



Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)

Strategic Planning Steering Committee

July 16, 2014

Location:

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

Agenda

9:00 Introductions and review of Charge to the Steering Committee

9:30 Overview of Potential Strategic Plan Continuum Framework

10:00 Findings from TANF Participant Focus Groups and Surveys

10:45 Break

11:00 Findings from TANF Participant Focus Groups and Surveys continued

12:00 Working Lunch

12:45 Listening session with Contractors: Suggested changes in state policies related to clients

1:45 Discussion: Measures of Success

3:00 Break

3:15 What's up for Consideration? –Presentation by DPHHS

4:00 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

9:00 Introductions and review of Charge to the Steering Committee-Katie Loveland

- Housekeeping
- Introductions
- Charge
- Role and responsibilities
- Review meeting schedule
- Resend non-cash assistance survey to all interested parties
 - Discussion re: who received the non cash survey and who should receive it.
 - Sen Caferro-We should send out to CASA and BBBS. Provides family support.
 - Discussed options to design survey to target youth or just add a few questions to the non cash survey and send to all.

9:30 Continuum framework-Katie Loveland

See PowerPoint-Temporary Assistance for Needy Families Strategic Planning-July 16, 2014

- Feedback/comments
 - Career transitions in Belgrade, budgeting should be at the beginning
 - Sandy bailey-soft skills? Should be brought back down a little bit.
 - Jamie Palagi-Up for definition, based on the person; dress for a job, feeling confident, etc
 - Bobbi, HRDC billings-People are dealing with serious issues, not necessarily disabled, domestic violence. Anybody that can work is working, caseload is low. Not getting out of poverty. Folks coming in are the ones that can't get a job.
 - Katie-Under basic needs maybe add mental health
 - Pam Carlson-until we can talk about the activities, there is going to be a disconnect. Restrictions, it is hard to imagine how this is going to work
 - Jamie Palagi-this afternoon it will be addressed.
 - Kelsen-what is meant by line at bottom. How are we addressing the needs of the youth and how it works for generational poverty? Real life, no access to help to get out of poverty. Debunk idea of generational poverty. What about Adult TANF success.
 - TANF youth, and families how to do it well with ongoing support.
 - Jamie Palagi-There is a direct need for youth in family, also issue about generational poverty how to serve youth throughout their years into becoming young adult
 - Lesa-could be beneficial to client, lays out department expectations. Should be broader, wider, to lay out foundation. Understand when someone comes in, they don't know what to ask, understand client better get to know them and to give them what they need, so they don't miss out.
 - Katie-Let's make it easier for clients. Where are we falling short?
 - Sandy-before a person can move forward, time and stress management skills are needed. If they don't know how to manage it, they can't move forward.

- Mary Caferro-When someone applies, are screenings not done? Domestic violence screening being done? FIA? This is not being done at OPA? What about ESL? Domestic violence should be completed when they walk in the door at OPA. Isn't anything on there for family strengthening with children on continuum? Big Question-Why are people going on TANF in the first place?
 - Tanya Watson-Completed at WoRC office.
 - Jamie Palagi-How could we do this? Expand the population to meet rates, and buy yourself some space to help those with earlier needs. Liz provided some creative solutions, and with the fiscal staff to see where we can get that done. Assessments-Due to caseload and not being able to meet the needs, client needs are better met at WoRC office.
 - Jamie Palagi -Idea-Tanya Watson partner with WoRC operator to demonstrate a client process.
- Sandy B-what is the framework and purpose of TANF. All employment is only one thing.
 - Vicky Leland-Participation of what they can do. Soft skills, we do parenting, time management, stress, we are able to do under some of these components. Problem is verification, 4 week assessment period, steer them to referrals. Job skills, DV-FV are hours that can be counted. One week break is the difficult part of what we do with the client during this time.
- Bobbi-family strengthening, no brainer. Helping with meeting hours. Domestic violence, good cause for those hours. Pressure of job searching, classes, etc when they don't get it done, good cause can be granted.
 - Stephanie Wilkins-At two or three WoRC consortiums we listened to issues, barriers you are facing. This afternoon you will see the work we have been doing. Liz gave us some great ideas. Working with federal requirements, but serve people with quality.

10:10 **Break**

10:25 **Kirsten Smith**

See Power Point-Summary of Focus Group and Survey Results

- Participant-Eastern Montana, no representation; two on reservations-Crow and Lame Deer; Butte
- Interested parties-Butte, Glasgow, Billings, Lame Deer
- Feels some questions will get answered through the qualitative analysis
 - Participation
 - Results
 - Meeting basic needs was brought up more than having a stable job
 - Most did not have jobs. 75%-looking for job, volunteer, training, overcoming barriers, seeking child care. Ones that did, majority were not full time.
 - Q-Heather-were more options available to choose on any question?
 - Q-Mary-what was the question? And why not ask the working people, their value of employment?
 - Kirsten -Non working people, what are they doing for work activities?
 - Sandy B-Can we divide data from rural to nonrural. Reservation vs non reservation. How does the sample compare to the average age of TANF participant?
- Work barriers-
 - Tribal issues-work is limited you have to know someone to get a job.
 - Not being able to land a paying job, due to availability to unpaid workers
 - Participants not thinking about soft skills. Brought up more with interested parties.
 - Full day is driving and crisis management. Time is huge barrier.

- Limitations
 - Presented was a sampling and others will get discussed further in full report.
 - Volunteering in certain types of work (eg: construction), work comp limits those opportunities.
 - Only 4 weeks to set up self-employment, then a calculation sets in. No allowance for people to find their own path to success.
 - TANF supportive services wouldn't pay for background checks for a particular client (and other things)
 - Tom, Career Transitions-Comment: They do pay as long as client is complying.
 - Tribal law does not require license, registration, creates limits in having car and going off reservation for interviews/better shopping, conflicts with TANF regulations.
 - Inconsistent information on what supportive services are available.
 - Ability to travel a shorter distance to meet WoRC operator is not available when crossing county lines.
 - Supportive services do not line up with tribal regulations.
 - Child care-
 - Only one state approved location in lame deer which is a child care assistance issue
 - Copay is due in transitions to Best Beginnings child care.
 - New babies in household is not allowing for family bonding with new child.
 - Family provided care; legally certified-background checks are required, and individual has to pay for it.
 - Housing, food, and health insurance
 - Pseudo housing program assistance-not enough support to cover all costs.
 - Hardin/ Lame deer for affordable food choices have to go to billings.
 - Health insurance, not a big focus
 - Sanction
 - Needing some extra time to get on their feet.
 - Q-All were sanctioned?
 - No, all were sanctioned at one time or another. Between 10-33% are being sanctioned every month.
- Ways to get out of poverty
 - Q-What is job support?
 - A-Self defined
 - Q-Where is Child support?
 - A-Comes up later, not anything specific as an option.
- How can TANF help me?
- Systemic problems
 - Lack of housing vouchers, is why the housing issues arrive.
 - Comments:
 - Lesa -In tribal areas, even if voucher is there, there is no house to move into. On Reservations, it is not working-people are struggling. Four places accept Work Experience (WEX) volunteers, Tribal holidays not acknowledged as legitimate holidays.
 - Kelsen-Q-Subject to county OPA, or tribal run
 - A-Tanya-clients have the choice to choose tribal or state run TANF in big Horn and Rosebud.
 - Katie-Put tribal TANF/State TANF on agenda
 - Kelly Deniger-State run TANF does not work for tribal
 - Bobbi-Can Tribal NEW be expanded?

- Lesa-There is a lot of bouncing around due to feeling mistreated. Also, culturally choose NEW due to Tribal members understanding their situation. (eg. Not allowed to bring kids to work meeting)
- Tribal NEW programs-Rocky Boy, Flathead, Black Feet, Fort Belknap
 - Q-Have they done their own participation satisfaction.
 - JP-We don't collect that data, since they chose to do their own program. We serve who is not being served in State run tribal programs, and can provide data on that.
- Policy issues
- Magic wand
 - Comment on lack of tuition being paid on CNA training-It does cover, but may have been taken away from lack of participation, not showing up, sanctions.
 - Would be nice to provide positive reinforcements to encourage people to participate.
 - Community Service Placement = CSP
 - Lying about family household size, to get better benefits. Work on taking away negative reinforcements.
 - Long distance reimbursement for parents getting kids to better schools.
 - 70% heard about TANF from OPA
- Katie-Does this sound right or is there some opinions on the answers?
 - Vicki-Great Falls-Parents cannot get Medicaid, but kids could.
 - Rob-What percentage of the 22% uninsured were tribal?
 - JP-we can get data of which TANF participants are on Medicaid
 - Belgrade Career transitions-Transitional Medicaid would be helpful to participants. Be on Medicaid for three months.....
 - Stephanie- If they are employed right away they do not get transitional Medicaid
 - Pam Carlson-transitional disability program would help
 - Comment: Kelly Deniger-If they get a job without benefits-go off medication-go back on TANF. Child care Providers fees do not match the state reimbursement mechanism.
 - Kirsten-Yes that did come up in surveys
 - Bobbi-healthy kids, but not healthy parents.
 - Sandy-2 sick days a month are not sufficient. A lot of unhealthy family members
 - Tom, Career Transitions-80 hours per year, 16 days
 - MaryCafarro-Question about magic wand question.
 - Kirsten - i.e.; If you were queen for a day and if you could change the program, what would you do.
 - Katie-read question from survey:Imagine you had a magic wand that you can use to change Montana's TANF program. What would you do/what changes would you make to make the program better for you and your family?
 - MaryC- Re-asked; Why did they go to the program in the first place.
 - Kirsten:-OPA-SNAP, HMK 70%, knew about it because their parents were on it, barriers-paying the bills, inequality in the job market.
 - Kelly Deniger, Missoula-Majority say they lost their job, child support (absent parent lost job), pay power bill-always a last resort to come in.
 - Education
 - Leaving abusive relationships, may not have worked for 10 years
 - Barb, Florence Crittenton-18-21 youth have not had the opportunity to have a job and gain the experience, are parents.
 - Tracking why people are coming in for longevity purposes.

12:00 Working lunch

- Does the Department routinely conduct focus groups?
- Jamie explained it has been a conscious efforts in visiting OPA
- Jamie-It is an expectation while I am in this position
- Q-Focus groups for TANF? A-Not for TANF, except for this.
- Katie-Is that a suggestion to come out of this process: Regular focus groups, electronic surveys
- Urban representation
- Discussion about the process with the committee. Jamie-As a committee feel comfortable in expressing how you feel.
 - Lesa-she feels we need more time in working things out. Allow for time to have discussion on agenda items. Can't get enough feedback.
 - Kelsen-who decided timeline, and where do we demand flexibility. Few more meetings to get something more meaningful, she is willing to do that.
 - New things may come out that may create issues. Altruistic goal to have something in place to take to session to show the progress in planning.
 - Kelsen does not feel there is time.
 - Sandy-could not come up with any suggestions. Would like to see more focus groups
 - Kelsen-contractors need a space to talk without a sense of retribution.
 - Jamie-Few more meetings, more focus groups in more areas.
 - Will focus groups be productive?-Customer relations, appreciate the chance to talk.
 - Kelsen-The data presented to legislature is limited, and would like to see stronger data from more areas.
 - Rob-Legislative perspective: survey response is alarming, heavily biased to big horn county, not a concern. Presenting around the issues we keep hearing. They don't seem to vary geographically.
 - Mary Caferro-Not enough time to give a good idea on what to advise.
 - Jamie-For legislature: Program focus, recommendations, strategically to guide the department. The things we know we can do, let's put that in place and continue to work on the rest of the planning.
 - Kelsen-What should be ongoing strategic process. Accountability through an advisory council? Institute these procedures so the program doesn't get derailed in time.
 - Katie-we will find the balance on the extension of time.
 - Jamie-Send link for the Best Beginnings advisory council to committee.

1:00 Listening session with Contractors

- **Suggested changes in state policies related to clients**
 - Kelly-Monies received are not enough to cover rent. Participants view-Why should I do all these hours for the little amount I get.
 - Katie-Would it be better to get paid for volunteer activities, paid for performance.
 - Both. Should be consistent across state, and raising the minimum amount that would be positive.
 - Bobbi-Needs of one family are different of others. May incentivize what they do, rather what they need.
 - Tom, Bozeman-Wait time is unacceptable in OPA. 6 weeks, and may end up denied. Still having to do activities. Need immediate assistance. Wait time between application date and initial interview.
 - Kelly Deniger- Missoula, participants here are receiving benefits within 36 hours.

- Kelsen-what is the cause of Gallatin county lag time?
 - Jamie- how counties prioritize is based on each office right now, we have high caseloads, Computer, lack of staffing, high turnover, federal law, conflicting policy and more. The State is working on this with a Service First initiative.
- Bobbi-Expected to complete activities from the time they applied. Flexible to grant good cause, expected to comply, but we can't give them the tools to help them comply.
 - Lesa-Is this a state policy or federal? Interested in finding areas that can be changed.
 - JP-Work participation rate policy
 - Kelsen-what's the possible solution
 - Katie-At what level can this be changed, or is it federal where we can't change. What authority.
 - Stephanie-If they receive a benefit, they are required to reconcile from date of application. Remove policy, what kind of hit, and penalties, other ways to balance work participation. Pros cons how it is going to affect our participants to our budget. State has options. Flexibility, however, there are federal requirements and there may be penalties. Consider what would incur penalties. 5% penalty of state family assistance grant. 42mil.
 - Work Participation Rate penalty-Feds look at your current caseload and compares to 95 data, error has allowed us to look at 05. MOE buyback is not enough
 - Jamie-Let's look at Liz's suggestion for alternative solutions.
- Sanction-Federal noncompliance, must be a penalty. State decides. What is the happy medium.
- Vicki, Great Falls-Feels policy is fairly good. Successful participant-really wants to make a difference in their lives. Difficult participant-want a handout, don't want to help themselves. Her organization has applied for grant through United Way to help pay for bus passes, gas card. Hard to manage grant.
- Mary Berg-If it is a State agency error-do at a state level to notate this and not client error.
- Stephanie-Expedited benefits would be a nice change.
- Darla Joyner-Sometimes consequences, sometimes positive benefit.
- Kelly-Incentive-being non-sanctioned for 3 months, get a little more benefit. 6 months is too long, where 1 month was not enough. Go to 3 month.
- Bobbi-Sanction policy makes sense but it is Hard on the kids. The ones who aren't going to make participation rate and do something productive with them.
- Lesa-are we helping build people so we can meet participation rates?
- Pam Carlson-Being a work participant is a liability in their program because they may not be able to meet the work expectations and participate in other programs or they aren't eligible for other programs. Youth build-Diploma program, 21 or over you can't do that for your activity. Education is one of the biggest conflicts to allow opportunities.
- Jasyn-Paid work experiences from other programs to co-enroll-to do a paid work experience. But does that count as TANF income. Work force is exempt. TANF summer youth, FES counts against. Family investment center-how is the money decided as it is countable. WIA
- Tom Jacobson-When it was a more robust program there was more funding for people in FES.
- In FES we have different eligibilities for different programs. Make sense to streamline to one eligibility.
- Bobbi-Clients in treatment, if they comply with treatment, they can't comply with TANF. Second chance home, Center for children and families struggling. Transitional housing-community activities.
 - Katie-Add treatment to a basic need

- Nanette-What's best for the families, what is the cause of why they fall apart.
- Pam Carlson-Eligibility process. Verification piece is time consuming, lose employable people, they wonder why are they doing participation requirement.
- Kelly Deniger-Paperwork is taking up too much time.
- Candy Spitzer-FES-It does not serve foster kids
 - Stephanie-Foster kids are not in a family situation. Second chance home is an approved independent teen living situation. Federal law with CASA is an underlying line that can be used. This needs more research.
- Vicki, Great Falls-Federal guidelines on job search; not more than 4 consecutive weeks, on a one week break-not able to do community service, put in WEX site but they don't want someone for a week, what to do with them for a week. Limited hours of job search.
 - Stephanie-Wex we pay for work comp. volunteer site we do not pay for work comp.
- Bobbi-Would like to know what the Federal government requires, and how much State has layered on top of those guidelines.
 - Stephanie-Goal is to look at the policies, and look to see if current situations can be changed. Look at the requirements.

2:00 **Break**

2:15 **What's is DPPHS considering right now? – Jamie Palagi**

- Raise eligibility levels-governor/legislative
- Increase benefits-governor/legislative
- Increase disregards-can change
- Create presumptive eligibility-can work on
 - Might be a work participation issue
- Supplemental payment
 - For those in transitional housing, not fitting with any funding structure consistently across the state, not just in hcsd. Idea we could over the top of base level, offer supplemental payment of high needs, supportive shelter care concept. Other states are doing something like this.
 - Sandy-temporary assistance, maybe find other funding streams.
- Extend assessment period-yes
- Subsidized employment-
- Birth of baby for two parents
 - Comment-Mary one parent doing something, Should take the risk.
- Extend post employment program
 - Pam Carlson-Would not help them with work participation rate. But good for participants.
 - JP-Allowed to cherry pick, administrative nightmare.
 - Erin-One time payment, it was supposed to help to boost work participation rate, but it didn't.
 - Stephanie-This was netting, we can decrease too much. Will go back and reevaluate and start counting it.
- Other thoughts expressed in addition:
 - Extending parents as scholars
 - Non-cash survey thoughts
 - Child care follows child – ECSB
 - Expand flexibility for how we use supportive services
 - Same budget, less requirements
 - Funding for job re-location-
 - Reconsider WORC verification requirements

3:30 Discussion-Heather O'Loughlin

See Handout-Measures of Success

- What are we collecting
 - Second page is data collected through CHIMES, ADHOC report for information on participants.
 - Comment: Stephanie-MT BEAR manages our program more appropriately. Ability to track outcomes; look at other data sources, to determine if we had success. What happens when they left TANF, have they met that goal?
 - Katie-Using CHIMES for programmatic reasons. Is it accurate?
 - SW-No I do not believe it is accurate. Comparing to previous program, there are significant differences. Challenging in research on how information is collected, or is there an error in program?
- What kind of data should we be collecting?
 - Hourly wage after exiting, and the quarterly wage after leaving. Should be able to track this data in Montana. Possibly working with other agencies to follow participant. Perhaps there should be a charge to DPHHS to see how Washington is doing this.
- How long should we measure of performance?
 - 12-24-36 month increment, and when does this measurement start.
- Should it be separated by categories?
 - Comment-Sandy-DPHHS should collect only what the department needs, avoid over gathering. Where are we at this bottom end, self-sufficiency, where is the most need. Where are we making some progress? Statistical analysis-is needed to pinpoint what needs to be done to reach self-sufficiency.
 - Comment-Stephanie-Historical data will be challenging. It is on hard copy only pre 2012.
 - Comment-Katie-One potential recommendation to have someone to do the data collection that is needed is a staff person. See demographics of the different clientele.
- How are we using this data?
 - Few examples of what other states are using are attached, and what data is useful to them.
 - Katie-In better utilizing administrative data, continue Focus groups and surveys to better inform the department.
 - Q Sandy-What about tracking how often a family moves?
 - Stephanie-It is not tracked how often families move.
 - Katie-how big of a population are we talking about?
 - Stephanie-Hard to determine on some situations-out of compliance due to not closing their case, or moved and didn't inform us.
 - Bobbi-Moving within the county upsets the whole employability plan. They get out of compliance and leave and never come back. They know they will be sanctioned and why come back and face failure. Leaving doesn't always mean success.

4:00 Wrap up

- Katie-Committee: What do you need to hear from us? Think we need to move on with the planning process. What do we still need to know?
 - Sandy-Would like more data from participants. And can the department prioritize policy changes.
 - Kelsen-Would like to extend process
 - Jamie-Is there a consensus we need to extend the process. Focus group path, to continue.
- Put to a vote to extending the timeline:

- Extending the timeline: yay-7 nay-1 abstain-1
- Recommendation-Up to 3 months urban tribal focus group, keeping survey confidential
- Put to a vote to extend data collection
 - Extending data collection outreach Yay-8 nay-0
 - In the survey, ask different questions.
 - Highest number of TANF participants: Cascade170 Flathead179 Gallatin70 Glacier318 Missoula221
 - Tanya- In Big Horn we made sure the forms were always available to all areas.
 - Will need better instructions, retool, any thoughts submit them.
 - Separate name by number and deposit in separate box from survey.
- Jamie-Chart created with ideas brought up here, will be Low level, and High level. Will get as much information as possible by next meeting. Find enough of a framework in the continuum, we didn't talk about what are the barriers at the different levels. Then the rest of the conversation can be applied
- Mary C-Add youth and strengthening families.
- Kelsen-When can we talk about new ideas and bringing back old ideas. Separate out standard pot of money, how can we be innovative in using reserves. Ideas that aren't on the table, ways that people are negatively impacted.
- Jp-address reserves and apply within, or say here is what we need to put in place and start crunching numbers. Look at a person working through the continuum to come up with a plan, and what ideas others have to get there.

4:40 **Public comment**

4:45 **Adjourn**