



Proposed Amendments to TANF to Assist Adults and Children with Mental Disorders

Interagency Linkages

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- Interagency collaboration, especially between TANF agencies and mental health authorities, should be encouraged.
- Provide state TANF agencies with small incentive grants to enter into planning discussions with state mental health, substance abuse, special education, child welfare, housing and vocational rehabilitation agencies in order to address issues facing adults with mental illness who are on TANF and parents of children with disabilities.

RATIONALE

There is a need for the various adult and child serving systems to collaborate in order to provide a coordinated response to the needs of TANF families.

- Some of the systems that should collaborate include:
 - mental health
 - substance abuse
 - juvenile justice
 - special education
 - child welfare
 - health care
 - rehabilitation
 - housing
 - veterans
- The benefits of collaboration include:
 - increasing efficiency
 - decreasing the duplication of services
 - reduction of paperwork
 - helping recipients feel more comfortable and less overwhelmed by all of the agencies and programs with which they have to deal
 - working with families in a holistic fashion
 - outreach to populations who historically do not use certain services that may assist them in meeting TANF requirements

- Various mechanisms can be used by states to foster collaboration, such as:
 - co-location of service providers to enable one-stop shopping
 - team service planning meetings involving all relevant agencies
 - system level communication and collaboration among agencies to create more coordinated policies among the various key agencies
 - having one service plan across agencies and one case manager for the family
 - creating more focused funding strategies to enable family-focused service teams
 - more flexibility in meeting the needs of families
 - specifically blending certain funds together in order to create a pool of more flexible resources to meet the families needs
 - allowing an existing inter-agency plan of care to be incorporated in the TANF plan, so as to avoid competing plans

EXAMPLES OF GOOD PRACTICES

- In Columbia, Missouri, the Healthy Foundations for Families program provides integrated services at the university pediatric primary care clinic. A family support staff member, with access to professionals, works with families to identify and coordinate services and increase parental knowledge about child development. When outside referrals are necessary, wraparound funds are used to support child care and transportation.
- The California Work Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids Project (CalWORKS) in Ventura County, California is in the TANF office. Professionals are available to diagnose mental illnesses, physical health ailments, teach classes, and evaluate other needs. Professionals make home visits to accommodate the needs of individuals who are not able to travel to the office.
- Montgomery County, Ohio created the Job Center, which houses welfare, housing, health, employment, and veterans services in one building. On the site, there is also a community college which provides training to all. Over 40 non-profits and businesses work together to provide a broad spectrum of services to the TANF recipients in Montgomery County.
- The state of Utah integrated the whole TANF program into the Utah Department of Workforce Services. Utah created employment centers, which are a one-stop service center. The employment centers are the points of service for programs under the Department of Workforce Services. Services include employment supports, job training, food stamps, child care, and financial assistance.

FURTHER DETAILS OF THE RECOMMENDATION

This goal can be accomplished by:

- Creating a new authority in TANF law to offer states incentive grants (\$100,000) to plan and set up collaborative arrangements between TANF agencies and two or more other service systems.