

APPENDIX B

STATE AND LOCAL TELEPHONE INTERVIEW GUIDES

TANF DIVERSION STUDY

STATE AND LOCAL TELEPHONE INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Introduction

In the mail survey you completed last month you indicated that the state targets the following programs or requirements to applicants for TANF assistance: [name programs].

[Local interview: From discussions we have had with the state TANF office, we understand that your local office has implemented the following program(s) targeted to applicants for TANF assistance: [programs] .]

The purpose of this interview is to learn more about each of these programs. First, I would like to discuss each of these programs with you and, then, I will ask you some general questions about the state's [local office's] overall strategy.

We would like to start with [name of program].

Modules

Module 1: Formal Diversion Payments (Lump-Sum Payment)

Module 2: Job Search and Other Work-Related Requirements

Module 3: Alternative Resources

Module 4: Pre-TANF Job Search and Assessment Program with Cash Assistance

Module 5: Solely State-Funded Cash Assistance Program

Concluding Questions

Is the state trying to achieve a broader goal with its mix of applicant requirements and programs? If so, how well is this mix meeting the state's goals?

Are there any approaches you would like to see the state take with respect to diverting TANF applicants and/or preparing them for the work-participation requirements?

How has the state's [local office's] overall approach to diverting applicants been influenced by passage of the DRA?

Are there new programs or approaches being considered by the state [local office] to divert applicants from TANF? Please describe.

Thank you for your time.

MODULE 1: FORMAL DIVERSION PAYMENTS

I. Program Details

We have obtained information from the Urban Institute on the structure of your formal diversion payment or lump sum payment program. We would like to review this information and then ask you some additional questions: [Review the following information]

Maximum Payment Amount
Form of payment
How often recipient can receive payment
Period of TANF ineligibility without penalty after payment
How the payment is treated with regards to the time limit

II. Program Goals/Scope

1. What is the primary purpose/goal of the lump sum payment program?
2. Was the program created through state legislation or administratively?
3. Do county or local offices have any discretion to offer a formal diversion payment that is different than what we just reviewed? If yes, please describe.

III. Eligibility

1. To whom is the program targeted?
2. Are there explicit criteria that an applicant must meet to be considered for the program? If so, what are the criteria?
3. For those applicants that meet the program criteria, is the program mandatory or voluntary?
4. Are there any circumstances under which an applicant who does not meet the program criteria can receive a diversion payment? Please describe.
5. Are the income and assets criteria for eligibility the same as for the TANF program?
 - If no: How are they different?

IV. Recruitment and Screening

1. What strategies are used to inform and recruit applicants to participate in the program? When is an applicant informed about the program and by whom?
2. How are intake or eligibility workers trained to discuss the option of a lump sum payment with applicants? Who trains them?
3. How consistently do you think these discussions occur between workers and applicants?

4. At what point in the application process do these discussions occur? What event or information triggers the discussion?
5. Which workers screen applicants and manage the payments?

V. Payment

1. How is the amount of the payment determined? What information does the applicant need to provide to demonstrate the need for the payment? How much discretion do workers have in determining the payment amount?
2. Are there restrictions on how the payment can be used? Do workers have discretion on how it is used?
3. Over what time period is the payment received?
4. Is participation in any work activity required to receive the payment? If yes, what is the requirement?

VI. Application Processing

1. How much time do you have to make a decision on an application? Does the clock start ticking at the time the initial application is submitted or after the completion of any pre-application work requirements?
2. What is the disposition of a participant's initial TANF application?
3. How is the participant's application for other supports (Medicaid, food stamps) handled? How does this change if an applicant finds employment?
4. How are participants' payments treated in determining eligibility for Medicaid and food stamps?
5. If a person receives a lump sum payment, are they eligible to receive any other kind of supports either while receiving the lump sum or if they find a job? [child care, transportation, case management, education and training]

VII. Participation and Outcomes

1. What proportion of applicants is considered for the program? Of those considered, what proportion receives a lump sum cash payment? How many applicants enroll in the program during an average month?
2. How do you track participation in the program?
3. To what extent do you maintain data on participation and outcomes (participation rates, employment rates, proportion reapply for assistance)? [request data]
4. Do you have any data or reports that compare the outcomes of lump-sum recipients with families that receive TANF assistance? [If so, request data/reports]

VIII. Successes/Challenges/Advice for Other States

1. To what extent is the program achieving its goals?

2. What challenges have you had to overcome to implement the program? What strategies helped you to overcome those challenges?
3. What lessons have you learned that you would like to pass along to states that are considering implementing a similar program?
4. Have you made or considered making any changes to this requirement since the reauthorization of TANF? Please describe.
5. Which counties or local offices have done an exemplary job implementing the program and/or have had high participation rates? What do they do differently than other offices?

MODULE 2: JOB SEARCH AND OTHER WORK-RELATED REQUIREMENTS
(WORK PROGRAM ORIENTATION, WORK REGISTRATION
OR DEVELOPMENT OF AN EMPLOYMENT PLAN)

You indicated that TANF applicants are required to complete [the program requirement] as a condition of eligibility for TANF. We would like to learn more about this requirement, including what is expected of applicants, what assistance is available to them and what happens if they do not complete the requirement.

I. Program Goals/Scope

1. What is the primary purpose/goal of requiring applicants to [insert program requirement] as a part of the TANF application process?
2. Was this requirement created through state legislation or administratively?
3. Is [the program requirement] required statewide or only in selected areas?
4. Do county or local offices have any discretion in defining or altering [the program requirement]? If yes, please describe.

II. Eligibility

1. Who is required to complete the [program requirement]? How do you determine if someone should be exempted from this requirement?
2. Are there any circumstances in which this requirement can be waived? Please describe.
3. How is the participant's application for other supports (Medicaid, food stamps) handled while they are completing the [program requirement]?

III. Recruitment and Screening

1. What strategies are used to inform applicants about this requirement? When is an applicant informed about the requirement and by whom?
2. Who explains this requirement to applicants?

IV. Program Structure

1. How is the [program requirement] structured? What must the applicant do? Over what period of time?
2. What assistance is provided to participants to help them meet this requirement? Who provides this assistance? [the TANF agency; another government agency, such as the One Stop Career Center or the Workforce Development agency; or a contractor]

3. Is child care assistance available for participants? If yes, is there a formal process for linking participants with child care assistance? If so, please describe this process.
4. Where does an applicant have to go to complete the requirement? Is an applicant given an appointment to complete the requirement or are they required to schedule a time on their own? What are the options for rescheduling if an applicant misses an appointment?
5. How long does it take to complete the requirement?
6. For job search requirements, how is participation monitored? Who monitors participation?

V. Consequences for Not Participating

1. What are the consequences for not completing the requirement?
2. If an applicant begins to participate but then stops participating, are any efforts in place to reengage them?
3. How much time do you have to make a decision on an application? Does the clock start ticking at the time the initial application is submitted or after the completion of any pre-application work requirements?
4. What is the disposition of the TANF application if an applicant does not complete the requirement?
5. When can the applicant reapply for assistance if their application is denied for failing to meet the requirement?
6. What happens to a participant's applications for food stamps and Medicaid if they do not complete the requirement?

VI. Participation

1. What proportion of applicants is required to complete [the program requirement]?
2. Of those required to complete the requirement, what proportion complete it?
3. How do you track completion of the requirement?
4. To what extent do you maintain data on who completes the requirement and who finds employment? [request data]

VII. Employment (Job search requirements only)

1. What proportion of applicants finds employment before going on to TANF?
2. How is the TANF application handled if an applicant finds employment? How is their eligibility for TANF determined?

3. Is an applicant who finds employment before going on to TANF eligible for the same earnings disregard as a TANF recipient who finds employment? If not, how does the earnings disregard differ for applicants?
4. If they find employment and are not eligible for TANF, are they eligible for the same benefits as a TANF recipient who finds employment and exits TANF? If not, what is different? Do you offer a post-employment TANF program or exit bonus for TANF recipients? Are applicants who find employment eligible for this program or bonus?
5. How is the food stamp and Medicaid application handled if the applicant finds a job?

VIII. TANF Transition (Job search requirements only)

1. If an applicant does not find employment or finds employment and is still eligible, how is the transition to TANF handled?
2. What work activity are they required to participate in?
3. Do they undergo an assessment? If so, when?

IX. Successes/Challenges/Advice for Other States

1. To what extent is the program achieving its goals?
2. What challenges have you had to overcome to implement the requirement? What strategies helped you to overcome those challenges?
3. What lessons have you learned that you would like to pass along to states that are considering implementing a similar requirement?
4. Have you made or considered making any changes to this requirement since the reauthorization of TANF? Please describe.
5. Which counties or local offices have done an exemplary job of implementing [the program requirement]? What makes them exemplary?

MODULE 3: ALTERNATIVE RESOURCES

You indicated that as a part of the application process, eligibility workers are required to explore the availability of alternative resources (such as family or friends or services provided by community organizations) with families applying for assistance. We would like to learn more about this requirement and how it is implemented.

I. Program Goals/Scope

1. What is the primary purpose/goal of this approach?
2. Was this approach created through state legislation or administratively? When?
3. Is this approach implemented statewide or only in selected areas?
4. Do county or local offices have any discretion in defining or altering this requirement? Please describe.
5. Have you made or considered making any changes to this approach since the reauthorization of TANF?
6. What public agency or other organization manages this program?

II. Eligibility

1. To whom is the consideration of alternative resources targeted?
2. Are there any circumstances when an applicant can choose to apply for TANF rather than accessing alternative resources even when identified?

III. Recruitment and Screening

1. What strategies are used to inform applicants that they must consider alternative resources before their TANF application can be approved? When is an applicant informed about the requirement and by whom?
2. Can you describe when this discussion takes place and what instructions workers have been given about how to facilitate this discussion?
3. Is information gathered as a part of the written TANF application that helps to guide this discussion. Or, does the intake worker initiate the discussion during the eligibility interview?
4. Who conducts this discussion with applicants? How are they trained?
5. How consistently do you think these discussions occur between workers and applicants?

6. How does a worker determine whether alternative resources are available and accessible to an applicant?
7. If alternative resources are identified, what is the next step? Is the TANF application placed on hold? If so, for what period of time or until what specific requirement is met?

IV. Outcomes

1. How often are workers able to identify alternative resources that alleviate the need to apply for TANF benefits? How often is a TANF application withdrawn or denied because a family's needs can be met through alternative resources?
2. How do you track which applications are withdrawn or denied because alternative resources have been identified?

V. Successes/Challenges/Advice for Other States

1. To what extent is the program achieving its goals?
2. What challenges have you had to overcome to implement the program? What strategies helped you to overcome those challenges?
3. What lessons have you learned that you would like to pass along to states that are considering implementing a similar program?
4. Have you made or considered making any changes to this requirement since the reauthorization of TANF?
5. Which counties or local offices have done an exemplary job of implementing this approach? What makes them exemplary?

MODULE 4: PRE-TANF JOB SEARCH AND ASSESSMENT PROGRAMS WITH CASH ASSISTANCE

You indicated on your survey form that you have implemented a program separate from your TANF programs that provides *short-term* financial assistance to families who apply for TANF assistance while they participate in job search, complete an assessment, or participate in other work-related activities.

I. Program Goals/Scope

1. What is the primary purpose/goal of providing a pre-TANF program that provides financial assistance and requires individuals to participate in work activities?
2. Was this program created through state legislation or administratively?
3. Is the program available statewide or only in selected areas? Please describe.
4. Do county or local offices have any discretion in defining or altering the structure of this program? Please describe.
5. What influence did increased work participation rates as a result of TANF reauthorization have on the implementation of this program?
6. How is the program funded? Is financial assistance claimed as assistance or non-assistance for TANF/MOE reporting purposes?
7. What public agency or other organization manages this program?

II. Eligibility

1. What are the eligibility criteria for the pre-TANF program? Which applicants are exempted from participation in the pre-TANF program? How do you determine if someone should be exempted from this requirement? Is participation in the pre-TANF program mandatory for eligible applicants?
2. For applicants who meet the eligibility criteria, are there any circumstances in which this requirement can be waived and applicants can apply directly to TANF?

III. Recruitment and Screening

1. What strategies are used to inform applicants about this program? When is an applicant informed about the program and by whom?

IV. Financial Assistance

We would like to first learn more about the financial assistance component of the program and then learn about the services and work component.

1. What is the maximum amount of financial assistance a family can receive through this program? How does this compare to the amount of assistance they can receive from TANF?
2. How is the amount of assistance determined? What information does the applicant need to provide to demonstrate the need for the assistance?
3. How is the financial assistance provided to participants? (e.g., cash, voucher, vendor payment)
4. How often is the financial assistance provided?
5. Are there any constraints on how the assistance can be used?
6. What is the maximum amount of time a family can receive assistance through the program?
7. Do the months when a family is receiving financial assistance count toward the time limit?

V. Interaction with Other Programs

1. How is the participant's application for other supports (Medicaid, food stamps) handled?
2. Are families eligible for child care and other work supports while they are participating in the pre-TANF program? If yes, is there a formal process for linking participants with child care assistance? If so, please describe this process.
3. How are earnings treated while a family is in the pre-TANF program?
4. Are child support payments collected on behalf of families in the pre-TANF program retained by the state? How does this differ from the TANF program? Does child support distributed to families in the pre-TANF program reduce the financial assistance they receive through the program? Does the state disregard any of the child support income to determine the amount of financial assistance?

VI. Work Activity Requirement

1. In what type of work activities are program participants required to participate?
2. If all participants do not participate in the same activity, what determines the activity in which they participate?
3. What level of participation is required in the work activity? Over what period of time?

4. What assistance is provided to participants? Who provides this assistance? [the TANF agency; another government agency, such as the One Stop Career Center or the Workforce Development agency; or a contractor]
5. How long does participation in the program last?
6. How is participation monitored? Who monitors participation?

VII. Consequences for Not Participating

1. What happens if a participant stops participating? Are any efforts required to reengage them?
2. What are the consequences for not participating? What happens to their financial assistance?
3. When can they reapply for the program?

VIII. Transition to TANF

1. Under what circumstances is a family transitioned onto TANF? What happens when a family reaches the maximum amount of time in the pre-TANF program?
2. How does this transition occur?
3. Is the transition automatic or does the family have to complete a separate application for TANF?
4. If participants of this program are working, how are earnings treated when they transition to TANF? Are they eligible for the same benefits as a TANF recipient who finds employment? If not, what is different?
 - Is a participant who finds employment eligible for the same earnings disregard as a TANF recipient? If not, how does the earnings disregard differ for participants?
5. What benefits are available for families who find employment and are not eligible for TANF due to earnings? Are they eligible for the same benefits as a TANF recipient who finds employment? If not, what is different?
6. What work activity are participants required to participate in once on TANF?

IX. Participation and Outcomes

1. How do you track participation in the program?
2. What proportion of applicants is required to participate in the pre-TANF program?
3. Of those required to participate, what proportion do so? What proportion finds employment before transferring to TANF? What proportion does not find

- employment, but does not transfer to TANF? What proportion transfers to TANF?
4. What other data do you maintain on program participation and outcomes? [request all data/reports]

X. Successes/Challenges/Advice for Other States

1. To what extent is the program achieving its goals?
2. What challenges have you had to overcome to implement the program? What strategies helped you to overcome those challenges?
3. What lessons have you learned that you would like to pass along to states that are considering implementing a similar program?
4. Which counties or local offices have done any exemplary job of implementing the pre-TANF program? What makes them exemplary?

MODULE 5: SOLELY STATE-FUNDED CASH ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS

You indicated on your survey form that you have implemented a financial assistance program funded solely with state or local dollars that provides ongoing financial assistance to families with children and in which families are not considered to be on TANF. We would like to learn more about this program.

I. Program Goals/Scope

1. What is the primary purpose/goal of creating a state program that provides cash assistance to families with children?
2. Was this program created through state legislation or administratively?
3. Is the program available statewide or only in selected areas?
4. Do county or local offices have any discretion in defining or altering the structure of this program? Please describe.
5. What influence did increased work participation rates resulting from TANF reauthorization have on the implementation of this program?

II. Eligibility

1. Which families are eligible for this program?
2. Does this program target new applicants, families that have been receiving TANF assistance or both?
3. Is participation in the solely state-funded program mandatory for any families who meet particular criteria?
4. How is eligibility for the program determined? How does the eligibility criteria differ from your TANF program?
5. Is the application process for this program separate from the application process for TANF? If yes, can you describe the application process?
6. Does the solely state-funded program have the same rules and regulations as the state's TANF program? If no, how does the program differ?

If no, complete subsequent sections of the protocol as needed. If yes, skip to section X of the protocol.

III. Recruitment and Screening

1. What strategies are used to inform families about this program? If participation in the program is optional, how are families informed of the option and of any consequences for not participating?

IV. Financial Assistance

1. What is the maximum amount of financial assistance a family can receive through this program? How does this compare to the amount of assistance they can receive from TANF?
2. How is the amount of assistance determined?
3. How is the financial assistance provided to participants? (e.g., cash, voucher, vendor payment)
4. Are there any restrictions on how this assistance can be used?
5. How often is the financial assistance provided?
6. What is the maximum amount of time a family can receive assistance through the program? Is this time limit for receiving assistance through the solely state-funded program based on the TANF time limit?
7. Does assistance received through the solely state-funded program count towards the TANF time limit?
8. If there is no time limit on participation, are there other events that can cause families to exit the program or transition into another program? Describe.

V. Interaction with Other Programs

1. How is the participant's application for other supports (Medicaid, food stamps) handled?
2. Are families eligible for child care and other work supports while they are participating in this program?
3. Are child support payments collected on behalf of families in the solely state-funded program retained by the state? How does this differ from the TANF program? Does child support distributed to families in the solely state-funded program reduce the financial assistance they receive through the program? Does the state disregard any of the child support income to determine the amount of financial assistance?
4. How is eligibility for Medicaid or Transitional Medical Assistance handled for families that exit the solely state-funded program? If the state offers Transitional Food Stamps, how is eligibility for Transitional Food Stamps handled for families that exit the solely state-funded program?

VI. Work Activity Requirement

1. In what type of work activities are program participants required to participate?
2. If all participants do not participate in the same activity, what determines the activity in which they participate?
3. What level of participation is required in the work activity? Over what period of time?
4. What assistance is provided to participants? Who provides this assistance? [the TANF agency; another government agency, such as the One Stop Career Center or the Workforce Development agency; or a contractor]
5. Who monitors their participation?

VII. Consequences for Not Participating

1. What happens if a participant stops participating? Are any efforts required to reengage them?
2. What are the consequences for not participating? What happens to their financial assistance?
3. When can the applicant reapply for the program?

VIII. Transition to TANF

1. Are families participating in this program ever eligible for TANF? Describe.
2. If so, what is the process for transferring families from this program to TANF? Is the transition automatic or does the family have to complete a separate application for TANF?
3. If a family finds employment, how are earnings treated when families transition to TANF?
4. What benefits are available for families who find employment and are not eligible for TANF due to earnings?

IX. Participation and Outcomes

1. How many families are currently participating in this program?
2. In an average month, how many families apply for or are transferred to the program?
3. Among families applying directly to the program, how many families have been deemed eligible? How many of these families were initially applicants for TANF?

4. How do you track participation in the program?
5. What other data do you maintain on program participation and outcomes?
[request all data/reports]

X. Successes/Challenges/Advice for Other States

1. To what extent is the program achieving its goals?
2. What challenges have you had to overcome to implement the program? What strategies helped you to overcome those challenges?
3. What lessons have you learned that you would like to pass along to states that are considering implementing a similar program?

TANF DIVERSION STUDY

TELEPHONE INTERVIEW PROTOCOL: STATES WITH NO REQUIREMENTS OR PROGRAMS

You indicated on your survey form that you do not currently engage TANF applicants in work or work-related activities before their application is approved, or provide financial and other assistance to applicant families through programs outside of your regular TANF program. We would like to ask you a few questions about whether your state has any *past* experience with these types of programs and/or requirements.

I. Introduction

1. In the past, has your state ever:

Offered lump sum payments (via cash, vendor payments, or vouchers) to families applying for cash assistance with the intent of alleviating the need for TANF assistance?

Required all or some TANF applicants to complete any of the following *before* they are approved to receive TANF cash assistance:

- An orientation focused on work requirements and/or employment-related activities?
- A plan that outlines what steps they will take to find employment and/or move towards self-sufficiency?
- Registration for work?
- Participation in work-related activities, such as job search?

Required applicants to explore the availability of alternative resources (such as family or friends or services provided by community organizations) as part of your application process?

Implemented a program separate from your TANF cash assistance program that provides *short-term* financial assistance to families who apply for TANF assistance while they participate in job search, complete an employability assessment, or participate in other work-related activities?

Established programs that are funded solely by state or local dollars (not TANF or TANF MOE dollars) that provide *ongoing* financial assistance to families with children and in which families are not considered to be on TANF?

II. States with Prior Experience

If the state has prior experience with any of the above programs/requirements, ask questions 2-8 for each program/requirement.

1. When was the program/requirement first implemented and how long did it exist?

2. Was the program/requirement created through state legislation or administratively?
3. What was the primary purpose or goal of the program/requirement?
4. Did the program/requirement target a specific type of welfare applicant?
5. Did county or local offices have discretion in defining or altering the program/requirement?
6. Did the state collect any data on participation or outcomes for the program/requirement (participation rates, employment rates, proportion who reapply for assistance)? Please describe.
7. Why did the state end/discontinue the program/requirement?
8. What were the main lessons learned from implementing the program/requirement?
9. Does the state have plans to reconsider this type of program in light of TANF reauthorization or the interim final regulations?

If yes, why? When does the state expect to implement the program/requirement? How will it differ from the state's previous program/requirement (purpose/goal, target population, implications for TANF application)? Is it a statewide program or a program implemented at a county's discretion?

If no, why not?

III. States with No Prior Experience

If the state does not have prior experience with any of the above programs, ask the following question:

1. Has the state considered implementing these types of programs/requirements for applicants in light of TANF reauthorization or the interim final regulations?

If yes, what type of program/requirement did the state consider/is the state considering? Is the state planning to implement the program/requirement? Why or why not? If the state is planning to implement the program/requirement, please describe it (projected start date, purpose/goal, target population, implications for TANF application). Is it planned as a statewide program or a program implemented at county discretion?

If no, why has the state not considered these types of programs/requirements?