

Together,  
we're making  
our families  
stronger.



Temporary Assistance for Needy Families  
Arkansas Department of Workforce Services

# TANF eNews

Fall 2013

An Electronic Newsletter from the Arkansas Department of Workforce Services

## Inside this issue:

The Leadership Corner .....	2
TEA Sanctions .....	3
EBT Cards .....	3
TANF Spotlight .....	4
CÚRAM .....	5
TANF Vision and Mission.....	6

## TANF in Arkansas – Making a Difference!

Phil Harris, Assistant Director—TANF

Many Arkansas families have become more economically independent with help from the Arkansas Department of Workforce Services Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program through job placement and improved education and training services. The satisfaction that is obtained from observing direct success among our clients as a result of our program efforts is most gratifying. These successes may take many forms and may be focused on a single-or two-parent family unit. However, the underlying theme in any success story is the positive impact on an individual or society that occurs as a result of our assistance.

As we read our TANF success stories, they provide evidence of hope. Everyone needs hope. It helps us survive. Hope guides our direction and sustains and improves our lives. Hope inspires us to help others in need. Every day, people look to the Arkansas TANF program for help and hope. And every day, we strive to help people in need help themselves and lead safer, healthier, and more independent and productive lives. We are proud of the work that we do. It makes me very proud to be affiliated with a group of professionals who give their best in serving those in our great state who need a hand up and not a hand out. The TANF program would like to thank James Jones, DWS Logistics Program Operations Manager, for his assistance in developing the design and graphics layout of the TANF Success Story E-Book and Slideshow.

To view our inaugural TANF Success Stories, click the following link! [Success Stories](#)



## TANF Case Management Corner: What is Good Case Management

Dr. Beverly Ford, President—ASM Associates

Case management provides an organized, structured process for moving participants through the process of change and toward the goal of self-sufficiency. The process is based on the following beliefs:

- Case management is a participant-centered, rather than a program-centered approach. It starts with participants and uses the program's resources to help each person achieve his or her goals.
- Participants are capable of taking more control of their lives. They are capable of solving problems, making decisions, and setting goals. Case management should not do for people what they can do for themselves.
- Participants have strengths and resources as well as problems and challenges. Case management attempts to enable participants to use their strengths and resources to overcome their problems and challenges.
- The case management process should be a shared partnership between a participant and case manager. Although each partner brings different skills, experiences, and expertise, they share in the responsibility for producing change.
- Participants should be actively involved in all phases of the process—assessment, planning, problem solving, and finding resources. Case management seeks to have active participants rather than passive ones.
- Participants are responsible for the outcomes. The case manager is responsible for the process. Participants are ultimately responsible for making change happen. We cannot force change on them. Instead, the case management process attempts to influence change.

Jobs for People. People for Jobs.

**DWS**  
Department of  
WORKFORCE Services

## The Leadership Corner



*Director Artee Williams shares  
10 Leadership Principles*

### *A Good Leader must. . .*

- ...Have great imagination*
- ...Articulate the vision to others*
- ...Complete homework beforehand*
- ...Be a great storyteller*
- ...Be transparent*
- ...Be audacious*
- ...Be committed*
- ...Share credit*
- ...Execute*
- ...Be passionate*

## ***Ethics—Is Character Relevant to Leadership?***

Are we only concerned about a leader's character when it affects us financially? The parade of scandals and setbacks at the beginning of this century might suggest that we are. We might like to think that personality will carry the leader even when their character is questionable, but in the end it catches up with us.

This points out the importance of character not only in our daily lives but also as a qualification for leadership. We cannot compartmentalize our virtues and character and pull them out at will when we think they may benefit us. Effective leaders are those with stable lives—whose personal lives are congruent with their public lives. In a word, integrity. Personal integrity is what drives the ethics process.

Often we speak of business ethics as though it is different from everyday run-of-the-mill ethics. But, ethics is ethics. To be an ethical leader means to be ethical in everything we do, in both our business and personal lives. Ethics speaks to a whole, congruent person. When people act differently at work than they do at home, you begin to see fractures that can lead to collapses in ethical behavior. External problems of this nature are problems of inner positions and thinking. Before someone bends the rule, before someone breaks the law, there is an identifiable behavior leading to a breakdown in integrity.

"There is nothing better business and government leaders can do for this country right now than restore faith in the system that made it great," said former US Treasury Secretary Paul O'Neill. To do that, we must make character a priority in developing and choosing our leaders.

In the Leadership Corner, we want to change the way you think about leadership. It is not about position. Leadership is everybody's business. It is for you. We need leadership now. Increasingly, people must influence without formal authority. We need people from all backgrounds to take advantage of the myriad of opportunities that exist to make a difference.

We all possess the capacity for leadership, but only those who cultivate it ever become truly effective leaders. Life doesn't happen to us, it happens through us. Leaders don't have all of the answers, they know the questions. They create an environment where the questions can be answered. The world needs you to live up to your potential. Imagine yourself leading. Where is your leadership needed ... now?

## TEA Sanctions—Friend or Foe

by Christy Fuerst and Sharon Stringer

I guess that depends on your perception of the purpose for the non-compliance process. Federal regulations require sanctions, state law mandates them, so how do we live with them and at the same time positively impact our program? Imposition of a sanction to a client's TEA benefits should not be taken lightly and comes with a great deal of responsibility on the part of the case manager and compliance officer. Sanctions affect the cash benefit amount a client receives and can positively or adversely affect our Work Participation Rate. There are financial ramifications to the client, the state, and our program when we fail to implement the process properly. So how as case managers can we make this a win/win situation and make sure that this action is used only as a final resort that will lead to positive effects?

The sanction process should not be taken lightly, as there are many consequences if done incorrectly. We should not sanction a client "just because." We have to follow policy and procedure to include proper documentation and notification. A client has to be in mandatory status, required to do something, and fail to verify it before a sanction can be imposed. We cannot sanction someone if we failed to clearly notify them of their requirements and reporting obligations.

Conversely, we cannot ignore non-compliance and fail to impose a sanction when the client is not cooperating and fails to participate. We cannot wait week after week without participation verification and fail to impose a sanction. When a client is in non-compliance, we must begin the sanction process in a timely manner.

Unfortunately, we all know there are times when we must sanction a client's benefits, and as long as we do this according to policy the process is fairly smooth. The faster you can bring the case back into compliance, the less effect on our WPR. Do your best. Make every effort to work with the client to return to compliance. Regrettably sometimes the client is not ready, and you cannot change that.

Clients always have the right to appeal, so double-check to make sure all of your documentation is correct, within policy guidelines, and copies are contained in the file. The sanction process was not designed as a punishment, but as a consequence when a client fails to maintain their obligation. It must be applied timely and in accordance with policy. All efforts should be made to bring the case back into compliance as quickly as possible.

When our clients fully participate, they have a much better chance to become employed and reach their goals. Through your encouragement, motivation, coaching, and case management efforts, they will cooperate and remain compliant. Their benefits will remain at full grant, and they will be on their way to self-sufficiency.

Remember, we have an obligation to our clients, the program and the State to be fair and objective when imposing a sanction on TEA benefits. There are no shortcuts. Try to be accurate and impose sanctions timely and within policy.

## Tips for Sanctioning Participants:

Before implementing the sanction process, we should be sure the following tasks have been completed:

- The participants have been clearly informed of what is expected of them and the consequences for not complying. This should be done during initial assessment and repeated throughout the case management process.
- Identify participants who may be unable to participate in a work activity due to barriers or an exemption/deferral reason.
- Assign and monitor participation. Realize that some barriers for a participant may not surface until after participation begins. Differentiate between what is "good cause" (lasting a limited time) and an exemption/deferral reason which could last three to six months or longer.
- Define the triggers for entering a participant into the sanction process. With proper notification, some participants may enter the sanction process immediately (failure to attend assessment/employment plan update) while others may not enter the process until a week or two weeks of non-compliance has been established.
- Determine the type of notice to be issued, actual level of sanction to be imposed, and proper notification to participants of when a sanction will take effect.
- Establish a process for encouraging participants to engage or re-engage in allowable work activities in order to meet compliance and inform them of specific requirements needed to end a sanction.



Section 4004 of the Middle Class Tax Relief and Job Creation Act of 2012 (P. L. 112-96) requires states receiving TANF grants to "maintain policies and practices as necessary to prevent assistance provided under the State program funded under this part from being used in any electronic benefit transfer transaction in any liquor store; any casino, gambling casino or gaming establishment; or any retail establishment which provides adult-oriented entertainment in which performers disrobe or perform in an unclothed state for entertainment." The legislation also imposes a reporting requirement as well as a penalty and a modification to state plans. Each state is required to report to the Secretary by February 22, 2014 on its implementation of policies and practices required by the law.

The Central Office TANF staff is developing the state's plan to comply with this new requirement. Additional information will be made available to TANF Field staff as it becomes available.

## Spotlight

### Helping Hand Spotlight: Little Rock TANF Staff Lends a Helping Hand!

In April 2013, TANF Program Operations Manager Don Childers, TANF Trainers Tabitha Wallace and Ed Milligan, and several Little Rock TANF staff traveled to the Texarkana Local Office to assist that staff in catching up their TANF case management duties.

Under Mr. Childers' direction, the staff assisted the Texarkana TANF staff by reviewing TEA and Work Pays cases, organizing case files, scheduling and conducting assessments, updating employment plans, keying participation hours, entering ANSWER narratives, and a host of other TANF case management duties.

Additionally, staff conducted one-on-one training with the Texarkana TANF staff on TEA Policy, Work Pays Policy, TEA Compliance and Sanctions, TEA Exempt/Deferred Cases, and TANF Case Reviews.

Mary Wakefield, Texarkana Local Office TANF Supervisor, was very proactive with categorizing and mapping out case management needs prior to the arrival of the Central Office and Little Rock staff members.

The TANF Assistant Director asks that you join him in thanking the following DWS TANF staff members for lending this "helping hand." TEA Case Managers included Glennis Bogard, Shonia Murphy, Tarzetta Parks, and David Wallace, while Work Pays Case Managers included Tolina Butler, Jeannie Hill, and Andre Rogers.



Pictured are Tarzetta Parks, David Wallace, Jeannie Hill, Tolina Butler, Andre Rogers, and Glennis Bogard from the Little Rock Workforce Center's TANF staff. (Shonia Murphy not pictured.)



Pictured are (Back Row) Makesha Shelton, Jennifer Cole, Willie Hansel, Joann Lieblong and Junette Freeman (Front Row) Dolores Young, Alice Williford and Shalotta Washington

### Local Office Spotlight: Forrest City Improves TANF Transportation Provider Process

In Arkansas, the lack of available transportation is one of the most prominent barriers preventing TEA participants from completing their assigned work activities. Unfortunately, this barrier is also one of the most time-consuming supportive services to manage. In the DWS Local Office – Forrest City, Manager Alice Williford, new TANF Program Supervisor Makesha Shelton, and the TANF staff have made great strides in improving this process. In Forrest City, the sheer number of transportation providers resulted in

many of them believing that they were not receiving an equal number of referrals.

Working with Central Office TANF staff, Ms. Williford and Ms. Shelton completely overhauled their existing processes to ensure fairness and transparency in the referral process. They conducted meetings and training sessions with the Forrest City TANF staff to identify issues with the current processes. Additionally, group and individual meetings were conducted with all of the transportation providers to discuss the new processes and procedures to be implemented.

Specifically, staff implemented the following changes:

- Employ a Transportation Provider Log to ensure an equitable and fair referral process
- Require TANF staff to funnel all transportation referral requests to a single staff member to decrease the appearance of favoritism by TANF staff
- Maintain a referral refusal log to record all instances whereby a Transportation Provider is unwilling or unable to provide the requested transportation services

Phil Harris, TANF Assistant Director, and his staff salute the efforts of Ms. Williford and Ms. Shelton and encourage other offices to contact them for more information regarding their new processes.



Pictured are (back row) Area Operation Chief, Jeanette Williams, Tonya Hill, Wanda Mouncil, Sharon Tyson-Demery, Stephanie Smith, Gail Walker, Joyce Redmond, Nancy Spriggs, LaTara Parris, Carla Harrison, Marcus Tillmon (front row) Kinyetta Alexander, Valerie Price, Lavatia Wooten, Local Office Manager, William Campbell, Laura Cummings, Roberta Spears, Gwendolyn Valliant, Danietta Nelson, Marilyn Maloney, DWS Assistant Director, Phil Harris.

## Pine Bluff Workforce Center

As part of Director Williams' "Good-to-Great" initiative, TANF Assistant Director Phil Harris decided to award a "mid-year" Award.

Based upon the cumulative results from the on-site Quality Assurance reviews and Work

Participation Rates during the period of December 2012—May 2013, the recipient of the 2013 mid-year *Assessments-Sanctions-Keying* (A.S.K.) Award has been awarded to the Pine Bluff Local Office. The initial A.S.K. awards were announced during the 2012 TANF Conference. These awards recognize the local offices with exemplary performance in Assessments–Sanctions–Keying.

### **DWS-TANF Central Office is pleased to announce that the Arkansas TANF Transition & Optimization (ATTOP) project has begun!**

This project is designed to bring us through—

- Transitioning eligibility from DHS to DWS
- Upgrading our IT capability
- Developing, documenting, and implementing business processes and procedures
- Enlarging our capacity to serve our clients—the reason we are here



We are fortunate to have Nagaraj Bettadapura to lead this project as Project Manager. We ask for your support and assistance in adopting the changes we expect to occur over the next few weeks as we prepare ourselves and our organization for this long awaited and momentous occasion—TANF transition. By working together in teamwork and collaboration, we can make this stretch of our *Good to Great* path an enjoyable adventure that allows us to move quickly, effectively, and efficiently toward our goal.

Studies show that a strong success factor for projects such as this one is to create an environment that allows everyone to thrive. Anyone who feels left behind will be there by personal choice. I ask each of you to do your part to contribute in your area of expertise, to serve as a role model for your peers, and make this project a success. We will provide more information soon with further details about this project and how you can help! As we move forward with this project, we plan to keep everybody informed of significant milestones and successes. We are also working on creating and distributing a Frequently Asked Questions about the Cúram® Solution and covering the following topics over the next few months—

*In each article, TANF Leadership will talk about what's in it for you and how you can participate. We will set up ways for you to provide your ideas, suggestions, feedback, and questions and get answers.*

*Let the adventure begin!*

- Our initial vision for DWS after implementation: a great vision with the right service delivery model
- How we got to where we are now: Blueprints and roadmaps
- Considerations for our key business components, starting with people: How can we best take care of each other?
- Process: Designing, developing, and documenting procedures and processes
- Technology: So what is Cúram®?
- Governance: Clarity, pragmatism, insight
- Project Progress: Updated each week; how it works and why you care
- What do we do now, Coach?



## Vision:

To be Arkansas' preferred provider of workforce services and solutions.

## Mission:

To enable the Arkansas workforce to compete in the global economy by linking a comprehensive array of services for employers and job seekers.



## Core Values:

- A** **Accountability** – We concern ourselves with the responsibilities we have to our customers, state, agency partners and colleagues. Accordingly, we use good judgment when making decisions, and we take ownership for our actions.
- D** **Discipline** – We demonstrate discipline in our thoughts and actions, always striving to improve our processes and never settling for mediocrity.
- A** **Agility** – We are flexible and embrace innovation in order to align ourselves with our ever-changing world.
- P** **Passion** – We are dedicated to improving the well-being of our state and show pride and enthusiasm in providing quality services to our customers.
- T** **Teamwork** – We care about each other both professionally and personally, and we are cooperative with each other and our partners, uniting to achieve a common mission.

### Vision Statement



#### We envision a TANF program which:

Unifies and empowers Arkansas families by providing quality, supportive, and timely services to help them become self-sufficient and achieve their full potential.

### Our Mission



#### In partnership with all available resources:

To guide the operation of TANF-funded programs by creating a high performing culture that supports strategic planning, innovative policies, effective community partnerships, and data-driven decisions.

### Our Value and Guiding Principles

The TANF Division believes that:

1. Our customers, partners, and employees are our most important asset and must be respected at all times.
2. A flexible, friendly, and professional environment that supports open communication, encourages innovation and creativity, and recognizes the unique expertise and competence of each person will promote integrity and continuous improvement.
3. Publicly-funded programs must become increasingly accountable for utilizing resources in ways that meet the overarching program objectives.
4. It is vital to recognize achievements, both individual and organizational, regularly and publicly.
5. Teamwork allows us to achieve common goals and maximize program resources.
6. Management must provide staff the tools, support, and necessary authority to respond to our customers' needs.
7. Continuous improvement is required to achieve our mission and vision.