APPENDIX C

SITE VISIT INTERVIEW GUIDES

IDENTIFYING PROMISING TANF DIVERSION PRACTICES STUDY

SITE VISIT GUIDE: GENERAL INTRODUCTION

Thank you for taking the time to speak with me today. My name is [X], and I am a [TITLE] with Mathematica Policy Research, Inc. (MPR), a nonpartisan research firm. The Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation (OPRE) under the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) has contracted with MPR to conduct a study of state policies and programs designed to provide assistance to families before approving their application for ongoing cash assistance through TANF. Through this study, we will examine the types of strategies states and local offices are using.

During our conversation, I would like to hear about your experiences with these applicant diversion and employment strategies, and will also ask you your opinions. I will ask you about (1) the purpose of the program and how it was developed, (2) details of the program and the kind of data kept on participants, and (3) your perceptions of the successes and challenges in implementing and operating the program.

Everything you say is confidential. The information we gather will be used to write a report about states' experiences implementing these activities, including their successes, challenges, and lessons learned. Our report will describe experiences and views expressed by staff across states, but comments will not be attributed to specific individuals or states. Staff members will not be quoted by name.

Do you have any questions before we get started?

IDENTIFYING PROMISING TANF DIVERSION PRACTICES STUDY

SITE VISIT GUIDE – ADMINISTRATOR

A. Goal/Purpose

1. What is the primary goal or purpose of the work-related application requirement/job search program? Have the goals of the requirement evolved or changed over time? If so, in what ways and why?

2. What was the impetus for implementing the work-related application requirement/job search program? Was it imposed in response to a change in federal/state/local policy? If so, how does it address the policy or policy change?

3. For pre-TANF job search with cash assistance program: Why did you decide to establish a separate short-term financial assistance program with work requirements?

4. For older work-related application requirements/job search program: How has the Deficit Reduction Act (DRA) or release of the subsequent federal regulations affected the original work-related application requirement/job search program?

5. For office with multiple work-related application requirements: How do the different applicant requirements complement each other?

6. Please describe the requirements and/or programs available to TANF applicants. Who do they target and what is required or available?

B. Development Process

1. When was the work-related application requirement/job search program first implemented?

2. What were the start up issues and challenges, if any?

3. What was the local office's role in developing the work-related application requirement/job search program?

4. What funds are used to support and implement the work-related application requirement/job search program [federal, state MOE, or separate state funds]? Why are these types of funds used? Has the source of funding for the program changed over time? If so, how and why?

5. How much funding is currently allocated for the work-related application requirement/job search program? How long is the funding period?

6. What kinds of support did the local office receive from the state or other local offices in implementing the work-related application requirement/job search program? [e.g., rely on experiences of other local offices/states; receive resources from the state]

7. How much discretion do local offices have in implementing the work-related application requirement/job search program? Do local offices have discretion over any of the following:

- Eligibility requirements
- Screening process
- Selecting partners
- Determining types of job search assistance or services

C. Tracking Applicant/Participant and Program Outcomes

1. Where is applicant/participant information stored? Is it included in the TANF administrative data system or a separate system? How are applicants/participants tracked during their participation in the work-related application requirement/job search program? Who is responsible for entering and tracking this information?

2. Are there any applicants/participants whose information is not entered into the data system (e.g., applicants/participants that do not complete the application process, applicants/participants that do not complete the job search requirement)?

3. Describe the data collected on TANF applicants/participants who do not end up receiving TANF. [collect any available reports]

- What demographic data are collected?

- Is there information on the services provided to these participants?

- What information is collected on participant outcomes, including employment and TANF receipt?

- Is it possible to determine whether a participant reapplied for TANF or received TANF benefits after participation in the program/activity?

- What information is available on employment, including type of employment, wages, or hours for this population?

4. How accessible are the data? How long have the data been collected?

5. How are the data used? To determine eligibility for later TANF eligibility? To monitor program outcomes?

6. What are the challenges associated with collecting these data?

7. How many families who start the TANF application process or enter the pre-TANF job search program do not continue? For what reasons? What are the characteristics of these families?

8. What are the employment outcomes for applicants/participants participating in the work-related application requirement/upfront job search program? What were the characteristics of applicants who obtained work during the work-related application requirement/job search program?

9. How has the work-related application requirement/upfront job search program affected the office's TANF caseload? To what extent do TANF applicants not receive cash assistance through TANF as a result of the work-related application requirement/job search program?

10. For Work-Related Application Requirements: What percentage of applicants enroll in TANF after completing the work-related application requirement? What percentage of applicants who do not meet the application requirement reapply to TANF at a later date?

11. For Pre-TANF Job Search Programs: What percentage of participants (a) finish the program, (b) find employment, (c) transfer onto TANF, (d) do not complete the program, or (e) reapply to TANF?

12. How has the requirement/program affected the work participation rate? Did it have the intended effect? Why or why not?

D. Successes, Challenges

1. Was the work-related application requirement/job search program implemented as expected? How did implementation differ from what was expected? Why?

2. Which aspects of the program/activity worked well and which aspects did not? Why?

3. What are the major challenges in implementing the program/activity? How were these challenges addressed?

4. To what extent is the work-related application requirement/job search program meeting its purpose/goals? What information/data is this assessment based on?

5. Are you satisfied with the numbers and outcomes of applicants participating in the work-related application requirement/job search program? Why or why not?

6. How has the program improved your ability to meet the TANF program changes resulting from DRA and the new federal regulations?

7. What, if any, unexpected positive or negative consequences resulted from the work-related application requirement/job search program? Explain.

8. What are the main lessons learned from your experience implementing the requirement/program? What lessons were learned regarding:
- Eligibility/screening process
- Stringency of penalties
- Funding
- Staffing
- Orientation
- Support services

9. What would you have done differently in implementing your applicant program or requirement? What advice would you give to another state or local office considering this type of program/requirement?

10. Are there new programs or approaches being considered by the state [local office]? Please describe.

11. Is there a different approach you would like to see the state/office take with respect to diverting TANF applicants and/or preparing them for the work-participation requirements? Please describe.

IDENTIFYING PROMISING TANF DIVERSION PRACTICES STUDY

SITE VISIT GUIDE – SUPERVISOR

A. Goal/Purpose

1. What is the primary goal or purpose of the work-related application requirement/job search program? Have the goals of the requirement evolved or changed over time? If so, in what ways and why?

2. For older work-related application requirements/job search program: How has the Deficit Reduction Act (DRA) or release of the subsequent federal regulations affected the original work-related application requirement/job search program?

3. For office with multiple work-related application requirements: How do the different applicant requirements complement each other?

B. Development Process

1. What were the start up issues and challenges, if any?

2. What was the local office's role in developing the work-related application requirement/job search program?

3. What kinds of support did the local office receive from the state or other local offices in implementing the work-related application requirement/job search program? [e.g., rely on experiences of other local offices/states; receive resources from the state]

4. How much discretion do local offices have in implementing the work-related application requirement/job search program? Do local offices have discretion over any of the following:

-       Eligibility requirements
-       Screening process
-       Selecting partners
-       Determining types of job search assistance or services

C. TANF Application Process

1. Please describe the sequence of steps in the TANF application process and the specific timing of required activities such as (a) attending an orientation, (b) completing an employability plan, or (c) conducting an upfront job search?

   Specifically:

-       What steps in the TANF/pre-TANF application process occur before and/or between each work-related application requirement, or before the job search program?

-　　　　How much of the TANF/pre-TANF application is completed before the work-related application requirement/job search program?

-　　　　Is a determination of TANF/pre-TANF eligibility made before an applicant completes the work-related application requirement/job search program?

2. What is the typical amount of time between first entrance to the welfare office and each work-related requirement?

3. How do applicants first hear about the work-related application requirements, and from whom?　What is the message conveyed to applicants regarding the work-related application requirements?

4. Is the requirement/program mandatory for all applicants?　If not, what type of welfare applicant does the requirement/program target?　Why is this population targeted?　What information is gathered from the applicant to determine whether they are required to complete the requirement/program?

5. Are any applicants exempted from the requirement/program?　How much discretion do program staff have in determining eligibility and granting exemptions from the requirement/program?　What is the process for determining whether someone should be exempt from the requirement/program?

6. For older program/requirement:　Have the eligibility requirements changed over time?　How?　Why?

D.　Orientation Requirement (ask if applicable)

1. What is the purpose of the orientation session?　What information is covered?　Are other work-related application requirements explained during the orientation?　What is the format for the orientation session?

2. Who conducts the orientation sessions?　How long are they?　Are they group or individual sessions?　How often are they held?

3. How are orientations scheduled for applicants—i.e., are dates and times assigned or do applicants have some input into the scheduling process?

4. What is the process for tracking applicant participation in the orientation session?　Approximately what proportion of applicants attends orientation sessions?

5. How much outreach is conducted to encourage attendance at the orientation sessions?　Is there additional follow-up for applicants that do not attend the first scheduled orientation or subsequent sessions?

6. What is the required time frame for an applicant to attend an orientation session?　For the average applicant, how much time is there between their initial visit to the welfare office and orientation?

E. Employability Plan Requirement (ask if applicable)

1. Are applicants required to complete the employability plan before being approved for assistance?

2. How are meetings to complete an employability plan scheduled? How many visits are required to complete the employability plan? Where is the plan completed?

3. How much outreach is conducted to encourage completion of an employability plan? Is there additional follow-up for applicants that do not complete an employability plan?

4. Who assists the applicant in preparing the employability plan? What is their background/training?

5. What information is collected to develop the plan? How is the plan developed? In what ways and how often is it modified?

6. How is the plan used by staff or customers? What follow-up activities occur after creation of the employability plan?

F. Job Search Application Requirement or Pre-TANF Job Search Program (ask if applicable)

1. What job search activities must an applicant/participant complete before their application is approved? Or as part of the pre-TANF job search program?

-        How is the job search requirement defined?   Are applicants/participants required to contact a specific number of employers, spend a certain number of weeks looking for a job, attend job search classes or workshops?

-        What is the maximum/minimum amount of time the applicant/participant has to participate in job search activities? What is the average amount of time the typical customer spends in the activity?

-        Are these requirements the same for all applicants/participants? Explain.

-        How does the job search requirement/program differ from the job search requirement for TANF recipients?

2. How much outreach is conducted to encourage participation in job search activities? Is there additional follow-up for applicants/participants who do not participate in job search activities?

3. What resources are provided to assist applicants/participants with their job search?

-        Are there computer labs? Phones, fax machines, copy machines, printers, and other office equipment?   Does the program provide transportation assistance for job interviews? What resources are most useful for clients?

-        When are the resources available? Where are they located? How often do applicants/participants use the resources?   Is there a staff person available to assist

applicants/participants in using the resources? Is there someone available to assist customers with the computers?

\- How are these job search resources different from the resources available to TANF recipients?

\- Who provides these resources?

4. Are job search classes or workshops provided for applicants/participants?

\- If so, are the classes/workshops mandatory or voluntary? How many classes/workshops are required?

\- What topics are covered in the classes? What is the format of the classes? How long are the classes?

\- Who teaches the classes? Where are they provided?

\- How often are classes provided?

\- How many applicants attend a typical job search session?

\- How do the job search classes differ from classes offered to TANF recipients?

5. Do applicants/participants receive one-on-one job search assistance?

\- If so, who provides this assistance and where? How much time is typically spent with each applicant/participant? What type of assistance is requested by applicants/participants most often?

\- Are applicants/participants provided with job leads?

6. Are incentives offered to the applicant/participant for finding work during the upfront (pre-TANF) period?

7. Is a case manager assigned to each applicant/participant during the period they are meeting the requirement or participating in the program? If so, what is the case manager's role? How much and what kind of contact does the case manager have with applicants/participants? What is the purpose of this contact? How many cases are assigned to each case manager?

8. Please describe the staffing structure for this initiative. Specifically:

\- Who within the local office has responsibility for managing the job search requirement/program? Did the office hire new staff or rely on existing staff?

\- What is the experience/background of staff involved? What other responsibilities does this person have?

\- How much time do staff spend on the work-related application requirement/job search program?

\- Have there been changes in staffing over time?

\- What kind of training do staff connected to the requirement/activity receive?

9. To what extent do other staff not directly connected to the program have knowledge or information about the work-related application requirement/job search program to inform applicants/clients? What kind of training do they receive?

10. To what extent does the program/activity rely on staff from partner agencies? What are the responsibilities of these agencies?

G. Financial Assistance

1. Do applicants/participants receive financial assistance while participating in the job search requirement/program? (If office offers financial assistance but through lump-sum program, ask these questions as well)

-        If yes, what is the purpose of providing this assistance?

-        Are there conditions for receiving this assistance?

-        How is cash assistance provided (e.g., cash, voucher, vendor payment)? Do case managers have discretion in deciding the form of assistance?

-        Are there restrictions on how the assistance can be used? Do case managers have discretion in defining how the assistance can be used?

-        How is the amount of financial assistance determined? Do case managers have discretion in deciding the amount of financial assistance or the length of its receipt? What is the maximum amount of time a family can receive assistance through the program? What is the maximum amount of financial assistance a family can receive? How does this amount differ from the amount they can receive under TANF?

-        How often is the financial assistance provided to applicants/participants?

-        Is this assistance treated as assistance or non-assistance? Why?

H. Other Forms of Assistance

1. Do applicants/participants receive any support services while completing the work-related application requirement/job search program? For example, a transportation stipend, food assistance, or other assistance? How are applicants informed of these services? How many applicants/participants utilize these services? How do these services compare to support services available through TANF? How are they funded?

2. Are applicants/participants participating in the work-related application requirement/job search program eligible for childcare assistance? How are applicants enrolled in childcare assistance? When does this assistance become available? How much assistance is available? How does the assistance compare to the childcare assistance available through TANF? What proportion of applicants/participants utilize child care assistance?

3. What is the status of an applicant's/participant's food stamp application while completing the work-related application requirement/job search program? When is the

food stamp application filed and approved? Is approval of the food stamp application dependent on completion of the requirements?

4. What is the status of an applicant's/participant's Medicaid application while completing the work-related application requirement/job search program? When is the Medicaid application filed and approved? Is approval of the Medicaid application dependent on completion of the requirements?

I. Requirement/Program Implications for TANF

For Work-Related Application Requirements (i.e., job search, orientation, or employability plan):

1. At what point is the application for TANF approved or denied based on the work-related application requirement (e.g., complete employability plan; after x months in pre-TANF activities; after complete x number of employer contacts)? What happens when an applicant finishes the work-related application requirement?

2. What are the consequences for applicants who do not complete each work-related application requirement? What happens to their current TANF application or their application for other services? What are the implications for their future TANF eligibility, time on TANF, and sanctions?

3. For Job Search Application Requirements: What happens to applicants who find a job during the job search requirement period? Are they transferred to a TANF work program? What assistance or supports are available for participants who find a job as a result of the job search requirement/program? Are these applicants eligible for earned income disregards? Are the earned income disregards for applicants different than those available for TANF recipients? If so, how do they differ?

For Pre-TANF Job Search Programs:

4. What is the maximum amount of time an individual can participate in the program?

5. How does participation in the program affect participants' eligibility for TANF or their time limit? Does financial assistance received during the job search program affect an applicant's eligibility for TANF cash benefits?

6. If still eligible for TANF, what triggers the participant's transfer to TANF (for example, exhausting their time in the program; successfully participating for x hours per week; obtaining employment)? Is this different for different types of participants? Describe.

7. If eligible for TANF, please describe the transfer process. Specifically, are participants required to reapply for TANF? If so, do they need to complete the entire application process? If not, how are participants transferred onto TANF?

8. What events trigger the exit of a participant from the pre-TANF job search program (without making them eligible for TANF)?

9. What are the consequences for applicants who do not complete the required activities of the program? What happens to their TANF application or their application for other services? What are the implications for their future TANF eligibility, time on TANF, and sanctions?

10. What happens to applicants who find a job during the program? Does the program provide assistance or supports for participants who find a job as a result of the job search requirement/program? How does this compare to the assistance and supports available for TANF clients who find jobs? Are these applicants eligible for earned income disregards? Are these applicants eligible for Transitional Medical Assistance or Transitional Food Stamp benefits (if offered by the state)? How does their eligibility for transitional benefits differ from the eligibility of TANF recipients?

11. Does the financial assistance received during the job search requirement/program count towards their TANF time limit?

J.   Tracking Applicant/Participant and Program Outcomes

1. How are applicants/participants tracked during their participation in the work-related application requirement/job search program? Who is responsible for entering and tracking this information?

2. Are there any applicants/participants whose information is not entered into the data system (e.g., applicants/participants that do not complete the application process, applicants/participants that do not complete the job search requirement)?

3. Describe the data collected on TANF applicants/participants who do not end up receiving TANF. [collect any available reports]

4. How accessible are the data? How long have the data been collected?

5. What are the challenges associated with collecting these data?

6. How many families who start the TANF application process or enter the pre-TANF job search program do not continue? For what reasons? What are the characteristics of these families?

7. What are the employment outcomes for applicants/participants participating in the work-related application requirement/upfront job search program? What were the characteristics of applicants who obtained work during the work-related application requirement/job search program?

8. For Work-Related Application Requirements: What percentage of applicants enroll in TANF after completing the work-related application requirement? What percentage of applicants who do not meet the application requirement reapply to TANF at a later date?

9. For Pre-TANF Job Search Programs: What percentage of participants (a) finish the program, (b) find employment, (c) transfer onto TANF, (d) do not complete the program, or (e) reapply to TANF?

K. Successes, Challenges

1. Was the work-related application requirement/job search program implemented as expected? How did implementation differ from what was expected? Why?

2. Which aspects of the program/activity worked well and which aspects did not? Why?

3. What are the major challenges in implementing the program/activity? How were these challenges addressed?

4. To what extent is the work-related application requirement/job search program meeting its purpose/goals? What information/data is this assessment based on?

5. Are you satisfied with the numbers and outcomes of applicants participating in the work-related application requirement/job search program? Why or why not?

6. How has the program improved your ability to meet the TANF program changes resulting from DRA and the new federal regulations?

7. What, if any, unexpected positive or negative consequences resulted from the work-related application requirement/job search program? Explain.

8. What are the main lessons learned from your experience implementing the requirement/program? What lessons were learned regarding:

- Eligibility/screening process
- Stringency of penalties
- Funding
- Staffing
- Orientation
- Support services

9. What would you have done differently in implementing your applicant program or requirement? What advice would you give to another state or local office considering this type of program/requirement?

10. Is there a different approach you would like to see the state/office take with respect to diverting TANF applicants and/or preparing them for the work-participation requirements? Please describe.

IDENTIFYING PROMISING TANF DIVERSION PRACTICES STUDY

SITE VISIT GUIDE – LINE STAFF

Background:

What is your experience/background?

How much time do you spend on the work-related application requirement/job search program?

What other responsibilities do you have?

What kind of training do staff connected to the requirement/activity receive?

A. Goal/Purpose of Requirement/Program

1. What is the primary goal or purpose of the work-related application requirement/job search program? Have the goals of the requirement evolved or changed over time? If so, in what ways and why?

2. For office with multiple work-related application requirements: How do the different applicant requirements complement each other?

B. Development Process

1. What were the start up issues and challenges, if any?

2. What kinds of support did the local office receive from the state or other local offices in implementing the work-related application requirement/job search program? [e.g., rely on experiences of other local offices/states; receive resources from the state]

C. TANF Application Process

1. Please describe the sequence of steps in the TANF application process and the specific timing of required activities such as (a) attending an orientation, (b) completing an employability plan, or (c) conducting an upfront job search?

    Specifically:

-       What steps in the TANF/pre-TANF application process occur before and/or between each work-related application requirement, or before the job search program?

-       How much of the TANF/pre-TANF application is completed before the work-related application requirement/job search program?

\-   Is a determination of TANF/pre-TANF eligibility made before an applicant completes the work-related application requirement/job search program?

2. What is the typical amount of time between first entrance to the welfare office and each work-related requirement?

3. How do applicants first hear about the work-related application requirements, and from whom? What is the message conveyed to applicants regarding the work-related application requirements?

4. Are any applicants exempted from the requirement/program? How much discretion do program staff have in determining eligibility and granting exemptions from the requirement/program? What is the process for determining whether someone should be exempt from the requirement/program?

D. Orientation Requirement   (ask if applicable)

1. What is the purpose of the orientation session? What information is covered? Are other work-related application requirements explained during the orientation? What is the format for the orientation session?

2. How long are the orientation sessions? Are they group or individual sessions? How often are they held?

3. How are orientations scheduled for applicants—i.e., are dates and times assigned or do applicants have some input into the scheduling process?

4. What is the process for tracking applicant participation in the orientation session? Approximately what proportion of applicants attends orientation sessions?

5. How much outreach is conducted to encourage attendance at the orientation sessions? Is there additional follow-up for applicants that do not attend the first scheduled orientation or subsequent sessions?

6. What is the required time frame for an applicant to attend an orientation session? For the average applicant, how much time is there between their initial visit to the welfare office and orientation?

E. Employability Plan Requirement

1. Are applicants required to complete the employability plan before being approved for assistance?

2. How are meetings to complete an employability plan scheduled? How many visits are required to complete the employability plan? Where is the plan completed?

3. How much outreach is conducted to encourage completion of an employability plan? Is there additional follow-up for applicants that do not complete an employability plan?

4. What is your role in preparing the employability plan?

5. What information is collected to develop the plan? How is the plan developed? In what ways and how often is it modified?

6. How is the plan used by staff or customers?   What follow-up activities occur after creation of the employability plan?

F.   Job Search Application Requirement or Pre-TANF Job Search Program

1. What job search activities must an applicant/participant complete before their application is approved? Or as part of the pre-TANF job search program?

-        How is the job search requirement defined?   Are applicants/participants required to contact a specific number of employers, spend a certain number of weeks looking for a job, attend job search classes or workshops?

-        What is the maximum/minimum amount of time the applicant/participant has to participate in job search activities? What is the average amount of time the typical customer spends in the activity?

-        Are these requirements the same for all applicants/participants? Explain.

-        How does the job search requirement/program differ from the job search requirement for TANF recipients?

2. How are applicants/participants informed of the requirement/program?   Is there an orientation session to inform applicants/participants of the requirement/program?

3. How much outreach is conducted to encourage participation in job search activities? Is there additional follow-up for applicants/participants who do not participate in job search activities?

4. What resources are provided to assist applicants/participants with their job search?

-        Are there computer labs? Phones, fax machines, copy machines, printers, and other office equipment?   Does the program provide transportation assistance for job interviews? What resources are most useful for clients?

-        When are the resources available? Where are they located? How often do applicants/participants use the resources? Is there a staff person available to assist applicants/participants in using the resources? Is there someone available to assist customers with the computers?

-        How are these job search resources different from the resources available to TANF recipients?

-        Who provides these resources?

5. Are job search classes or workshops provided for applicants/participants?

-        If so, are the classes/workshops mandatory or voluntary?   How many classes/workshops are required?

-        What topics are covered in the classes? What is the format of the classes?
How long are the classes?

-        Who teaches the classes? Where are they provided?

-        How often are classes provided?

-        How many applicants attend a typical job search session?

-        How do the job search classes differ from classes offered to TANF recipients?

     6. Do applicants/participants receive one-on-one job search assistance?

-        If so, who provides this assistance and where? How much time is typically
spent with each applicant/participant?   What type of assistance is requested by
applicants/participants most often?

-        Are applicants/participants provided with job leads?

     7. Are incentives offered to the applicant/participant for finding work during the upfront
(pre-TANF) period?

     8. If a case manager: What is your role with applicant/participant? How much and what
kind of contact do you have with applicants/participants? What is the purpose of this
contact? How many cases are assigned to you?

G. Financial Assistance

     1. Do applicants/participants receive financial assistance while participating in the job
search requirement/program? (If office offers financial assistance but through lump-sum
program, ask these questions as well)

-        If yes, what are the conditions for receiving this assistance?

-        Do case managers have discretion in deciding the form of assistance?
Describe.

-        Do case managers have discretion in defining how the assistance can be used?
Describe.

-        Do case managers have discretion in deciding the amount of financial
assistance or the length of its receipt? Describe.

     2. How often is the financial assistance provided to applicants/participants?

H. Other Forms of Assistance

     1. Do applicants/participants receive any support services while completing the work-
related application requirement/job search program? For example, a transportation
stipend, food assistance, or other assistance? How are applicants informed of these
services? How many applicants/participants utilize these services? How do these
services compare to support services available through TANF? How are they funded?

2. Are applicants/participants participating in the work-related application requirement/job search program eligible for childcare assistance? How are applicants enrolled in childcare assistance? When does this assistance become available? How much assistance is available? How does the assistance compare to the childcare assistance available through TANF? What proportion of applicants/participants utilize child care assistance?

3. What is the status of an applicant's/participant's food stamp application while completing the work-related application requirement/job search program? When is the food stamp application filed and approved? Is approval of the food stamp application dependent on completion of the requirements?

4. What is the status of an applicant's/participant's Medicaid application while completing the work-related application requirement/job search program? When is the Medicaid application filed and approved? Is approval of the Medicaid application dependent on completion of the requirements?

I.   Requirement/Program Implications for TANF

For Work-Related Application Requirements (i.e., job search, orientation, or employability plan):

1. At what point is the application for TANF approved or denied based on the work-related application requirement (e.g., complete employability plan; after x months in pre-TANF activities; after complete x number of employer contacts)? What happens when an applicant finishes the work-related application requirement?

2. What are the consequences for applicants who do not complete each work-related application requirement? What happens to their current TANF application or their application for other services? What are the implications for their future TANF eligibility, time on TANF, and sanctions?

3. For Job Search Application Requirements: What happens to applicants who find a job during the job search requirement period? Are they transferred to a TANF work program? What assistance or supports are available for participants who find a job as a result of the job search requirement/program? Are these applicants eligible for earned income disregards? Are the earned income disregards for applicants different than those available for TANF recipients? If so, how do they differ?

For Pre-TANF Job Search Programs:

4. How does participation in the program affect participants' eligibility for TANF or their time limit? Does financial assistance received during the job search program affect an applicant's eligibility for TANF cash benefits?

5. If still eligible for TANF, what triggers the participant's transfer to TANF (for example, exhausting their time in the program; successfully participating for x hours per week; obtaining employment)? Is this different for different types of participants? Describe.

6. If eligible for TANF, please describe the transfer process. Specifically, are participants required to reapply for TANF? If so, do they need to complete the entire application process? If not, how are participants transferred onto TANF?

7. What events trigger the exit of a participant from the pre-TANF job search program (without making them eligible for TANF)?

8. What are the consequences for applicants who do not complete the required activities of the program? What happens to their TANF application or their application for other services? What are the implications for their future TANF eligibility, time on TANF, and sanctions?

9. What happens to applicants who find a job during the program? Does the program provide assistance or supports for participants who find a job as a result of the job search requirement/program? How does this compare to the assistance and supports available for TANF clients who find jobs? Are these applicants eligible for earned income disregards? Are these applicants eligible for Transitional Medical Assistance or Transitional Food Stamp benefits (if offered by the state)? How does their eligibility for transitional benefits differ from the eligibility of TANF recipients?

J. Tracking Applicant/Participant and Program Outcomes

1. How are applicants/participants tracked during their participation in the work-related application requirement/job search program? Who is responsible for entering and tracking this information?

2. Are there any applicants/participants whose information is not entered into the data system (e.g., applicants/participants that do not complete the application process, applicants/participants that do not complete the job search requirement)?

3. What are the challenges associated with collecting the data on participants and nonparticipants?

4. How many families who start the TANF application process or enter the pre-TANF job search program do not continue? For what reasons? What are the characteristics of these families?

5. For Work-Related Application Requirements: What percentage of applicants enroll in TANF after completing the work-related application requirement? What percentage of applicants who do not meet the application requirement reapply to TANF at a later date?

6. For Pre-TANF Job Search Programs: What percentage of participants (a) finish the program, (b) find employment, (c) transfer onto TANF, (d) do not complete the program, or (e) reapply to TANF?

K. Successes, Challenges

1. Was the work-related application requirement/job search program implemented as you expected? How did implementation differ from what you expected? Why?

2. Which aspects of the program/activity worked well and which aspects did not? Why?

3. What are the major challenges in implementing the program/activity? How were these challenges addressed?

4. In your opinion, to what extent is the work-related application requirement/job search program meeting its purpose/goals? What information/data is this assessment based on?

5. Are you satisfied with the numbers and outcomes of applicants participating in the work-related application requirement/job search program? Why or why not?

6. What, if any, unexpected positive or negative consequences resulted from the work-related application requirement/job search program? Explain.

7. What are the main lessons learned from your experience implementing the requirement/program? What lessons were learned regarding:

-          Eligibility/screening process
-          Stringency of penalties
-          Funding
-          Staffing
-          Orientation
-          Support services

8. What advice would you give to another state or local office considering this type of program/requirement?

9. Are there new programs or approaches being considered by the state [local office]? Please describe.

10. Is there a different approach you would like to see the state/office take with respect to diverting TANF applicants and/or preparing them for the work-participation requirements? Please describe.

IDENTIFYING PROMISING TANF DIVERSION PRACTICES STUDY

SITE VISIT GUIDE – PARTNER ORGANIZATION

A. Goal/Purpose

1. What is the primary goal or purpose of the work-related application requirement/job search program? Have the goals of the requirement evolved or changed over time? If so, in what ways and why?

B. Development Process

1. When did you first provide services as part of the work-related application requirement/job search program?

2. What were the start up issues and challenges, if any?

3. What was your organization's role in developing the work-related application requirement/job search program?

4. What funds are used to support and implement the work-related application requirement/job search program [federal, state MOE, or separate state funds]?

5. How much funding is currently allocated to your organization for the work-related application requirement/job search program? How long is the funding period?

6. What kinds of support did your organization receive from the local office, the state, or other local offices in implementing the work-related application requirement/job search program? [e.g., rely on experiences of other local offices/states; receive resources from the state]

7. How much discretion does your organization have in implementing the work-related application requirement/job search program? Does your organization have discretion over any of the following:

- Eligibility requirements
- Screening process
- Selecting partners
- Determining types of job search assistance or services

C. Orientation Requirement (ask if the organization is involved in this requirement)

1. What is the purpose of the orientation session? What information is covered? Are other work-related application requirements explained during the orientation? What is the format for the orientation session?

2. Who conducts the orientation sessions? How long are they? Are they group or individual sessions? How often are they held?

3. How are orientations scheduled for applicants—i.e., are dates and times assigned or do applicants have some input into the scheduling process?

4. What is the process for tracking applicant participation in the orientation session? Approximately what proportion of applicants attends orientation sessions?

5. How much outreach is conducted to encourage attendance at the orientation sessions? Is there additional follow-up for applicants that do not attend the first scheduled orientation or subsequent sessions?

6. What is the required time frame for an applicant to attend an orientation session? For the average applicant, how much time is there between their initial visit to the welfare office and orientation?

D. Employability Plan Requirement (ask if the organization is involved in this requirement)

1. Are applicants required to complete the employability plan before being approved for assistance?

2. How are meetings to complete an employability plan scheduled? How many visits are required to complete the employability plan? Where is the plan completed?

3. How much outreach is conducted to encourage completion of an employability plan? Is there additional follow-up for applicants that do not complete an employability plan?

4. Who assists the applicant in preparing the employability plan? What is their background/training?

5. What information is collected to develop the plan? How is the plan developed? In what ways and how often is it modified?

6. How is the plan used by staff or customers? What follow-up activities occur after creation of the employability plan?

E. Job Search Application Requirement or Pre-TANF Job Search Program (ask if the organization is involved in this requirement)

1. What job search activities must an applicant/participant complete before their application is approved? Or as part of the pre-TANF job search program?

-        How is the job search requirement defined?   Are applicants/participants required to contact a specific number of employers, spend a certain number of weeks looking for a job, attend job search classes or workshops?

-        What is the maximum/minimum amount of time the applicant/participant has to participate in job search activities? What is the average amount of time the typical customer spends in the activity?

-      Are these requirements the same for all applicants/participants? Explain.

-      How does the job search requirement/program differ from the job search requirement for TANF recipients?

2. How are applicants/participants informed of the requirement/program? Is there an orientation session to inform applicants/participants of the requirement/program?

3. How much outreach is conducted to encourage participation in job search activities? Is there additional follow-up for applicants/participants who do not participate in job search activities?

4. What resources are provided to assist applicants/participants with their job search?

-      Are there computer labs? Phones, fax machines, copy machines, printers, and other office equipment? Does the program provide transportation assistance for job interviews? What resources are most useful for clients?

-      When are the resources available? Where are they located? How often do applicants/participants use the resources? Is there a staff person available to assist applicants/participants in using the resources? Is there someone available to assist customers with the computers?

-      How are these job search resources different from the resources available to TANF recipients?

-      Who provides these resources?

5. Are job search classes or workshops provided for applicants/participants?

-      If so, are the classes/workshops mandatory or voluntary? How many classes/workshops are required?

-      What topics are covered in the classes? What is the format of the classes? How long are the classes?

-      Who teaches the classes? Where are they provided?

-      How often are classes provided?

-      How many applicants attend a typical job search session?

-      How do the job search classes differ from classes offered to TANF recipients?

6. Do applicants/participants receive one-on-one job search assistance?

-      If so, who provides this assistance and where? How much time is typically spent with each applicant/participant? What type of assistance is requested by applicants/participants most often?

-      Are applicants/participants provided with job leads?

7. Are incentives offered to the applicant/participant for finding work during the upfront (pre-TANF) period?

8. Is a case manager assigned to each applicant/participant during the period they are meeting the requirement or participating in the program? If so, what is the case manager's role? How much and what kind of contact does the case manager have with applicants/participants? What is the purpose of this contact? How many cases are assigned to each case manager?

9. Please describe the staffing structure for this initiative. Specifically:

- What is the experience/background of staff involved? What other responsibilities does this person have?

- How much time do staff spend on the work-related application requirement/job search program?

- Have there been changes in staffing over time?

- What kind of training do staff connected to the requirement/activity receive?

10. To what extent do other staff not directly connected to the program have knowledge or information about the work-related application requirement/job search program to inform applicants/clients? What kind of training do they receive?

11. To what extent does the program/activity rely on staff from partner agencies? What are the responsibilities of these agencies?

F. Financial Assistance (ask if the organization is involved in providing this assistance)

1. Do applicants/participants receive financial assistance while participating in the job search requirement/program? (If office offers financial assistance but through lump-sum program, ask these questions as well)

- If yes, what is the purpose of providing this assistance?

- Are there conditions for receiving this assistance?

- How is cash assistance provided (e.g., cash, voucher, vendor payment)? Do case managers have discretion in deciding the form of assistance?

- Are there restrictions on how the assistance can be used? Do case managers have discretion in defining how the assistance can be used?

- How is the amount of financial assistance determined? Do case managers have discretion in deciding the amount of financial assistance or the length of its receipt? What is the maximum amount of time a family can receive assistance through the program? What is the maximum amount of financial assistance a family can receive? How does this amount differ from the amount they can receive under TANF?

- How often is the financial assistance provided to applicants/participants?

- Is this assistance treated as assistance or non-assistance? Why?

G. Other Forms of Assistance (ask if the organization is involved in this requirement)

1. Do applicants/participants receive any support services while completing the work-related application requirement/job search program? For example, a transportation stipend, food assistance, or other assistance? What is your organization's role in providing these services?

2. Are applicants/participants participating in the work-related application requirement/job search program eligible for childcare assistance? What is your organization's role in providing these services?

H. Tracking Applicant/Participant and Program Outcomes

1. How are applicants/participants tracked during their participation in the work-related application requirement/job search program? Who is responsible for entering and tracking this information?

2. Are there any applicants/participants whose information is not entered into the data system (e.g., applicants/participants that do not complete the application process, applicants/participants that do not complete the job search requirement)?

3. Describe the data your organization collects on TANF applicants/participants who do not end up receiving TANF. [collect any available reports]

- What demographic data are collected?

- Is there information on the services provided to these participants?

- What information is collected on participant outcomes, including employment and TANF receipt?

- Is it possible to determine whether a participant reapplied for TANF or received TANF benefits after participation in the program/activity?

- What information is available on employment, including type of employment, wages, or hours for this population?

4. How are the data used? To determine eligibility for later TANF eligibility? To monitor program outcomes?

5. What are the challenges associated with collecting this data?

6. How many families who start the TANF application process or enter the pre-TANF job search program do not continue? For what reasons? What are the characteristics of these families?

7. What are the employment outcomes for applicants/participants participating in the work-related application requirement/upfront job search program? What were the characteristics of applicants who obtained work during the work-related application requirement/job search program?

8. For Work-Related Application Requirements: What percentage of applicants enroll in TANF after completing the work-related application requirement? What percentage of applicants who do not meet the application requirement reapply to TANF at a later date?

9. For Pre-TANF Job Search Programs: What percentage of participants (a) finish the program, (b) find employment, (c) transfer onto TANF, (d) do not complete the program, or (e) reapply to TANF?

I.   Successes, Challenges

1. Was the work-related application requirement/job search program implemented as expected? How did implementation differ from what was expected? Why?

2. Which aspects of the program/activity worked well and which aspects did not? Why?

3. What are the major challenges in implementing the program/activity? How were these challenges addressed?

4. To what extent is the work-related application requirement/job search program meeting its purpose/goals? What information/data is this assessment based on?

5. Are you satisfied with the numbers and outcomes of applicants participating in the work-related application requirement/job search program? Why or why not?

6. What, if any, unexpected positive or negative consequences resulted from the work-related application requirement/job search program? Explain.

7. What are the main lessons learned from your experience implementing the requirement/program? What lessons were learned regarding:

-        Eligibility/screening process
-        Stringency of penalties
-        Funding
-        Staffing
-        Orientation
-        Support services

8. What would you have done differently in implementing the applicant program or requirement? What advice would you give to another state or local office considering this type of program/requirement?

9. Is there a different approach you would like to see the state/office take with respect to diverting TANF applicants and/or preparing them for the work-participation requirements? Please describe.