

Presentation on TANF to U.S. Conference of Mayors

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**INFLUENCE
BUILD
CONNECT**

- TANF death by attrition – Real dollar value of funding has decreased nearly 35 percent since 1996
- TANF must be reauthorized or extended by **September 30, 2018**
- May become wrapped up in an executive order on public benefit programs and work requirements

- States are unfairly criticized for utilizing flexibility and not spending enough on direct employment-related activities
- Much of TANF's initial flexibility was eroded by the Deficit Reduction Act on 2005
 - And work participation verification requirements divert staff time away from actual goal of employment
- TANF measures the wrong things: the Work Participation Rate (WPR) is a process measure, not an outcome measure
 - Makes coordination with WIOA more difficult
- A transition to measuring outcomes like job placement and retention must happen gradually
- TANF is **NOT** a good model for implementing work requirements in other programs like SNAP and Medicaid

Immediate Changes:

- Expand countable activities under the WPR to include broader approaches
 - e.g., home visiting, motivational interviewing, teaching executive functioning skills
- Permit a longer countable period for currently allowable activities
 - e.g., vocational education beyond current one-year limit, and job-search/job-readiness beyond current six and twelve week limits
- Remove current distinction between core and non-core activities
- Allow proportional partial credit towards the WPR
 - for those engaged in activities that are either not countable, do not fully meet the 30-hour weekly work requirement or where participants have surpassed current time limits in a countable activity
 - Such partial credit would be allowed for any work-eligible adult engaged in activities for at least ten hours weekly and calculated as a percentage of the 30-hour participation rule
- Eliminate the two-parent 90 percent WPR
- Allow a 45-day grace period before a new TANF recipient is placed in the denominator for the WPR
 - After the 45 days the client should be in both the denominator and the numerator for TANF WPR purposes

Immediate Changes:

- Lessen the severity of the work verification requirement
- Change the current penalty structure in TANF for failing to meet the WPR
 - to one that requires states to increase their own MOE investments, but does not reduce the state share of federal funds
- Encourage broader use of sector-based, career pathway strategies that lead to job retention and, advancement
- Increase the coordination of TANF, WIOA and the SNAP E&T

Gradual Changes:

- Over the course of 5 years, transition the Work Participation Rate under TANF to a new national outcome based success measure focused on skill and credential attainment and job placement and retention akin to WIOA
 - During this transition period the WPR and the employment related outcome measure operate side by side (with suggested key modifications to the WPR)
 - The WPR will decline each year and the employment related rate will increase annually
 - Federal and state partners should jointly negotiate the percent of each applicable rate annually
- After 5 years, a percentage-based employment related outcome measure would replace the WPR as the measure of TANF program success
 - Engagement in activities would continue to be measured and reported

Expand Funding:

- In order to compensate for at least part of the over 30 percent erosion in the block grant since 1996, additional funding should be added to the Block Grant
 - Could dedicate any new funding solely for employment related activities, basic cash assistance, one-time diversion cash assistance, enactment or expansion of state EITCs, and increased child care supply
- Maintain strong TANF contingency fund
 - for use by states at times of economic downturns and high unemployment
 - Make such funding more accessible to states by reducing the level of state matching funds needed to access them
- Expand funding for research and evaluation efforts to determine what activities actually work, and to integrate data sharing between TANF and WIOA
- Add separate new funding for programs for non-custodial parents who are unable to meet their child support obligations
- Issue a competitive RFP to states allowing for and separately funding new pilot programs
 - designed and focused on employment to be reviewed and launched in lieu of existing program components and measures
 - Include a rigorous, separate competitive evaluation RFP to measure pilot program success over time

Utilize a Whole-Family Approach:

Both expanded child care availability and the work incentive and wage supplement effects of the EITC are critically important to helping and encouraging more work eligible adults to transition from TANF to employment, and to simultaneously support the overall well-being of parents and children.

- Increase available funding for the Child Care Development fund to expand the availability of subsidized child-care slots, assure the health and safety of care and promote the use of quality care.
- Expand the current federal Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC)
- Maintain the integrity of SNAP as a work support, a nutrition program, and a ripe area to expand and link E&T efforts to WIOA and TANF