

Together,
we're making
our families
stronger.



Temporary Assistance for Needy Families
Arkansas Department of Workforce Services

TANF eNews

September 2014

An Electronic Newsletter from the Arkansas Department of Workforce Services

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ATTOP Update

Meet You at the TOP!

With the end of August, the ATTOP team completed its first full development sprint with a completion rate of about 94% of planned sprint activities. The team provided an overview of the project plan and a demonstration of the look and feel of the new system. Change leaders from DWS IT, TANF Central Office, and TANF field staff participated in this event that occurred during the first week of September. The Petit Jean release, which is expected to be rolled out in February, 2015 will include most of the functions currently in ANSWER, Mainframe, and WISE. The ANSWER Client Notebook functionality that many of you are familiar with was the focus of this demonstration. A summary of some of the features that have been built, or partially completed, and were shown include the following:



- User verification and authority to login and use the system
- Search for existing clients and cases
- Based on user security profile, the ability to view, create, and / or change –
 - o Client registration requiring bio and demographics information capture and maintenance
 - o Disability, health, and work participation characteristics
 - o Pregnancy, disability, and immunization information
 - o Financial information - income, expense, and resource
 - o Education and employment details
 - o Referrals
 - o Progressive and non-progressive sanctions
 - o Time limits
 - o (Absent) parent, deprivation, and good cause information

Not all screens for Client Maintenance were complete at the time of the demonstration, but the approach being taken was clearly evident. We are planning a similar event in October that includes application and budget processing. If you have any specific needs, or if you want to participate in the demo, please do not hesitate to contact us at the ADWS Attop email box, and your immediate supervisors.

(Continued on page 2)

ATTOP Update (*Continued*):

Another major milestone occurred near the end of August, with the availability of an IT system for the ATTOP team to use in development and testing. Because of that, the Client Maintenance module has moved into Systems Integration Testing (SIT), which is currently underway. When SIT is successfully completed, the module will move to UAT (User Acceptance Testing).

A primary focus on the system at this time is usability. Usability is the extent to which users for whom a system is designed can use the system to perform work easily and efficiently. Factors that influence user-centered design include the following:

- Learnability—Users can use the system to perform basic tasks relatively easily the first time they see it (this is often referred to as “intuitive”)
- Memorability—Users can establish proficiency again, fairly quickly after not having used the system for some period of time
- Efficiency—Users can perform assigned tasks quickly and accurately
- Feedback—Users can and are encouraged to send feedback directly to the development team with suggestions for system improvement from most pages
- Satisfaction—Users find the system pleasant to work with



You may have noticed that these factors are relative—that is, they can only be measured when compared to something else, such as legacy systems. And most of them are highly subjective. Nonetheless, they do provide goals that the team can use to make the new system work as well as possible for those who use it.

Design decisions to enhance usability range from things such as following consistent patterns in wording of button and field labels and page and section headers, sequencing, and layout to ensuring that users can do what they need to do with a keyboard, that is, with no requirement for a mouse. Another important consideration is to design for all users including those with disabilities such as color blindness, blindness, deafness, and so on. The ATTOP team is leveraging research and millions of dollars already spent by other governments (so DWS does not have to spend) to establish usability principles and techniques as a starting point to creating usability in your system for you.

All of these design principles and ideas require knowledge of users and the tasks they are expected to perform with the new system. This includes understanding user experience with similar systems, user locations and environmental conditions, and user requirements. This is one of the reasons we’re asking you for your input—ideas, questions, and suggestions. These help us understand where you are and what you need in this new system.

Recently, Director Harris distributed information to TANF employees about the project plan, schedule, system, and planned releases. Be sure to keep up with all information coming your way so you know what to expect and how to prepare yourself for the changes coming your way.

In addition to the activities described above, TANF back office functions to support field operations are currently in various stages of being established or extended. These include EBT, Overpayments, Collections, QA, Systems Support, and Reporting, Research & Statistics.

There is still much work to do to prepare for this major transition, and we hope that each of you will contribute. We need your ideas, questions, suggestions, and assistance.

Many of you have already used the ATTOP email box to communicate your thoughts about ATTOP and transition—please continue to do that by emailing to ADWS.attopinfo@arkansas.gov. Thanks!

Leadership Corner



From the Assistant Director

It's September! In America it's the month we celebrate Labor Day and traditionally think of as "back to school" time and the beginning of football season. The weather is changing, but the magnitude of work and responsibility that we share cannot merely be tied to a change of seasons. In Arkansas TANF, our goal is straightforward—a shift from work participation and caseload management to a focus on employment and the successful engagement leading to the economic well-being of families.

Poor outcomes, such as TANF recipients with low income jobs, little career progression, and recidivism have a negative impact on the customer as well as the broader community. It is time to seriously reevaluate and redesign our business model!

We are thoroughly evaluating and revising every aspect of our program in support of this new focus on outcomes. We look forward to rolling out our new IT system, completing the program transition, implementing new

case management training, providing more statistics and characteristics of our caseload, along with research and proven practices.

It is my hope to provide the leadership and a clear sense of direction needed during this transition as we make the leap to stronger employment strategies, career pathways, improved assessments, and other workforce development efforts. Thanks to every committed TANF workforce specialist, program area coordinator, supervisor, and support staff! Keep embracing the change!!

Good to Great

By Tarzetta Parks-Thrower, Trainer

Jim Collins gathered a prestige research team consisting of twenty individuals to build the concepts discussed in *Good to Great*. *Good to Great* came as a prequel to Mr. Collins' *Built to Last* study. In order to establish the levels of transition from good to great, Mr. Collins suggests having a clear understanding of the *Built to Last* key ideas. These key ideas consist of the following steps as outlined in Chapter 9 of *Good to Great*:

1. Clock Building, Not Time Telling—which says an organization should be built to last over long periods of time. The organization should not be built around one single leader or idea.
2. Genius of AND—this idea means an organization should work effectively with two or more extremes at any level at the same time. An example provided by Mr. Collins is instead of choosing **A OR B**, the company must learn how to use the **A AND B**.
3. Core Ideology—core purposes must be developed and instilled into each member of the team. This is what each team member should operate by despite their position or title, because this ideology is what will operate the organization for years to come.
4. Preserve the Core/Stimulate Progress—changes will come, but the organization should be able to adapt based on the core ideology developed for the organization.

The Directors and Assistant Directors of the Department of Workforce Services are striving to ensure our organization is outlined by these ideas to make our transition from *Good to Great* a smooth ride. As staff of this agency, it is important that we govern ourselves by these key ideas in our individual capacity of work within the agency. After all, as individuals we want to be attached to something that is not only good, but something that is GREAT, right?

What are the DWS Mission and Vision Statements? What are the Four Purposes of TANF? These are questions we should ask ourselves to ensure every choice we make while performing our job duties reflects our agency's core ideology. Taking this personal evaluation will assist you in your personal transition from *good to great* as well as ensuring our organization, DWS, shifts from being a good organization to a GREAT one!

Success Stories



Shunta Shaw,
TANF Participant

Shunta Shaw **Pine Bluff Workforce Center** **Jefferson County** **TEA and Work Pays**

Shunta Shaw's TEA case opened 11/29/2011. At that time, Ms. Shaw, mother of three young children, was four months pregnant and in a difficult relationship with the father of her children. She depended on her children's father but determined to become independent once they separated. Her famous words were, **"I just want a job!"**

Shunta Shaw was willing to participate in any work activity suggested. Her first assignment was Work Experience (WEX) at the HOPE Resource Center, a center for battered women. She volunteered extra hours even though she was not being paid. She was an inspiration to several young women as she continued to say, **"I just want a job!"**

Despite her significant barriers, including a lack of child care for three children, another child on the way, taking care of her five-year old sister, health issues with her eye, domestic violence, and transportation, she wanted to take Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) classes. On 9/7/2012, she was referred for CNA training. TANF paid for the CNA Training and provided Supportive Services for the participant's child care.

By 9/25/2012, she successfully completed her CNA requirements and was re-assigned to WEX at Olympic Health Care to prepare for the CNA State Board Exam, which she passed in October of 2012. In March of 2013, Ms. Shaw was hired at Davis Life Center, a nursing home, where she still works. Her case manager is proud of her for her hard work and dedication in completing the work experience and training skills she needed to get a job. Ms. Shaw is now on a waiting list to purchase her own home through Section 8. As a Work Pays participant, she continues to represent the TANF Program positively and show others what TANF can do for those who want to succeed.



Dr. Larry Fincher, DDS,
Employer Partner, with Ruby
Testerman, TEA Participant

Ruby Testerman **Bigelow, Arkansas** **Perry County (Russellville Local Office)** **Transitional Employment Assistance (TEA)**

"You are never too old to accomplish your goals," says Ruby Testerman. A true success story of the TEA program, Ruby found herself unemployed in January 2013 as a single parent with two children to support. Losing her management position in healthcare services was just another obstacle in life to overcome; and Ruby is no stranger to obstacles. Ruby had previously completed a GED program since dropping out of school after only the 9th grade and has worked to overcome prior substance abuse issues. Upon entering the program, Ruby took full advantage of this period between jobs and worked to obtain a **Career Readiness Certificate**. It was during this process that Ruby determined it was time to fulfill her lifelong dream of becoming a Dental Assistant. She applied and was accepted into the Dental Assistant Program

at Eastern College of Health Vocations. Classes began May 2013 and by December 2013, Ruby had started her externship with Dr. Larry Fincher at Professional Dental Care. Dr. Fincher was extremely impressed with Ruby's work performance and kept her on after the externship had ended through On the Job Training.

On August 1, 2014 Ruby graduated from the Eastern College of Health Vocations and walked across the stage to receive her diploma as an honor graduate on the Director's List. According to Ruby, support has been vital in achieving her goals. Ruby acknowledged her mother when stating she "couldn't have done it without her." With help and encouragement, Ruby is building a foundation to become financially independent and completely self sufficient. Ruby believed in herself and with the support of the TEA program, as well as her mother, she was able to turn her dream into reality!

Spotlight

Camden Local Office: Good to Great

By Don Childers, Program Operations Manager

We are pleased to announce that, based upon the cumulative results from the on-site Quality Assurance reviews and Work Participation Rates during the rating period September 2013 through February 2014, the ASK (Assessments-Sanctions-Keying) Award has been awarded to the Camden local office.

The award recognizes local offices with exemplary performance in Assessments-Sanctions-Keying.



Camden office, TANF Staff pictured left to right: Audrianna Nutt; Latonya Thrower; Glory Hardy; Cynthia Martin; Jeannette McDaniels (PAC); Phil Harris (TANF Assistant Director).

August 2014 Puzzle Contest Winners

Winners of the puzzle contest in last month's newsletter are:

- Lindsey Watt
- Michelle Ryan
- Carla Harrison

Congratulations!! Great job!

We have a new puzzle in this issue of our newsletter. The first three readers to solve the puzzle and send the solution to the ATTOP mailbox, ADWS.attopinfo@arkansas.gov, will be recognized in the October issue of the newsletter.

ATTOP Puzzle 3 Solution

The following list identifies the words that make up the solution for the puzzle that appeared in last month's newsletter:

1. Move the remaining TANF functions to DWS: **Transition**
2. Way to talk about TEA as self-sufficient: **Engagement**
3. Name for transition and IT improvement: **ATTOP**
4. A mental image: **Vision**
5. Can be done: **Possible**
6. Manages our information: **IT System**
7. Connect again: **Reconnect**
8. Focus on following the rules: **Compliance**
9. Above average: **Great**
10. Coordinated public signs: **Signage**

ATTOP Puzzle 4

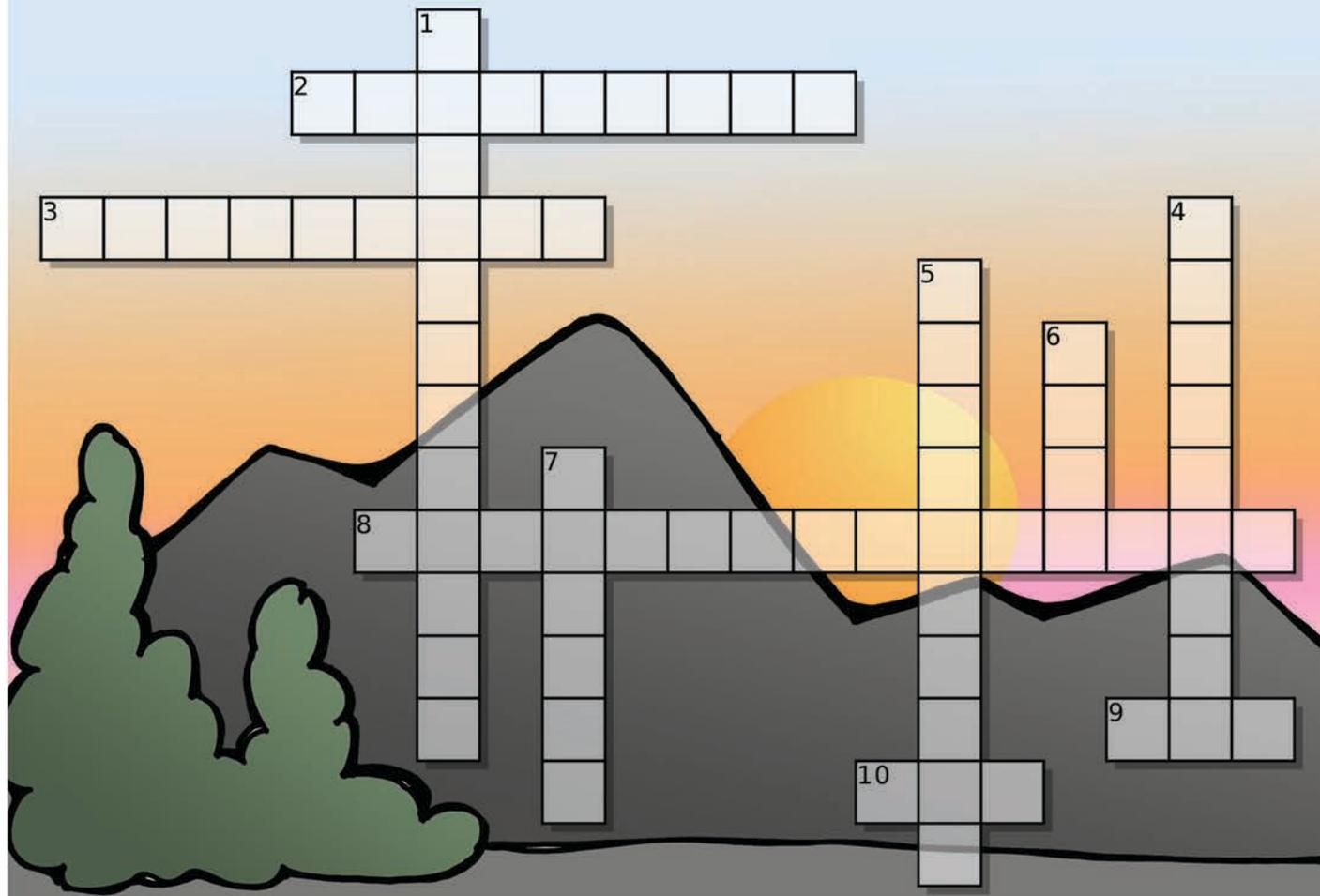
The puzzle in this issue of our newsletter (next page) is created from the articles that provide transition information throughout the newsletter. You can find clues to the puzzle solution within the articles. When you solve the puzzle, follow the instructions below and email to ADWS.attopinfo@arkansas.gov along with your feedback about the newsletter, ATTOP, and anything else you'd like to discuss.

1. Use a list of numbers 1 – 10 and write your solution for each clue by the appropriate number
2. Add your signature
3. Click Send to email it

The solution to this month's puzzle, along with the names of the contest winners, will be published in the October newsletter.

ATTOP

Meet You At The TOP!



ACROSS

- 2 A primary focus on the system
- 3 "Keep _ the change!"
- 8 Goal of Arkansas TANF
- 9 Certificate completed by Shunta
- 10 Genius of _

DOWN

- 1 Users find the system pleasant to work with
- 4 Perry County's Success Story
- 5 Author of Good to Great
- 6 Quoted, "I just want a job!"
- 7 Local office awarded the ASK