



ADMINISTRATION FOR  
**CHILDREN & FAMILIES**

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## Anne Arundel County, Maryland LASER TLC Site Journey

The Office of Family Assistance initiative, “Leveraging America’s Social and Economic Resilience TANF Learning Community” (LASER TLC), joins 10 TANF programs across the country as they worked to address the challenges of human service delivery in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, and focused on improved and responsive services to their TANF families.

### Goals & Objectives

The Anne Arundel County Department of Social Services (AACoDSS) LASER TLC initiative focuses on ensuring that every TANF customer receives individualized guidance and support. The goal is to ensure all customers, regardless of barriers, can make the best choices for themselves and their families.

To help customers reach their fullest potential, the county decided it needed to:

- Make every reasonable attempt to contact every customer and ensure they are fully assessed.
- Provide education and training opportunities to customers, resulting in a higher level of employability.
- Empower agency staff by providing them with additional training and encouraging self-care.

### Change Strategies

AACoDSS change strategies focused on minimizing duplication and redundancies between agencies by increasing communication and streamlining operations. The goal is a truly customer-centric case management system.

### Improved Work Processes

- Developed a data-driven process that includes roles, responsibilities, and accountability measures for the entire team.
- Created a “journey map” to track a customer’s path from entering the system to gaining a work placement.
- Conducted analysis to eliminate redundant assessments identified during the journey map.
- Identified gaps in services and points where customer “handoff” between teams could improve.
- Developed a “Road Test” to determine how to navigate cross-agency regulations and create a more seamless system.

### Anne Arundel’s Journey

Anne Arundel County is the seat of the state’s capitol and is the fifth largest county in Maryland based on population. The county has adapted its TANF program to support economic independence and mobility for its clients in a post-pandemic world.



### Challenges & Supports

#### Challenges:

- Accessing data across agencies, due to complex regulations and permissions.
- Duplicative intake processes.
- Upfront administrative burdens for families and staff.
- Maintaining momentum and accountability.

#### Supports:

- Leadership interest and support.
- Great team buy-in across agencies.
- Staff wanting to be more customer-centric, with a better handoff between DSS and Job Works! Arundel (JWA).



## Lessons Learned from Our Journey

- Cross-agency communication and clarity regarding roles and responsibilities is vital.
- Internal processes were burdensome and reduced data sharing.
- We need to start with the customer. “Rita”\* must be at the center of everything. We must make it easier for them to be successful and to make the right choices for themselves and their families. This is the best path to ensure economic stability and family well-being.

## Journey Insights from Our Team

“As we work together to accomplish goals, we must remain flexible to better deal with what may happen next.”

## What’s Next ...

- Conduct our data sharing “Road Test.”
- Reconnect and refresh our objectives.
- Introduce our new teams to the LASER TLC work.



— Leveraging —  
America’s Social &  
Economic Resilience

*\*Rita is the fictitious TANF program customer they created to unpack and examine the complicated and disheartening experiences their customers face in trying to navigate their “system” and receive the services they need to be successful.*

## Change Strategies (Continued)

### Improving TANF Program Operations

- Streamlined the referral procedure between the AACoDSS and JWA.
- Established interagency accountability measures.
- Created a systematic tool to eliminate administrative duplications and redundancies.
- Emphasized partnership communications and regular check-ins.

### Creating a Customer-Centric Case Management System

- Initiated a data sharing process across agencies.
- Reduced the paperwork redundancy for both customers and staff.
- Reduced the number of times “Rita”\* must tell her story to different people.
- Developed methods to collect feedback from both customers and staff in order to evaluate the process changes.

## Focus on Results

- Increased communication among agencies serving families.
- Increased staff accountability and production.
- Increased responsiveness to closing TANF cases due to employment.
- Positive customer and staff feedback on the changes.
- Continued staff support of the changes and greater ownership of the process.

