lunch (on own)</p>
1:00 p.m.–3:00 p.m.	<p>Plenary: Learning from the Past and Creating Opportunities for the Future</p> <p><i>This plenary dialogue will provide a reflection on the past 20 years of TANF, including a brief retrospective on the ideas and models that led to welfare reform in the 1990s, as well as an interactive discussion about the future of TANF and how states and federal partners can strengthen the TANF program.</i></p> <p>Speakers:</p> <p>Moderator: Susan Golonka, Acting Director, Office of Family Assistance, Administration for Children and Families</p> <p>Ron Haskins, Senior Fellow, Brookings Institution</p> <p>Luke Shaefer, Associate Professor of Social Work and Public Policy, School of Social Work and Ford School of Public Policy, University of Michigan</p> <p>Mark Greenberg, Acting Assistant Secretary, Administration for Children and Families</p>
3:00 p.m.–3:15 p.m.	<p>Break</p>

Time	Session Description
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3:15 p.m.–5:00 p.m.

WIOA Implementation: Where does TANF “fit” moving forward?

The inclusion of TANF as a required partner in the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) One-Stops can provide TANF participants with improved access to comprehensive employment services and job-driven training. In this session, speakers at the federal, state, and local levels will:

- Provide an initial overview of the WIOA legislation,
- Discuss strategies for serving youth,
- Explore how TANF “fits” into the framework,
- Explain the role of state and local workforce entities in providing meaningful services to TANF participants, and
- Identify concrete opportunities to ensure alignment and coordination of services.

Following this overview, participants will participate in a 45-minute interactive activity that focuses on sharing where they are with current WIOA implementation, including their successes, barriers, and strategies for ensuring that the American Job Centers (AJCs) are meeting the needs of the TANF population. At the end of this session, a Pennsylvania Department of Labor and Industry representative will provide an overview of three new work readiness apps developed by youth and released in October 2015: Get Prepared!, Get Dressed!, and Get Hired. The apps are user friendly and are designed to help youth practice realistic decision-making skills related to time management and preparation for interviews. Meeting participants will be able to access kiosks during the 2½-day meeting to further explore each of these apps.

Speakers:

Moderator: LaMonica Shelton, TANF Regional Program Manager, Office of Family Assistance, Administration for Children and Families, Region IV (Atlanta)

Tim Martin, Director, Employment and Training Administration, U.S. Department of Labor

Susan Golonka, Acting Director, Office of Family Assistance, Administration for Children and Families

Sara K. Muempfer, Director of Workforce Development, Family Investment Administration, Maryland Department of Human Resources

Vera Krekanova Krofcheck, Chief Strategy Officer, 3 Rivers Workforce Investment Board

Day 2

Wednesday, July 13, 2016

Time	Session Description
<p>8:30 a.m.–5:00 p.m.</p>	<p>Interactive Kiosks – Foyer</p> <p><i>The Pennsylvania Department of Labor and Industry released three new work readiness apps developed by youth in October 2015. These three apps – Get Prepared!, Get Dressed!, and Get Hired! – are user friendly and were designed by youth to help youth practice realistic decision-making skills related to time management and preparation for interviews. Three interactive kiosks will be available throughout the 2½-day meeting for meeting participants to explore each of the three apps.</i></p>
<p>8:30 a.m.–8:45 a.m.</p>	<p>Knowledge Share</p> <p>Speaker:</p> <p>Damon Waters, Family Assistance Program Specialist, Office of Family Assistance, Administration for Children and Families</p>
<p>8:45 a.m.–10:15 a.m.</p>	<p>Lab One: Using Two-Generation Approaches to Break the Cycle of Poverty</p> <p><i>Two-generation approaches to serving low-income families combine comprehensive, career-focused employment and training opportunities for parents with educational, employment and/or other enrichment opportunities for their children. This session will provide an overview of two state and local two-generation programs, including policy components, tools, lessons learned, implementation strategies, and specific resources that may be applicable to TANF programs.</i></p> <p>Speakers:</p> <p>Moderator: LaMonica Shelton, TANF Regional Program Manager, Office of Family Assistance, Administration for Children and Families, Region IV</p> <p>Tracy L. Bell, Chief Officer of Workforce Development, Employment, and Transformation, Tennessee Department of Human Services</p> <p>Dr. Carolyn N. Graham, President/Founder, The Elizabeth Ministry</p>
<p>10:15 a.m.–10:30 a.m.</p>	<p>Break</p>

Time	Session Description
10:30 a.m.–12:00 p.m.	<p>Lab Two: Career Pathways and Employment Outlook</p> <p><i>A recent surge in career pathway and apprenticeship programs for TANF participants showcases an increase in TANF agencies' strategic partnerships with workforce development, employers, and postsecondary institutions. During this lab, speakers will discuss their programs and strategies, including developing strategic partnerships with workforce development and postsecondary institutions, aligning job training with labor market information, and identifying employer partners.</i></p> <p>Speakers:</p> <p>Moderator: Eileen Friedman, TANF Regional Program Manager, Office of Family Assistance, Administration for Children and Families, Region III (Philadelphia)</p> <p>Tamila Lay, Director, Division of Employment & Training, Pennsylvania Department of Human Services</p> <p>Elisabeth Sachs, Executive Director, Jobs Opportunity Task Force</p> <p>Ana-Maria Garcia, Data Dissemination Specialist, Data Dissemination Branch, Customer Liaison & Marketing Services Office, U.S. Census Bureau</p>
12:00 p.m.–1:30 p.m.	<p>Lunch (on own)</p>
1:30 p.m.–2:45 p.m.	<p>Interactive HCD Activity</p> <p><i>Following the morning sessions, meeting participants will engage in an interactive activity working with their peers and HCD facilitators to explore the employment outlooks in their own state and to identify strategic opportunities to partner or strengthen existing partnerships with workforce development, employers, and postsecondary institutions.</i></p> <p>Speakers:</p> <p>Damon Waters, Family Assistance Program Specialist, Office of Family Assistance, Administration for Children and Families</p>
2:45 p.m.–3:00 p.m.	<p>Break</p>

Time

Session Description

3:00 p.m.–4:45 p.m.

Round Robin Tables

During this session, participants will have the opportunity to spend approximately 20 minutes at four different topic tables:

Moderator:

Carol Monteiro, TANF Regional Program Manager, Office of Family Assistance, Administration for Children and Families, Region I

Round Robin One: WIOA/TANF Partnership and Implementation in Massachusetts

John Stella, Director, TANF/Cash Department of Transitional Assistance, Massachusetts

Round Robin Two: Setting up Apprenticeship and Pre-Apprenticeship Programs for TANF Participants

Elisabeth Sachs, Executive Director, Jobs Opportunity Task Force

Round Robin Three: 2-Gen and the Tennessee Experience

Tracy L. Bell, Chief Officer of Workforce Development, Employment, and Transformation, Tennessee Department of Human Services

Round Robin Four: WIOA/TANF Partnership and Implementation in Maryland

Sara K. Muempfer, Director of Workforce Development, Family Investment Administration, Maryland Department of Human Resources

Day 3

Thursday, July 14, 2016

Time	Session Description
8:45 a.m.–12:30 p.m.	<p>Interactive Kiosks – Foyer</p> <p><i>The Pennsylvania Department of Labor and Industry released three new work readiness apps developed by youth in October 2015. These three apps – Get Prepared!, Get Dressed!, and Get Hired! – are user friendly and were designed by youth to help youth practice realistic decision-making skills related to time management and preparation for interviews. Three interactive kiosks will be available throughout the 2½- day meeting for meeting participants to explore each of the three apps.</i></p>
8:45 a.m.–9:00 a.m.	<p>Knowledge Share</p> <p>Speaker:</p> <p>Frank Ceruto, TANF Regional Program Manager, Office of Family Assistance, Administration for Children and Families, Region II (New York)</p>
9:00 a.m.–10:30 a.m.	<p>Interactive Activity</p> <p><i>Understanding the life circumstances and economic realities of participants is vital to designing responsive programs. Empathy provides program officials with needed information for developing program components and timelines that achieve the desired goal of improving the socioeconomic outcomes of families. Attendees will review personal stories and reflections from TANF participants and eligibles and gain a better understanding of the different circumstances that individuals are navigating. From program directors to frontline caseworkers, staff play an important role in developing human-centered programs. Policy decisions, staff decisions, and case worker decisions impact participant outcomes and attendees will reflect on the information gleaned from those stories and discuss how the information can inform program design activities.</i></p> <p>Speaker:</p> <p>Damon Waters, Family Assistance Program Specialist, Office of Family Assistance, Administration for Children and Families</p>
10:30 a.m.–10:45 a.m.	<p>Break</p>

Time	Session Description
10:45 a.m.–12:00 p.m.	<p>Working with the Hard to Serve – Developing Executive Skills with TANF Participants to Set and Achieve Goals</p> <p><i>Who are the “Hard to Serve”? What is the definition of executive functioning in the context of TANF, and what separates poor executive skills from other barriers to employment and self-sufficiency? This session will explore approaches to addressing the complex needs of TANF participants that stem from toxic stress and generational poverty, including strategies such as motivational interviewing and coaching. Presenters will provide practical applications, lessons learned, and an overview of how they incorporated executive functioning skills into curriculum, case management, and service delivery.</i></p> <p>Speakers:</p> <p>Moderator: Frank Ceruto, TANF Regional Program Manager, Office of Family Assistance, Administration for Children and Families, Region II</p> <p>Deborah Joffe, Associate Manager, PCG CalWorks Welfare-to-Work Program, Public Consulting Group</p> <p>Kate Probert Fagundes, MFIP/DWP/SNAP Employment Services Division Manager, Ramsey County Workforce Solutions</p>
12:00 p.m.–12:30 p.m.	<p>Closing Remarks</p> <p>Speakers:</p> <p>Carol Monteiro, TANF Regional Program Manager, Office of Family Assistance, Administration for Children and Families, Region I</p> <p>Frank Ceruto, TANF Regional Program Manager, Office of Family Assistance, Administration for Children and Families, Region II</p> <p>Eileen Friedman, TANF Regional Program Manager, Office of Family Assistance, Administration for Children and Families, Region III</p> <p>LaMonica Shelton, TANF Regional Program Manager, Office of Family Assistance, Administration for Children and Families, Region IV</p>
12:30 p.m.	<p>Adjourn</p>

Appendix C

Participants List

Reflecting on the Past: Looking Forward to the Future

OFA Regions I, II, III, and IV
East Coast TANF Directors Meeting



JULY 12-14, 2016 | PROVIDENCE, RI

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