

# TANF BEST PRACTICES – BY CITY

*American Institute for Full Employment*

## ATLANTA

1. Using state TANF data which is reported to the federal government, Fulton County has brought TANF participation reports down to the worker level. These reports show the federal participation rate for each worker's caseload. Reports are also created for supervisors and section managers to show how each supervisor's staff and each center are doing. Wide distribution of this information has created "friendly competition" among workers, supervisors and managers.
2. Fulton County is emphasizing work and TANF participation across their entire organization. Managers, supervisors and workers understand its importance and can articulate why it is important for them and how to put it into practice.
3. The County is not permitting participants to linger in mental health or substance abuse treatment. Thirty days after the date of enrollment into treatment, participants are also being placed into work experience. This allows for a more gradual transition rather than being in treatment only for three months and then abruptly ending it and going into a work activity. In addition, treatment usually does not last all day.
4. Fulton County has the philosophy, structure and tools in place to adapt successfully to whatever changes are required under TANF reauthorization. In one very critical area of work experience, they will be able to quickly expand the number of work experience slots.
5. The state's new sanction policies, when fully implemented, should improve accountability and thus participation levels.

## BALTIMORE

1. Maryland has changed policy to universal engagement, the 40 hour week and an emphasis on work activity and has communicated the new policy to all centers and staff in writing and verbally.
2. In spite of many issues (funding, staffing, systems, etc.) Maryland has found many ways to implement its new policy.
3. Work is progressing on multiple fronts with the highest priority to engage participants who have no assigned activity.
4. Use of Center Stat" to help center managers to understand and manage their caseloads.
5. The state is allocating a percentage of funding to centers based on key outcomes: caseload decline, earnings gain, job retention, universal engagement and diversion.
6. The State and the City are taking steps which will lead to expansion of the FSET program in Maryland.
7. The City is planning to start doing home visits to the TANF Child Only cases.
8. The City is starting to require Community Work Experience as a part of drug and alcohol treatment programs.
9. Project "Fresh Start" is an innovative approach for engaging the participants who are reaching the 5 year limit.
10. The State and the City have a good understanding of the problems and issues that are preventing engagement and participation in work activities. They are committed to addressing them.

## BOSTON

1. One worker does both eligibility and case management. 2. In anticipation of the end of their waiver in 2005 and of TANF reauthorization, Massachusetts is taking steps now to increase participation.
3. Making the application and review eligibility processes more efficient and thereby make more time available to focus on work program engagement.

## DETROIT

1. Management of vendor contracts.
2. Use of data for managing participation and performance.

## MINNEAPOLIS

1. The Diversionary Work Program as an effective program for immediate engagement in work and work activities.
2. The TEAMS system is an effective tool for case managers and providers. In addition, Hennepin is effectively using Lotus notes for communication and electronically images all documents.
3. Strong improved sanction policy.
4. 100% engagement policy – no exemptions.
5. Wage Subsidy program as a good alternative to Community Work Experience placements.
6. Use of a single vendor for all Community Work Experience placements.
7. The better providers in Hennepin County are setting outcome expectations and measuring success with data for their subcontractors.

## NEW ORLEANS

1. Since TANF started, they have followed a systematic program implementation cycle including: program design, implementation, evaluation, problem identification, and program redesign. Several major program changes have been implemented using this cycle.
2. Department managers understand and want to solve problems affecting the entire family including fathers, non-custodial parents, offenders, and children in child-only cases.
3. There is a good understanding of data and how it can be used to manage participation and performance.
4. Louisiana has made good progress in moving towards universal engagement.

## OAKLAND

1. Use of IVR (Interactive Voice Response) technology.
2. Planned use of Imaging.
3. Web-based IT systems.
4. Effort to set up Vita sites and to involve staff and managers in actually volunteering at the sites.

## SEATTLE

1. Seattle has an engagement program for women who are pregnant or who have newborns (first 4 months).
2. Large on-going Wage Subsidy program.
3. Diversion program at scale.
4. Have already started a discussion with center managers and supervisors about strategies for increasing engagement. These were done as part of the Urban Partnership Visit. Excellent ideas have been generated. The attached documents list the ideas that were generated.

## ST. LOUIS

1. In a very cooperative effort involving the state, SLATE, EC, BFL and other partners, the St. Louis TANF program has taken advantage of change at the state level to create a program which has increased TANF engagement and participation in work and work directed activities.
2. The Toolbox system helps Case Managers in many ways. One of the most important is to restrict assignment of activities to those who meet federal reporting requirements. It is also web-based which makes it easy to access from anywhere with an internet connection.
3. Involvement of faith based organizations in various aspects such as transportation of CAP.
4. The Metropolitan Education and Training Center brings many resources used by the CAP program in on physical location.
5. Case Managers are available in the evenings so that participants don't have to take off of work and other scheduled activities.
6. Setting participation and employment goals and encouraging "friendly competition" among staff by recognizing staff who have the highest job placements.
7. Co-location of eligibility workers and job placement specialist.

## DALLAS/FT. WORTH

1. In the last several years the state of Texas has moved aggressively to remove exemptions, to require full engagement and to implement a full family sanction.
2. The state of Texas has a Community work requirement for participants who are not participating in employment activities.

3. Tarrant County WDB for it's dramatic turn-around from the worst performing to the best performing.
4. Dallas County WDB for development and implementation of its truly unique Business ACCESS web-based tool for providing web based learning that can be used to meet participation hours an help with job retention and advancement.
5. Tarrant County WDB for its innovative Career Steps approach to public/private non-profit and private for-profit community service/work experience program.
6. Tarrant County WDB for its Rapid Employment and Attachment Program (REAP) which seeks to reengage sanctioned individuals.

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