

December 24, 2014

Thank you for the opportunity to be a part of the TANF Strategic Planning public meetings. After review of the draft plan we have compiled comments from our perspective as a DPHHS WoRC and FES contractor. While these comments may be duplicative of what you heard in the meetings, we would like them to be part of the record.

**Background:**

We appreciate the transparency in your extensive data gathering efforts. However, the report did not acknowledge limited survey responses, lack of TANF recipient attendance at forums, and lack of attendance of TANF recipient steering committee members at the steering committee meetings.

Page 8: We suggest a definition differentiating TANF cash and TANF non-cash programs. Participants who self-select into a program are much more likely to be satisfied in a TANF non-cash program than those who are mandatory participants in a TANF cash program.

**TANF Administration:**

Page 11: Under the third bullet in this section, it would be helpful to clarify what is meant by “simplify overall program”. There are currently several TANF funded programs.

Under the seventh bullet in this section, it is implied that contractors need training in how to treat customers and understand how to address sensitive issues. As attendees at every meeting, we did not hear negative comments regarding contractors’ treatment of participants or an inability to address sensitive topics.

**Application and Assessment:**

Page 12: Under the fourth bullet in this section, please define the process being referred to since screening; assessment and referral are regular activities currently being provided by WoRC and FES contractors.

**Cash Benefit Policies:**

Page 13: We concur with all of the recommendations on this page.

**Service Delivery:**

Page 14: Under the first bullet in this section, it is our position that having well-trained, seasoned staff that work closely with participants to address needs and broker services, is a requirement of the WoRC and FES contracts. What is currently lacking in the WoRC Program, and to some extent the FES Program, is the flexibility in the program design to be creative and effective. The discussion at the steering meetings regarding the client advocate model mirrors the case management service delivery system currently in place.

Under the last bullet in this section, the recommendation gives the impression that contractors do not have extensive knowledge of local resources, when in fact the RFP requires an extensive knowledge of local resources.

**Youth Programming and Childcare:**

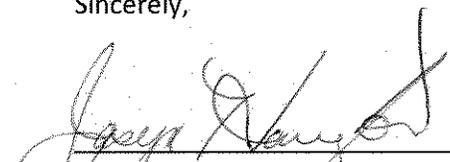
Page 15: Under the last bullet in this section, we agree with the statement and support a continued summer youth employment program. Additionally, we support the current structure of passing TANF funds through the Montana Department of Labor and Industry to administer this program and continuing to use WIA eligibility criteria. Starting the summer youth program prior to the end of the school year would allow contractors to recruit in-school students and those living in rural areas.

**Data Collection and Evaluation:**

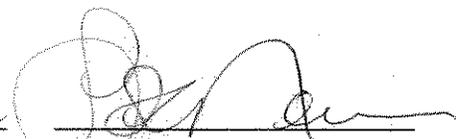
Page 16: Under the data collection recommendations, we feel it's important to note that only the TANF Cash WoRC-eligible program is required to meet the federal participation rate.

In summary, we appreciate the opportunity to be a part of the process and to provide comments regarding the DRAFT plan. Thank you for all of your efforts on behalf of those CTI serves.

Sincerely,

  
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