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Temporary Assistance for Needy Families
Arkansas Department of Workforce Services

TANF eNews

January 2015

An Electronic Newsletter from the Arkansas Department of Workforce Services

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Welcome DWS Director: A New Beginning

By Phil Harris, Assistant Director, DWS-TANF

I begin the first newsletter of the new year with a big "Wishing you all a Happy New Year!!" I am sure you have all made aspirational New Year resolutions, both personally and professionally, and I wish you all the very best in successfully realizing them.

Here at work, we begin the new year with major work to do. Bringing the TANF eligibility over, integrating across DWS divisions, working with program initiatives like WIOA, and doing all this in a way that exemplifies the best in each one of us is the primary opportunity ahead of us in 2015. This requires strong, competent, and no-nonsense leadership that is willing to make bold decisions and changes. And we are glad to have such a leader with us at this time.

I welcome and introduce to you our new Director, Mr. Daryl Bassett. Mr. Bassett brings with him a distinguished and diverse record of career accomplishments in both public and private sectors. Some of you may already know him, have worked with him, or have read about his accomplishments in various publications.

Many of the initiatives that we are undertaking in 2015 require a visionary and a pragmatic strategist. An interdisciplinary understanding of people, process, culture, values, budget, technology, governance, and how best DWS-TANF can leverage these factors to better serve its customers is paramount to a successful 2015. This is, in a nutshell, what Mr. Bassett's leadership brings to the agency.

I have spoken highly of the TANF staff to him, of your willingness to work hard, constantly improve, and day-in and day-out give your very best to deliver positive outcomes for our clients. We have discussed how Productivity, Performance, and Accountability are not just buzz words. We both whole-heartedly agree on this, and we will be requiring everyone's cooperation.

Change is inevitable. Let us embrace the changes ahead of us and look forward to a dynamic 2015!!



ATTOP Update—T&D: Road Shows

Meet You at the TOP!

As we reported earlier, the ATTOP team started doing road shows this past October, taking the new system out to the field to demonstrate to users and spend time answering questions and listening to your feedback. This particular communication method appears to be really useful and provides a time to share ideas, concerns, and suggestions for everyone involved. When the road shows paused for the Christmas holiday, the team had provided a road show for about 15 field offices between mid-October and mid-December. If we have time and there is interest in those field offices that have not yet received a road show, the team may try to schedule a few more visits early this year.

Mr. Harris has traveled with the team for each presentation, and he is happy with the attention the team has generated. This has provided an excellent forum for discussing field office needs, concerns, and plans for the transition. The new, evolving service delivery model is of interest to everyone and a frequent topic of discussion.



Following the road shows at each field office, we have planned activities to help each office establish the organizational structure and processes to be ready for the new system when it is deployed. These activities are still in the planning phase and have not yet been implemented, although we expect that work to start soon.

Please keep sending us your questions and suggestions related to ATTOP. We appreciate your ideas and use them to help us understand what you need and want in a new system. Use the ATTOP email box to email us at ADWS.attopinfo@arkansas.gov with your concerns, suggestions, and ideas.

A man in a dark suit and tie is smiling and holding a red marker. He is standing in an office environment. The words "PROBLEM" and "SOLUTION" are written in large, red, hand-drawn letters on a white background. A red horizontal line is drawn across the word "PROBLEM", and the man is holding the marker at the end of this line, as if he has just finished drawing it. The background shows office desks, windows, and a door.

ATTOP Update–IT Development: UAT

Meet You at the TOP!

As we reported earlier, the ATTOP team moved the initial system module—Client Maintenance—into UAT (User Acceptance Testing) this month. The feedback we've received so far is encouraging and positive. We are encouraged that it is easy for users, so we must be on the right track there. And testers have identified only a few changes, which indicates to us that our design and quality control are appropriate and working well. Moving forward, we are working to involve all members of the QA team in UAT to provide a broader test for usability.

Client Maintenance screens accept basic information about applicants, such as identity, contact information, demographics, and general profile information. Users with access to do so can enter, view, change, and delete this data. Current UAT is testing this functionality.

We expect this initial round of UAT to complete this month. Then we start UAT for Intake and Eligibility Determination. Intake refers to accepting and processing TANF applications. Eligibility Determination is the process of identifying whether applicants are eligible for TANF assistance based on the information they provide and TANF policy.

In this evolving service delivery model, the intake process registers applicants and enters their information into the system. With enough information, the system indicates whether an applicant is eligible for cash assistance. It also identifies what information is missing so that workers can identify information and documentation applicants need to bring to DWS-TANF.

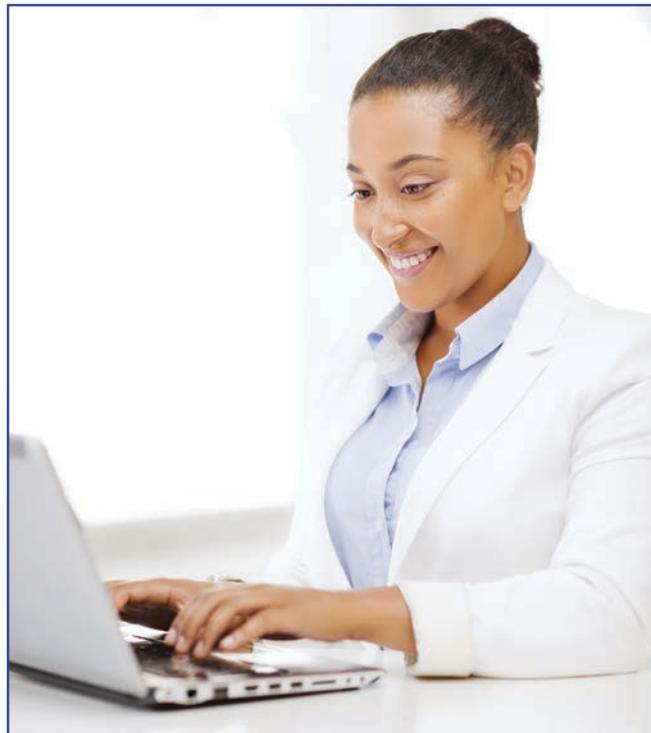
Intake includes receiving applications however they arrive. Some arrive electronically when applicants submit them through Access Arkansas or other potential web sites or when they scan and email them. Others arrive when applicants come into a local DWS office to request assistance and complete a paper application. Applicants can mail, scan and email, or fax their paper application to a local DWS office.

Workers enter information into the system for paper applications. The system assists in identifying missing information and verifications, and workers notify applicants in writing of what more they need to provide. For those applicants who qualify, workers schedule appointments for TABE and eligibility interviews and conduct face-to-face or telephonic interviews. Workers also identify and perform any other activities to prepare applicants for assessment interviews and Outcome Planning. Workers confirm or deny initial eligibility determinations and move the process forward efficiently.

CPU workers review applications that arrive electronically. They call applicants to conduct an initial eligibility interview and identify any missing information and documentation required. When CPU workers have no telephone number for applicants or are unable to reach applicants by telephone, they transfer the application to a local DWS office for the location that serves this applicant so they can perform the eligibility interview.

This is a high-level overview of intake and eligibility determination procedures as they could be. Details, including which roles are responsible for which activities and which forms are used, are not yet determined.

Please keep sending us your questions and suggestions related to ATTOP. We appreciate your ideas and use them to fill out project planning as needed. Use the ATTOP email box to email us at ADWS.attopinfo@arkansas.gov with your concerns, suggestions, and ideas. We look forward to hearing from you.



New Case Management Philosophy and Goals

By Dr. Beverly Ford, ASM Associates

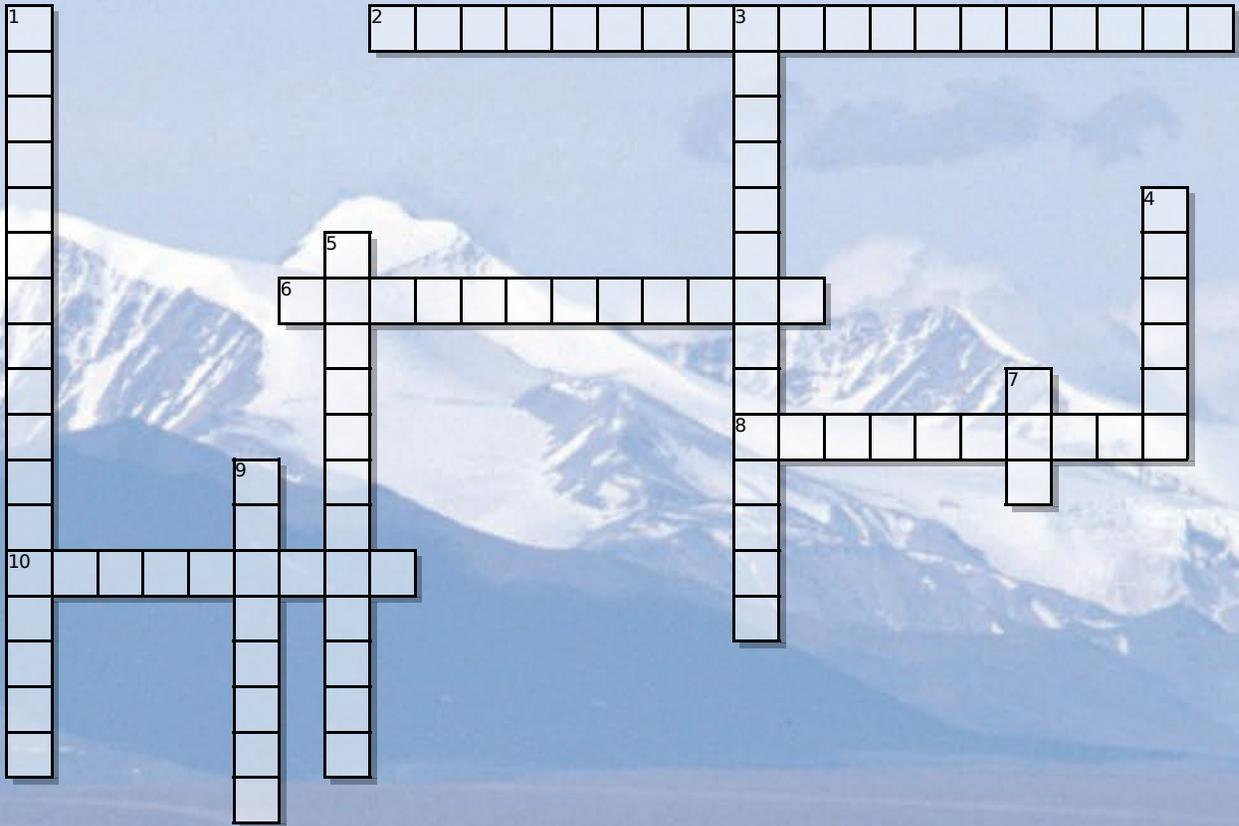
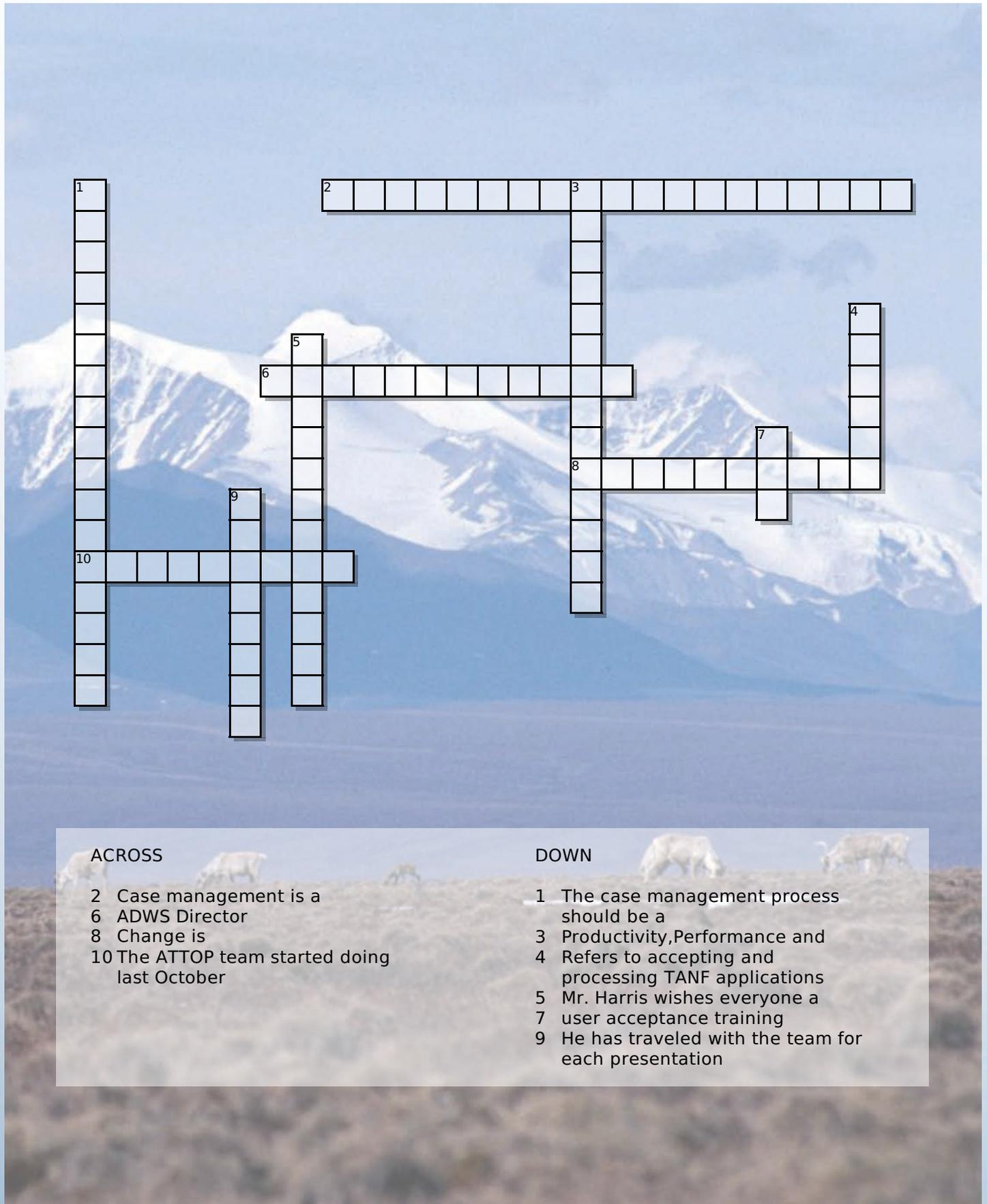
Case management provides an organized, structured method for moving participants through the process of change and toward the goal of self-sufficiency.

The process is based on the following beliefs:

- Case management is a **participant centered** rather than a **program centered** approach. It starts with the participant and uses their resources first and then the program's resources to try 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 the 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 process assessment, planning, problem solving, and finding resources. Case management seeks to have an active participant and not a passive one.
- Participants are responsible for the **outcome**. 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.

DWS has chosen to adopt this method because we believe strength-based case management is better for the participants and for those assisting them with the process. We anticipate this approach will help participants see the connection between the goals they set for themselves and their participation in activities. We also anticipate this approach creating higher success rates, particularly among those who have had difficulty taking part under our previous "compliance model."





ACROSS

- 2 Case management is a
- 6 ADWS Director
- 8 Change is
- 10 The ATTOP team started doing last October

DOWN

- 1 The case management process should be a
- 3 Productivity, Performance and
- 4 Refers to accepting and processing TANF applications
- 5 Mr. Harris wishes everyone a
- 7 user acceptance training
- 9 He has traveled with the team for each presentation