



Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)

Strategic Planning Steering Committee

April 23, 2014

Location:

Montana State Capitol Building, Room 152
1301 East 6th Ave
Helena

Note: Due to technical difficulties the meeting was not recorded as expected.

Agenda

- 1:00 Introductions and Overview of Charge to the Steering Committee
- 1:30 Overview of TANF Block Grant and current landscape
- 3:00 Break
- 3:15 TANF Participant & Stakeholder Feedback strategies
- 4:00 Public Input regarding Participant and Stakeholder Feedback strategies
- 4:30 Expectations and concerns for strategic process
Review of future meetings- locations and dates
Encouraging public participation
- 4:45 Public Comment
- 5:00 Adjourn

Public Comment - In accordance with 2-3-103 (1), MCA, the Department will hold a public comment period. Please note that this is the public's opportunity to address the work of the TANF Strategic Planning Steering Committee.

Americans with Disabilities Act - The Department of Public Health and Human Services is committed to providing meeting access through reasonable accommodation under the Americans with Disabilities Act. Please contact the Human and Community Services Division at (406) 444-1788.

Meeting Notes

TIME

AGENDA ITEM

- 1:00 Introductions and Overview of Charge to the Steering Committee
- *See PowerPoint: Temporary Assistance for Needy Families Strategic Planning Roles and Guidelines (slides 1-19)*
 - Katie Loveland has been hired as a 3rd party independent group facilitator to help with this process.
 - Housekeeping
 - Please sign in
 - Please take handouts
 - Location of restrooms
 - Introductions (by seat order at table)
 - Candee Krantz (non-committee), Fiscal Bureau Chief, Human and Community Services Division
 - Heather O' Loughlin, Montana Budget and Policy Center
 - Stephanie Wilkins, TANF Program Manager
 - Therese T., TANF participant
 - Jamie Palagi, Administrator, Human and Community Services Division
 - Tanya Watson, Manager, Hardin/Lame Deer Field Office, Office of Public Assistance
 - Cynthia Hollimon (non-committee), Legislative Fiscal Division as staff to the legislators
 - Bob Runkel, Economic Security Services Branch Manager
 - Molly H., TANF participant
 - Lesa Evers, Director's Office
 - Representative Rob Cook, Legislator
 - Sandy Bailey, Professor, PhD, Family and Consumer Services
 - Senator Mary Caferro, Legislator
 - Kelsen Young, Montana Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence
 - 1 member absent (Toni R., TANF Participant)
 - Review of agenda
 - Guiding principles were reviewed with the committee. Principles can be found on the attached presentations.
 - Roles and responsibilities were discussed with the committee and can be found on the attached presentations.
 - Stakeholder input is vital for this process
 - Committee will develop strategic plan based on a variety of inputs
 - Committee advises DPHHS
 - Once plan is developed and approved, it will be useful with the legislature for consideration when determining appropriations with TANF funding
 - All voices shall be heard
 - Steering committee representatives
 - The decision was to not have Contractors (past, present, or future) appointed to the steering committee to assure decisions are based on best use of funds as a whole. However contractors and interested stakeholders will have ample opportunity to weigh in.

- Charge to the Committee is attached to establish the purpose and the framework. The charge demonstrates that public input is critical to the process. The strategic plan should address the next 5-7 years and will be developed as a result of 5-6 meetings of the steering committee.
 - Questions?
 - Q: Where did the charge come from?
 - A: From DPHHS with the goal to take a step back and see what really needs to happen to support families
 - Q: Is this outside of the TANF program, or is this just TANF cash assistance?
 - A: It is a little of both
 - Looking at all that TANF does currently and can do consideration of the administration burden is necessary as well.
 - Q: Which legislative session is this for?
 - A: There may be things that can be informed by this process for the 2016-2017 biennium and there may be things that we may not be able to implement right away.
 - The goal for DPHHS is to have the strategic plan draft written by November 2014.

1:30 Overview of TANF Block Grant and current landscape

PowerPoint – Stephanie Wilkins

- *See PowerPoint: The Montana Temporary Assistance for Needy Families Program*
- States must work within provisions of the law with programs
- Needy is defined as “no or low income”
- Family is defined as having a child or a pregnant mother in her third trimester
- Questions:
 - Q: Programs involved have to meet one of the four purposes?
 - A: Correct
 - Q: All 4?
 - A: At least one of the purposes to support participants
 - Q: Flexibility because of general purposes?
 - A: We want to keep the spirit of the four points within the plan
- There can be flexible income guidelines for families based on programs
- Tribal funding regulations were reviewed
- In Montana’s state plan there is a Grandfather clause for TANF emergency assistance.
 - TANF Emergency Assistance Program (Hard Services)
 - Family that has a child under the age of 21 with an unforeseen emergency
 - Used a lot for transportation issues to maintain employment
 - Assistance used to prevent destitution of children
 - Helps out with home fires – replacement of clothing and appliances
 - Soft services through Child and Family Services Divisions are used to prevent the child’s removal from the home or assist in child’s return to the home.
- Questions:
 - Q: Will Candee’s presentation show numbers on emergency services?
 - A: Yes
- General information on the TANF program was discussed and is included in the powerpoint presentation.

- It is important to know that the TANF program has a limited time for a participant which is 5 years. Montana's time clock formula does count both adults in the household.
- The TANF program is under an extension until September of 2014. If reauthorized, it may look differently at the federal level
- Questions:
 - Q: Page 12 – transfers. What does this mean?
 - A: Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) and the Social Services Block Grant (SSBG) are eligible to receive TANF funding as a transfer. Transfers can account for up to 30% of the block grant.
 - Q: What does the funding do?
 - A: CCDF is used for child care assistance (sliding fee scale and copayment based on eligibility which supports families who are required to participate in work activities or work)

Candee Krantz – Budget

- *See PowerPoint: TANF Funding Overview*
- Montana has carryover of funds from previous years. The requirement for funding doesn't vary; however how much we spend does change from year to year. The Carryover balance has been decreasing over the years.
- CHIMES maintenance costs are required expenditures
- No control over indirect costs – spent under cost allocation plan
 - DPHHS is required by law to have a cost allocation plan
 - Cost allocation cannot be changed in strategic plan
- “Think Pink” – the pink lines in the presentation reflects current spending that the steering committee can affect
- Question:
 - Q: How are the amounts decided?
 - A: Cash assistance based on need
 - Department decides and legislature decides
 - Q: **Non-assistance: program descriptions requested**
 - **Will provide for next meeting**
- Any expenditure of federal funds could alternately be charged under MOE
 - Has to serve needy families
 - Has to meet one of the four purposes of TANF
- 75% MOE requirement based on a formula established in 1994 and has not changed.
 - A lot of states have an 80% MOE requirement. Montana does not because it continues to meet its work participation rate. States can spend more than the required amount of MOE and the excess is used as part of a caseload reduction credit.
- Question:
 - Q: How do we know where we are at?
 - A: Montana just received notification in April that we met the 2011 participation rates. Montana has traditionally spent more than 80% to avoid a penalty.
 - Penalty is 5% of State Family Assistance Grant for 1st year, adding an

additional 2% each year the rates are not met up to 21%

- Majority of pink section in MOE pie chart is used to fund work operations, which is a required activity, but how services are delivered is not prescribed.
- Tribal coverage: statute requires we reimburse MOE if they cover the same population the state served prior to the tribe taking over the program. .
- Child Care MOE – can be counted both with child care and TANF program (counts twice)
- Question:
 - Q: Is CSKT not included?
 - CSKT doesn't serve same population;
 - Blackfeet receives MOE funding for employment and training
- Think about a "Rainy day fund"
Question to think about: What level of funding do we need to keep should something happen?
- Questions:
 - Q: What was ARRA used for?
 - A: TANF employment was funded 80% with ARRA , and the other 20% was part of our block grant
 - Also spent on increased cash assistance and
 - other programs including summer youth employment
 - Q: Is there a measurement for success?
 - A: Permanent employment for subsidized program
 - Summer youth program: looking at enrollment and maintaining employment through the summer
 - Q: Where is subsidized employment now?
 - A: Part of Family Economic Security program
 - Q: Where is the Child support pass through
 - A: Bundled in cash benefits
 - The Child support supplement allows up to \$100 to help participant
 - Comment: Participation rate matters in the day to day lives of participants
 - **Can we get a Chart of work participation rates – Would be important to look historically – Stephanie will put it together**
 - Most states are reliant on the caseload reduction credit because it's hard to comply with the work participation rates, especially the two-parent rate
- **Topic for next meeting: measures of success for TANF programs past/present**
 - It is important to see what has gone on in history as we move forward

3:00 Break

3:15 TANF Participant & Stakeholder Feedback strategies

- *See PowerPoint: Temporary Assistance for Needy Families Strategic Planning Roles and Guidelines (slides 20-26)*
- Introductions were given again for steering committee members

Soliciting feedback from participants

- How should we solicit feedback from participants statewide?
- What is the best format? (interviews, focus groups, surveys, listening sessions?)
- How can we encourage honest feedback?
- Ideas from the steering committee:
 - All of the ideas can be utilized, listening session
 - Based on experience while on TANF – difficult to schedule a listening session outside of everything else going on – it would have been a burden had it been offered to have a listening session
 - A survey through the providers would be a good way to do it – building it into a part of the program
 - Would we get honest feedback? How do we make them feel safe?
 - Can the survey be anonymous? We want to be sensitive to people giving real feedback. Building trust is important
 - How many participants are we talking about? Through how many programs?
 - **This would be a great chart to see**
 - Are we getting any satisfaction data?
 - It is not something that has been put out as an expectation, but some of the contractors may do it as part of their CQI
 - This would be a starting point to reach out to contractors for data
 - Power dynamic causes issues
 - Listening sessions for participants would be a stretch, but would be helpful for other types of providers
 - Mixed method delivery – have someone neutral interview people throughout the state
 - What do we want back? Quantitative? Qualitative?
 - There is a third party that is interested in supporting the work and gathering feedback and conducting interviews
 - Data collections should be a priority, as well as being sensitive to the needs of our participants so that they are comfortable
 - Approach is different depending on where you look for feedback.
 - People who received services in the past would give different feedback than those currently on the program
 - If we ask people to come to a session, would it qualify as a work requirement?
 - Bigger question of what would really help- good to ask for previous participants
 - There are different pieces that we need to take a look at

Soliciting feedback from contractors

- How do we reach out to past, current and potential contractors in an unbiased way?
- How can we reach both in-state and out-of-state contractors?
- What is the best format? (solicit presentation, interviews, focus groups, surveys etc.?)
- How can we ensure that all voices have an equal opportunity to participate?
- Ideas/questions from the steering committee:
 - Is there a listing of who may have applied and was not awarded to bid?
 - We have a list of all past, current, and those who applied
 - It would be important to hear from people across the state, especially in eastern Montana
 - It needs to be an invitation instead of an assumption
 - We need to get good outreach
 - Open and transparent process so everyone knows about the process

- Should we structure the next few meetings about contractors? What is the best way to be systematic? Who is using the money? Who could use the money? What is our process and intent as a committee?
 - Is there interest in going to other parts of the state for meetings?
 - WebEx at locations throughout the state
- We cannot restrict the RFP process to in-state only contractors
- What population are people working with and what would their feedback look like to inform the strategic plan
- Would rather hear more for participants
- Would like to hear where contractors are having problems and what their impacts are
 - Contractors would respond to email and in different ways than participants
 - Could get data from contractors in written form
 - Could potentially solicit a summary of work and outcomes
 - How did their work align with or touch on the TANF purposes
 - Interdependence piece
- Would like to hear what the kinds of questions are that you would like to have answered – would like this information for the next meeting
- Listening session for participants on reservations
- Value in presentations from contractors
- The general belief in Indian country is that our department creates barriers
- Do we want to hear all of the problems then go from there?
- Connection with contractor is important
- Looking at flexibility down the road
- Parents under stress don't parent well – snowballing effect
- Food deserts, especially in a rural area
- Lack of control – disempowerment feedback
- Participant Questions
 - Pulling past participants – what would be the most effective and helpful tool for you?
 - What did you need that you didn't get
 - What didn't solve the needs that you had at the time
 - Was it worth it in the end? Better off after assistance from the system
 - Even though we provide services, what were your barriers? What is keeping you from being successful?
 - What's really the problem? Structures beyond the individual? This information would be helpful for the legislatures to know.
 - People currently on TANF are equally as important to hear from
 - Why did you access TANF in the first place?
 - What are your employment barriers?
 - What do you need to move yourself and your family out of poverty?
 - It is important to include people who left TANF for all kinds of reasons, including those sanctioned
 - Practical questions will be helpful
 - Creating space for people to talk about what they would do if they could will be able to get us out of box thinking
 - Why were you sanctioned? What led to your sanctioning? This will show us what our barriers are within the system
 - Some of it is personal responsibility

- Sanctions don't allow for responsiveness to people's lives
- Contractor Questions
 - What is your most successful area? Where do we need to focus to be more successful?
 - Bigger thinking questions that are out of the box to get the best ideas that they have
 - Contractors that aren't in the mix right now but might have some ideas on how to improve the program
 - Names of potential contractors – send them to Jamie
- This is a courageous effort – hoping to keep in a positive framework “strategic plan to create good, positive changes to improve program”
- Other stakeholders
 - OPAs throughout the state?
 - Tanya is one out of 40
 - They could be a place to facilitate part of the conversation
 - Providers that provide other types of services
 - Child care
 - Domestic violence
 - Broad net
 - Wraparound service to people on TANF
 - CSED information would be helpful

4:00 Public Input regarding Participant and Stakeholder Feedback strategies

- Pam Carlson – Career training institute
 - Interview participants where they gather such as an OPA lobby
 - Participants come on a weekly basis to WoRC contractors
 - Hope the survey discerns when someone is unhappy with the program vs. how the services are delivered – it is different if they don't like the policies vs. how they are delivered
- Tom Jacobsen – Rural Dynamics Incorporated
 - An understanding that it costs more to be poor
 - The ability for someone to take time off for a survey
 - Day care
 - Be aware of these issues
 - We need to go to them where they are at
 - Clear in purpose as we put these thoughts together
 - They need to know that their voices will be heard
 - We need to realize how great we are as a state
 - Understand Why we are doing this and What it is we want to accomplish – define our terms
 - Financial security
 - Financial stability
 - Financial independence
 - Economic independence
- Karen Thomas, Havre, MT
 - Came from a family of welfare
 - “We can tell that you're successful but we don't know how” – about food stamps conversation. All of the women were successful in many different ways, primarily due to relationship building. All of the policy, documentation, and paperwork doesn't seem to fit in with women's lives

- 4:30 Expectations and concerns for strategic process
Review of future meetings- locations and dates
Encouraging public participation
- 4:45 Public Comment in general
- Tom Jacobsen – Rural Dynamics Incorporated is hosting a Poverty simulator on May 28th and participation is welcome.
 - CFPB wants to come speak about economic security – they could meet with this group if we would like.
- 4:45 Other Items Discussed
- There is a month and a half until the next meeting
 - Strategies needed
 - Data collection
 - Topics for feedback solicitation
 - Outline of a draft strategy for data collection with time lines to send to the group?
 - Information would come back from sessions and presented to the group
 - Good to know our program is nationally recognized
 - Very valuable to have the public here and providing information
 - Defining success – will be key to this
 - What is success for participants and for the people leaving the program
 - How do we increase/improve the rate of success
 - Off the program because of time? Or in a place to succeed?
 - Current contractors: families close to time frame ending, having work issues, what happens to those families?
 - Balancing data with a clear picture for people about who is on TANF and what it looks like
 - People don't usually stay on for 5 years straight
 - Conversations about who is being served by TANF
 - Could help us get creative with how to use non assistance money
 - Better understanding of two parent families
 - Ages and how many children
 - What we develop will be based on what this picture looks like
 - Are we looking at TANF as a whole, or discretionary pieces? How do we support needy families?
 - There are at least 5 programs from TANF, and the participants don't always use more than the cash assistance or are using other services but not cash assistance
 - What would help these people? It is important to capture people not on cash assistance
 - STATS
 - 3,400 cases
 - 1,400 children only
 - No participation requirements
 - 285 two parent households
 - Helps grandparents and working caretaker relatives – child care options as well
 - Program history visual will be helpful
 - Will send out via email
 - Process data
 - Full sanction happens after two sanctions

- Things that are off the table for the committee
 - Direction is on non-cash assistance
 - On the table:
 - Eligibility levels
 - Open to committee providing input
 - Input about the cash assistance program
 - Manage our time to balance cash assistance and discretionary
 - Important to know as we solicit feedback
 - Most of the attention will be spent with discretionary
- Understanding what each program means will be helpful
- Talk about the purposes
- Two parent households with kids and a stay at home mom is no longer the tradition

The next meeting will include presentation from a national expert Liz Schott, from The Center for Budget and Policy Priorities out of Seattle.

5:00 | Adjourn