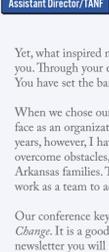
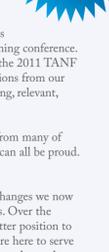


WINTER 2012



MAKING A DIFFERENCE

The TANF program has continued another federal fiscal year with the caliber of participation and cooperation I witnessed from many of you. Through your efforts you expedited teamwork and helped make our first conference something for which we can all be proud. You have set the bar high for 2012.

When we chose our conference theme—Champions of Change—I don't think any of us foresaw the extent of the changes we now face as an organization. TANF programs throughout the nation are confronted with economic and policy challenges. Over the years, however, I have learned that change creates both obstacles and opportunities. I also believe that we are in a better position to overcome obstacles, embrace opportunities, and steadily move "from good to great" when our mission is clear—we are here to serve Arkansas families. To do so effectively—now more than ever—we must utilize personal and professional wisdom every day, and work as a team to accomplish our mission.

Our conference keynote speaker, Dr. Beverly Ford, wrote a manual entitled, *Making Case Management Work: Empowering People for Change*. It is a good guideline when working with clients, and it is practical insight for staff as well. Throughout this edition of our newsletter you will read short excerpts from her manual as they relate to making the best of "changes."

As your director, I thank each of you for your commitment to excellence as you serve our Arkansas TANF clients. It is my honor to serve both you and them.

Sincerely,
Phil Harris
Assistant Director/TANF

THE TANF STAR AWARD DEBUTS AT TANF TRAINING CONFERENCE

For the first time, Arkansas TANF recognized local office employees for their outstanding services above and beyond their job descriptions. Eight TANF employees received STAR Awards at the 2011 TANF Staff Training Conference held in Little Rock, on August 10-11. The winners and their categories included: Sharon Stringer of Blytheville, and Angela Beauchamp of Fayetteville, recognized as outstanding TANF Supervisors. Also recognized were Linda Rockwell of Searcy; Chris Guerrini of Hot Springs; Nicole Gilkey of Arkadelphia; Connie Hendrix of Mena; and Tammy Smith of Paragould, all recognized as outstanding Workforce Specialists. Finally, Michelle Harris of Blytheville was recognized as outstanding Support Staff. According to TANF Director, Phil Harris, "The awards were a great opportunity to recognize and highlight the excellent work being done in the local offices, and a way to say 'thank you' to outstanding employees."



Phil Harris, TANF Assistant Director; Angela Beauchamp, Fayetteville; Connie Hendrix, Mena; Chris Guerrini, Hot Springs; Tammy Smith, Paragould; Sharon Stringer, Blytheville; Linda Rockwell, Searcy; Artes Williams, ADWS Director

The STAR Award Winners comment for this issue of the TANF Newsletter:

"Receiving the TANF STAR Award was such an incredible honor. I can only say that if I am a STAR it is because of the amazing staff that supports me. We all work very hard and I would like to thank everyone for this special recognition."
- Angela Beauchamp

"I appreciate the recognition and award for my hard work. I want to thank all the persons that were involved in making the 2011 conference a success."
- Nicole Gilkey

"I was surprised to be singled out for this award. Really, we're ALL stars!" - Chris Guerrini

"Receiving the TANF STAR Award, presented by Director Artes Williams and Assistant Director Phil Harris, was an honor. As AOCs, managers, supervisors, and colleagues watched and applauded, it made me realize that it is a privilege and a blessing to work for an agency that values its employees publicly, and that allowed nominations to come from all divisions." - Michelle Harris

"I greatly appreciate my supervisor for taking the time to nominate me for this award, and I will continue to diligently work to make positive changes when working with our local employees, the public, and specifically my TEA clients. Working as a TEA Case Manager has been a positive and rewarding experience. I am truly honored to be a recipient of the TANF STAR Award."
- Connie Hendrix

"Being selected as a TANF Star Award winner and being recognized for my work was an awesome feeling. I felt like it was a time where those clients, who have worked to remove their barriers, were also honored. When a client works beside you, the reward should go to them. At the same time, it is incentive for me to work even harder in the future. Bottom line, we are a good agency proud for greatness!" - Linda Rockwell

"It was a great honor to be awarded the TANF STAR Award from the Arkansas Department of Workforce Services. I enjoy working with the TANF Participants in helping them achieve stability and overcome barriers. I feel comfortable in saying that the Paragould Workforce Office works hard in these endeavors both individually and as a team. I look forward in continuing serving Arkansas TEA Participants." - Tammy Smith

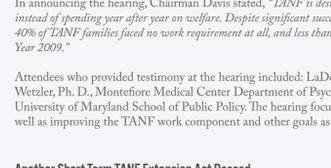
"It is, without a doubt, a great honor and a humbling experience to be recognized as a 2011 TANF STAR Award winner. I sincerely hope I will always be a credit to the TANF program as well as to the Arkansas Department of Workforce Services. I extend my most sincere 'thank you' to everyone." - Sharon Stringer



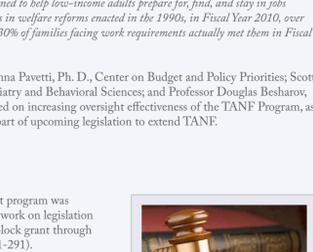
TANF Star Awards



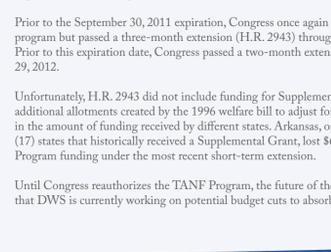
Dorothy Oliver, DWS Training Unit Yolanda Lewis, Manager, TANF "Customer" Support Services



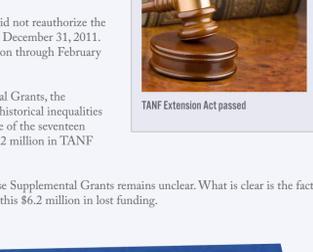
DWS Director, Artes Williams



TANF Conference Team Members



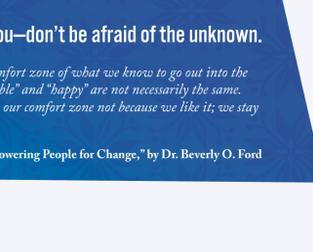
Mike Gleghorn, Paragould LOM, and TANF Team Members



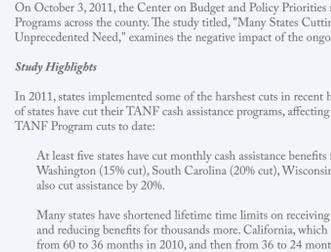
Dr. Sherice West, President of Winthrop Rockefeller Foundation



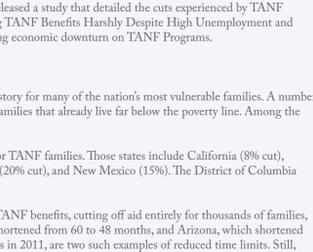
Joe Franklin, Assistant Director of New Hire Registry and CRC, DWS



Michael Steele, President of Advantage Communications, Inc.



Jody Sue Kelly, Cygnat Associates; Phil Harris; Dr. Beverly Ford, ASM Associates



2011 TANF Staff Training Conference Signage

TANF FEDERAL UPDATE

TANF Program Reauthorization

On September 8, 2011, a hearing was conducted on the reauthorization of the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program, including how states engage recipients in work activities that move them toward self-sufficiency. Congressman Geoff Davis (KY), Chairman of the Subcommittee on Human Resources of the Committee on Ways and Means, led the hearing.

In announcing the hearing, Chairman Davis stated, "TANF is designed to help low-income adults prepare for, find, and stay in jobs instead of spending year after year on welfare. Despite significant success in welfare reforms enacted in the 1990s, in Fiscal Year 2010, over 40% of TANF families faced no work requirement at all, and less than 30% of families facing work requirements actually met them in Fiscal Year 2009."

Attendees who provided testimony at the hearing included: LaDonna Pavetti, Ph. D., Center on Budget and Policy Priorities; Scott Wetzler, Ph. D., Montrose Medical Center Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences; and Professor Douglas Beshary, University of Maryland School of Public Policy. The hearing focused on increasing oversight effectiveness of the TANF Program, as well as improving the TANF work component and other goals as part of upcoming legislation to extend TANF.

Another Short-Term TANF Extension Act Passed

The Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) block grant program was scheduled for reauthorization in 2010. However, Congress did not work on legislation to reauthorize the program and instead they extended the TANF block grant through September 30, 2011 as part of the Claims Resolution Act (P.L. 111-291).

Prior to the September 30, 2011 expiration, Congress once again did not reauthorize the program but passed a three-month extension (H.R. 2943) through December 31, 2011. Prior to this expiration date, Congress passed a two-month extension through February 29, 2012.

Unfortunately, H.R. 2943 did not include funding for Supplemental Grants, the additional allotments created by the 1996 welfare bill to adjust for historical inequities in the amount of funding received by different states. Arkansas, one of the seventeen (17) states that historically received a Supplemental Grant, lost \$6.2 million in TANF Program funding under the most recent short-term extension.

Until Congress reauthorizes the TANF Program, the future of these Supplemental Grants remains unclear. What is clear is the fact that DWS is currently working on potential budget cuts to absorb this \$6.2 million in lost funding.



TANF Extension Act passed

TANF TIP #1 – Change will challenge you—don't be afraid of the unknown.

Change is difficult because it requires us to leave the comfort zone of what we know to go out into the unknown. Comfort zones are helpful [but] comfortable and "bappy" are not necessarily the same. We can be comfortable without being happy. We stay in our comfort zone not because we like it; we stay because it is known.

From the book "Making Change Work: Empowering People for Change," by Dr. Beverly O. Ford

Across the Nation, TANF Programs Face Hard Times

On October 3, 2011, the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities released a study that detailed the cuts experienced by TANF Programs across the country. The study titled, "Many States Cutting TANF Benefits Harshly Despite High Unemployment and Unprecedented Need," examines the negative impact of the ongoing economic downturn on TANF Programs.

Study Highlights

In 2011, states implemented some of the harshest cuts in recent history for many of the nation's most vulnerable families. A number of states have cut their TANF cash assistance programs, affecting families that already live far below the poverty line. Among the TANF Program cuts to date:

At least five states have cut monthly cash assistance benefits for TANF families. Those states include California (8% cut), Washington (15% cut), South Carolina (20% cut), Wisconsin (20% cut), and New Mexico (15%). The District of Columbia also cut assistance by 20%.

Many states have shortened lifetime time limits on receiving TANF benefits, cutting off aid entirely for thousands of families, and reducing to 36 months in 2010, and then from 36 to 24 months in 2011, are two such examples of Arizona time limits. Still, other states have tightened time limits. For example, Washington cut off over 5,000 families that had reached 60 months on TANF by revising its extension policies, while Michigan terminated benefits for over 12,000 families by tightening its 48-month limit.

There are also states that have reduced the resources available to help individuals find jobs, limiting available supportive services, or requiring case-workers to carry bigger caseloads rather than filling vacancies.

These TANF cuts come at a time when unemployment remains very high and the prospects of finding jobs—especially low-skilled ones—are poor. Despite these conditions, states are implementing policies that further shrink the number of poor families with children that TANF serves.

In 1994-1995, just prior to TANF's creation, the Aid to Families with Dependent Children Program (AFDC) served 75 families with children for every 100 in poverty. In 2008-2009, TANF served only 28 families with children for every 100 in poverty. This ratio varies among states; in seven states in 2008-2009, TANF served fewer than 10 families with children for every 100 in poverty.

Cuts in cash assistance benefits will leave families far below the poverty line with even fewer resources. New time-limit restrictions will completely eliminate assistance for many families with physical or mental health issues or other challenges that limit their ability to work. Cuts in child care and other benefits that help offset work-related costs will make it harder for many parents with jobs in this economy to keep those jobs. For the foreseeable future, hundreds of thousands of poor parents and children will face even greater difficulties than they already face in meeting their basic needs.

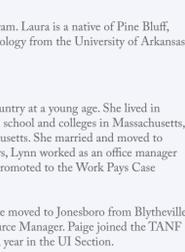
ADWS UPDATE

State Vehicles—Use Them or Lose Them

The Department of Finance and Administration (DFA) continues to monitor Arkansas family support agencies' state vehicle usage, and any vehicles that are not being fully utilized by agencies are in danger of being rescinded.

DWS Director Williams and Deputy Director Sneed has required the Central Office TANF Staff to monitor usage of state vehicles purchased by TANF funds. Any vehicles without sustained utilization will be subject to reallocation to other DWS offices.

Local Office TANF Staff are asked to schedule their vehicle usage in advance to ensure that other DWS local office staff can use these vehicles when available. Additionally, on March 22, 2011, DWS Travel Procedure Change 1—AM 10-10 was released, and now requires the Travel Supervisor's certification that no state vehicle was available prior to the approval of personal vehicle mileage reimbursement. It is imperative that TANF Staff assist in ensuring that our state vehicles are fully utilized when they are available.



Use them or lose them

TANF TIP #2 – You are a change-agent . . . you can influence change.

You cannot force people to change, but you can influence change. Change happens when (1) we become uncomfortable with the status quo, and want something better; (2) when we know how to perform the tasks involved in managing change; (3) when we have the supports we need to make change achievable.

From the book "Making Change Work: Empowering People for Change," by Dr. Beverly O. Ford

2011 Low-Income Conference 'Re-invigorating the War on Poverty'

The Arkansas Department of Workforce Services joined the Central Arkansas Development Council, and Entergy Arkansas for the 2011 Low Income Advocates Leadership and Community Development Conference. As it did in 2010, DWS helped plan and coordinate the two-day forum on poverty in Arkansas and throughout the region. This is the second year DWS has participated.

Company executives and organizational leaders from around the state came together to explore common problems, and share solutions and successes aimed at helping low to moderate income families achieve stability. In a joint statement, partnership leaders noted that "The 2011 Low Income Advocates Leadership and Community Development Conference was an opportunity to help re-invigorate the War on Poverty."

Artee Williams, Director of the Arkansas Department of Workforce Services; Larry Cogburn, Executive Director of the Central Arkansas Development Council; and Hugh McDonald, President and CEO of Entergy Arkansas were the partnership leaders this year.

Larry Cogburn, Artee Williams, and Representative Frederick I. Love, NLR

2011 Poverty Conference Breakout Session

Robin Freeman, CADIC; Alyssa Eady, former Miss Arkansas; and Miss Arkansas

Judge Ollie Neal, Jr.; Secretary Rodney Slater; and conference guest

TANF NEWS BRIEFS

New TANF Success Stories Page added to TANF web link

The TANF Web link now includes an exciting new TANF Success Stories page. This page includes a TANF Success Stories Video, released during the recent August 2011 TANF Training Conference, and a Success Stories Narratives link which includes compelling stories of clients throughout the state. This page has already garnered attention and numerous compliments from visitors to the site, as well as staff members who viewed the video in August.

We continue to urge local office caseworkers and supervisors to send us their stories. We want to feature your local successes on our web link. Please contact Linsey Sanders or Devona Caples for more information on this process.

New TANF Brand Featured in Division's Outreach Materials

August 2011 welcomed the launch of TANF's new and improved outreach materials. Information packets, including TANF Fact Sheets and Brochures were distributed to Local Office Managers during the recent 2011 TANF Training Conference. All inquiries regarding the new materials should be directed to Devona Caples, Administrative Assistant to Mr. Phil Harris.

The seven new outreach handouts include:

TANF TIP #3 – Change is a process—approach it as such.

Motivation to change can be positive—what we want badly enough [to change]. Or, motivation to change can be negative—what we [dislike so much] about our present lives (or what is making us miserable about where we are now) that we believe we have little choice but to change. The process of change typically occurs in three stages: First, we identify what we don't like about our present situation; then we define what we want in our lives; finally, we decide what we will do to accomplish the goals.

From the book "Making Change Work: Empowering People for Change," by Dr. Beverly O. Ford

Welcome, Family Support Unit - Mental Health and Substance Abuse Program (MHSAP)!

We welcome the Mental Health and Substance Abuse Program component of the TANF Family Support Unit (FSU), formerly the Severe Barriers unit, and its staff members, which joined the TANF Central Office Division on October 1, 2011. According to Program Manager Ida Emerson, "The mission of the newly relocated program is to identify, assess, and assist in the treatment services of participants who are experiencing employment and family instability due to mental illnesses and/or substance abuse that keep our TANF participants from obtaining and keeping a job. We utilize a screening, assessment, and referral program, which uses an assertive community management model to assist our participants as they transition to employment status."

The three new program staff members are:

Tyria Black is a Little Rock native who graduated from UALR in 1996 with a B.A. degree in Criminal Justice. She became a certified mental health para-professional while working for Centers for Youth & Families from 1997 to 2006. Tyria went on to work for the Severe Barriers Project through UAMS Department of Psychiatry until 2011. She has over 13 years of mental health and case management experience.

Yolonda Callahan started with the TANF Monitoring Unit in August 2006 as a Management Project Analyst I, and then later as an MPA II under the Office of Financial Management. She graduated from the University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff with a BA in Communications/Public Relations. She has a MA in Criminal Justice from University of Arkansas at Little Rock, and is working on a Doctorate Degree in Educational Leadership from Kaplan University. Yolonda is a member of Junior League of Little Rock, and a current student in the agency CPM Course & The TANF Foundation's Edward Coleman Leadership Institute.

Joy Cole is an Administrative Analyst with DWS. She is a native of California, and studied at Cal State Dominguez Hills. She is also certified as a mental health para-professional with over 13 years of case management and mental health experience. Joy was previously employed with UAMS in The Department of Psychiatry as an Eligibility Specialist. She served as unit supervisor for the Department of Youth Services, and worked closely with the psychiatrist, psychologist and therapists as part of a treatment team.

AROUND THE STATE

As we seek ways to better highlight TANF's good news around the state, we are calling on local office managers and TANF program supervisors to continue to collect and share news about staff and activities. We would like to feature new TANF employees, new partnerships, outstanding achievements or recognitions, or even great photos of TANF-related events and activities taking place in your areas. Share your good news with your TANF Family around the state!

Welcome to New TANF Employees

PINE BLUFF DWS CENTER

Laura R. Cummings is a new Workforce Specialist for the Pine Bluff local office TEA program. Laura is a native of Pine Bluff, and a graduate of White Hall High School. She received a Bachelor of Arts degree in Psychology from the University of Arkansas at Little Rock. She was hired on October 3, 2011.

JONESBORO DWS CENTER

Lynn Chang-Ly, a Workforce Specialist for Work Pays, was born in Vietnam, but left the country at a young age. She lived in China, Hong Kong, and the Philippines before moving to the U.S. in 1982. She went to high school and colleges in Massachusetts, and received her BA in Accounting from Emmanuel College, and an MBA-MIS in Massachusetts. She married and moved to California in 1993, and then to Arkansas in 1996. The couple has three children. For 12 years, Lynn worked as an office manager for a doctor's clinic. In January 2011, she joined the DWS-Jonesboro Local Office, and was promoted to the Work Pays Case Manager in August of 2011.

Paige Galbraith was hired by the Jonesboro local office as a Workforce Specialist, TEA. Paige moved to Jonesboro from Blytheville, and graduated from ASU with a BA degree. She was previously employed as a Human Resource Manager. Paige joined the TANF unit at the DWS-Jonesboro Local Office as a TEA Case Manager in September 2011 after a year in the UI Section.

Kimberly Roberts, a Marianna, Arkansas native, was hired in October of 2011, as a TEA Workforce Specialist at the Jonesboro Local Office. She has a Bachelor's Degree in Education.

ROGERS DWS CENTER

Mary Coll is DWS Workforce Specialist TEA Case Manager for the Rogers DWS Center. She grew up in Fort Smith and graduated from the University of Arkansas. Mary began her career with the state in Saline County in 1983, working with the Division of Children and Family Services. She later worked with the Department of Human Services as a Family Support Specialist in Benton and Washington Counties. In January 2006, Mary moved from DHS to the Department of Workforce Services as a TEA Case Manager. Later that year, she relocated to Oregon and continued working as a TANF Case Manager for five years. Mary returned to DWS to work as a TANF Workforce Specialist in Rogers on October 17, 2011.

HOT SPRINGS DWS CENTER

Dean Gould is a Workforce Specialist for Work Pays, in the Hot Springs Workforce Center. He was born in Boonton, New Jersey, and graduated from St. John's University in Queens, New York, in 1984. Dean relocated from Colorado Springs, CO, in 2008 to be near his children, Gage, 15, and Kaylee, 14. Gage is a sophomore at Lake Hamilton High School, and Kaylee is an 8th grader at Hot Springs Middle School. Dean previously worked as a Disability Adjudicator for SSA for 2 years prior to joining Workforce in April 2011. His hobbies include hiking, fishing, watching sports on the big screen, and trying to keep up with two teenagers with driving permits.

TANF CASE MANAGEMENT TIPS

- To increase Work Pays awareness to participants, the Workforce Specialists should conduct initial interviews and exit interviews to convey what Work Pays financial bonuses and supportive services are available to the TEA participant for continuing employment.
- DWS can increase the WPR by increasing daily monitoring. WFS may assist by conducting peer reviews and conducting round table discussions on common errors.
- Case managers should consider using their voice mails to relay a message to their participants of times when they will be conducting interviews, home visits, and/or are out on leave to cut down on complaints that they are not answering their phone.
- Sanction Compliance Officers should set-up a task in "ANSWER" to remind them to apply the appropriate sanctions on all of their participants.
- The exception reports should be reviewed monthly to identify Workforce Specialists, by Worker ID, who habitually appear on these reports. These WFS's should complete a day-sheet to ensure that they are accurately using their time wisely, and that necessary follow-ups are made. These day-sheets should be given to supervisors for review.
- Case Managers should use their Outlook Calendar to assign tasks to remind them of case actions that need to be done. They can also add a task through ANSWER that will appear on their to-do-list in order to remind them of tasks pending, and necessary case actions to be taken.
- Case Managers may possibly set aside time daily to key activity hours.
- Case Managers can establish a case load spread sheet in order to ensure all case actions, such as assessments completed, sanctions applied, activity hours keyed, staffing scheduled and home visits completed timely.