

**NOTIFICATION OF STATE SELECTION FOR SITE VISIT  
LOGISTICS/SITE VISIT PLANNING  
E-MAIL TO STATE TANF DIRECTORS IN COUNTY-ADMINISTERED STATES**

OMB #: 0970-XXXX  
Expiration Date: XX/XX/XXXX

**From:** Heather Hahn  
**To:** [STATE TANF DIRECTOR]  
**Cc:**  
**Subject:** Urban Institute Study of County-Administered TANF Programs

Dear [Ms./Mr.] [NAME],

As you may recall, our Urban Institute/ICF study team spoke with you on the phone in April about our study of county-administered TANF programs and you expressed your willingness to participate in the study, including a site visit to your state, if your state were selected. I am writing today to let you know that your state indeed was selected and to confirm your continued willingness to participate.

This e-mail provides an overview of our study and identifies the topics we would like to discuss during the site visit. One of our research assistants [NAME; E-MAIL ADDRESS; PHONE] will work with you (or your designee) on the logistics of the visit. We would like to visit [STATE] during October or November.

**The Study**

The Urban Institute, under contract with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), is gathering information on county-administered TANF programs. The goals of the study are to provide a systematic description of county-administered TANF programs, identify areas of difference between county- and state-administered TANF programs, and identifying specific technical assistance needs of county-administered systems.

As you know, county-administered TANF programs by their nature offer the possibility of more extensive variation in policy and management choices, as well as service delivery, and therefore greater variation in outputs and outcomes within a single state. Our study is taking advantage of this opportunity by gathering and synthesizing information through secondary research and case studies for a set of states, including yours, with county-administered systems. In addition, we are having brief phone discussions with some additional states to gather broader information about state-administered TANF programs. Our study will culminate with a report to HHS in summer 2014, and we expect that report to later be made publicly available.

If you wish to contact HHS directly about the study, you may contact our project officer, Michael Dubinsky, at 202-401-3442 or [Michael.Dubinsky@acf.hhs.gov](mailto:Michael.Dubinsky@acf.hhs.gov).

**County Site Selection**

In addition to interviewing officials and administrators on the state level, our study plan includes visits to two counties within each state to meet with county-level TANF administrators and local government officials. Rather than select a state with a predetermined set of counties to visit, we have prepared criteria for selecting counties (attached), and in collaboration with your office, would like to apply this criteria to select which counties to visit.

**The Site Visit**

Our general plan includes a 2-3 day site visit, with about 7 interviews, each lasting 60-90 minutes. This plan should be adjusted as needed to accommodate your program structure and your schedules. Based on our description of the

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information we are seeking, please use your best judgment as to whom you think would be most appropriate to meet with us.

DAY 1:

- State TANF administrators or program managers
- State human service department director or cabinet-level official
- County TANF directors' associations or similar organizations

Day 2 (and potentially Day 3):

- County TANF administrators in the first county we visit
- County executives or county board members from the first county we visit
- County TANF administrators in the second county we visit
- County executives or county board members from the second county we visit

If you have any questions, please let me know. Again, we hope you will be willing to participate in the study and share your experiences of county-administered TANF programs.

Sincerely,

Heather Hahn

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Enc.: County Site Selection Criteria

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## County Site Selection Criteria

The overarching goal of county site selection is to include counties that best represent the most common experiences and characteristics of county-administered TANF programs. The following five criteria aim to identify such counties so as to provide valuable study data from a sub-state lens:

- *Limit visits to two counties per state.* It is desirable to visit two counties to learn from multiple experiences and approaches while not expanding the number of county visits per study site given the project's limited resources.
- *Size of population served.* It is desirable to have variation in this characteristic so that one of the two selected counties is among each state's most populous while the other is moderate or small in size approximately representing the balance of the state, to the extent possible.
- *Range of TANF approaches.* It is desirable to include in the two selected counties a range of program administration and policy approaches to TANF.
- *Proximity.* Because only one visit to each state will be conducted, it is desirable to visit two counties close in proximity to each other (i.e. within a three-hour drive).
- *Other criteria.* It is desirable to have variation among a range of other characteristics (e.g. seeking technical assistance, focus on TANF performance management, caseload and program characteristics).

The county selection criteria will be applied using an iterative process.