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ABSTRACT
        Collaboration between welfare and workforce development
agencies has increased since the implementation of welfare reform. Federal
legislation, state and local policy-making environments, and the capacity of
potential partners to serve an agency's clients affect agency collaboration.
The following broad approaches to collaboration have been identified: welfare-
centered; shared responsibility for work-related services for Temporary
Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) clients; and a highly integrated system.
Collaboration enables agencies and clients to gain knowledge, access
additional resources, reduce duplication of services, offer more comprehensive
services, and benefit from complementary skills and services. The following
are among 24 strategies that federal, state, and local agencies can take to
facilitate agency collaboration: provide guidance, technical assistance, and
training on interagency collaboration; disseminate promising strategies and
models; pursue joint planning and program coordination through unified plans;
use state-level contracts to promote coordination in the delivery system; and
develop mechanisms for communicating and sharing client and program
information. The debates over reauthorization of TANF in 2002 and the
Workforce Investment Act in 2003 will provide opportunities to improve
collaboration between the welfare and workforce development systems. Research
has identified innovative examples of collaboration at the state and local
levels, including examples from Maryland, Ohio, Washington, and Vermont.
(Seven resource contacts and 12 references are listed.) (MN)

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Improving Collaboration Between Welfare and Workforce Development Agencies

Nanette Relave

Improving Collaboration Between Welfare and Workforce Development Agencies

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Background

Collaboration between welfare and workforce development agencies has increased since the implementation of welfare reform, the Welfare-to-Work Grant program, and the Workforce Investment Act. The welfare and workforce development systems share a focus on employment and serve some of the same customers. The workforce development system is an important provider of employment and training services for welfare clients, and the welfare system is a major source of funding for the workforce development system. Different patterns of coordination and integration have emerged at the state and local levels in response to the flexibility afforded by the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program and the coordination mechanisms promoted by the Workforce Investment Act (WIA), such as the one-stop system.

This *Issue Note* describes models of collaboration, presents strategies to facilitate collaboration, and looks at opportunities to address collaboration in the reauthorization of TANF and WIA. It builds on an earlier Welfare Information Network (WIN) *Issue Note*, "Collaboration Between the Welfare and Workforce Development Systems," at http://www.welfareinfo.org/workforcecollab.htm. For more information, visit the WIN web page on workforce development at http://www.welfareinfo.org/workforc.htm.

Policy and Program Issues

What factors affect collaboration between welfare and workforce development agencies? The Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act, the Workforce Investment Act, and legislation authorizing the Welfare-to-Work Grant program created new opportunities and incentives for collaboration. Federal legislation and other factors influence the decision to pursue collaboration.

The state and local policy-making environment influences interagency collaboration. Funding availability, political support for collaboration, the degree of state and local flexibility, and policy objectives for welfare reform and workforce development all shape the context for collaboration. Economic or labor market conditions can spur agencies to collaborate in order to combine or leverage resources. Prior collaboration and the perceived benefits and risks of collaboration are still other factors influencing collaboration.

At the local level, the capacity of a potential partner to serve an agency's clients can affect the decision to collaborate. For example, the location of a one-stop career center or its capacity to serve clients with barriers to employment can influence the TANF agency's decision to collaborate with the center. For more information on factors affecting collaboration, see the WIN *Issue Note*

"Collaboration Between the Welfare and Workforce Development Systems," at http://www.welfareinfo.org/workforcecollab.htm.

What models of collaboration have emerged at the state and local levels? The numerous factors affecting collaboration have also fostered different approaches to collaboration. There is no one right approach. Some areas have pursued a highly integrated service delivery model. Other areas have maintained separate welfare and workforce development structures, using formal and informal linkages to coordinate services and agency activities. In their research on the coordination and integration of welfare and workforce development systems, Pindus et al. identify three broad organizational approaches: welfare-centered, shared responsibility for work-related services for TANF clients, and highly integrated. For more information, see Nancy Pindus et al., *Coordination and Integration of Welfare and Workforce Development Systems* (Washington, D.C.: The Urban Institute, March 2000), at http://aspe.hhs.gov/hsp/coord00/index.htm.

The coordination of welfare and workforce development programs at the state level has increased since the implementation of welfare reform and WIA. Twenty-eight states reported that in 2001 they made extensive use of formal linkages, such as memoranda of understanding and state-level formal agreements, between agencies administering TANF and WIA. For more information, see U.S. General Accounting Office, *Workforce Investment Act: Coordination of TANF Services Through One-Stops Has Increased Despite Challenges,* testimony, GAO-02-739T (Washington, D.C., May 16, 2002), at http://www.gao.gov/new.items/d02739t.pdf. TANF is represented on the state workforce investment board in 46 states, Guam, Puerto Rico, and the District of Columbia. For more information, see U.S. Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration, Office of Policy and Research and Office of Field Operations, *State WIA-TANF Relationships Survey Results Summary* (Washington, D.C., April 2002), at http://usworkforce.org/reauthorization/policy.asp#survey.

A few states have merged their welfare and workforce development programs into a single agency at the state level. For example, the TANF program and the Office of Family Support were integrated into the Utah Department of Workforce Services. Other states have brought the TANF work program into the workforce development agency. For example, the Texas Workforce Commission, the agency responsible for WIA and Welfare-to-Work programs, administers the TANF employment and training program. A larger number of states use contracts, financial agreements, memoranda of understanding, and other formal agreements to coordinate services and activities between state welfare and workforce development agencies. Coordination can also occur at the state level through more informal means, such as sharing program information and forming interagency committees.

The types and scope of coordination vary considerably at the local level. One-stop career centers and local workforce investment boards have provided new avenues for collaboration between welfare and workforce agencies. Twenty-four states reported in 2001 that services for the TANF work program were collocated at the majority of their one-stops, and in 15 states these services were electronically linked to the majority of one-stops, or were provided by referral. In 2001, about half the states coordinated their TANF cash assistance, Food Stamp, or Medicaid programs with the one-stop centers electronically or by referral, and 16 states reported providing cash assistance services at least part time at the majority of their one-stop centers. For more information, see U.S. General Accounting Office, *Workforce Investment Act: Coordination of TANF Services Through One-Stops Has Increased Despite Challenges,* testimony, GAO-02-739T (Washington, D.C., May 16, 2002), at http://www.gao.gov/new.items/d02739t.pdf.

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The one-stop system provides several mechanisms for coordination and service integration. Welfare agencies and one-stops can be collocated or linked electronically or by referral. TANF staff can be collocated part time or full time at the one-stop, or the TANF program can be collocated with workforce development programs. One-stop partners can integrate services or agency activities to provide a more seamless service delivery environment, such as providing integrated intake and case management. The type of service provided can influence the level of coordination. For example, TANF work services are more likely than cash assistance services to be collocated. The TANF agency might also contract with the one-stop center to provide work-related services to TANF clients.

One-stop centers are not the only means for coordination at the local level. TANF agencies can contract with employment and training providers for welfare-to-work services. Staff from a workforce development program can be collocated at the TANF agency. Welfare and workforce programs can also collaborate through informal means.

How does collaboration benefit welfare and workforce development agencies and clients? Collaboration enables agencies to gain knowledge, access additional resources, reduce duplication of services, offer more comprehensive services, and benefit from complementary skills and services. Welfare and workforce development agencies can work together to plan and deliver employment, training, and support services to low-income clients. Collaboration also enables welfare and workforce agencies to serve employers more efficiently by minimizing duplicative job development activities.

Pindus et al. found that coordination resulted in advantages for TANF clients in sites that were able to achieve a relatively coordinated program. These advantages included simplified referrals, improved case management, the convenience of collocation, greater intensity of services to clients, and referrals to more services and a wider range of services. McIntire and Robins found that service integration enhances the retention of welfare clients at one-stop centers working with welfare recipients. The collocation of welfare and employment services also seems to offer significant net benefits for TANF clients and may improve relationships with welfare caseworkers. For more information, see Nancy Pindus et al., *Coordination and Integration of Welfare and Workforce Development Systems* (Washington, D.C.: The Urban Institute, March 2000), at http://aspe.hhs.gov/hsp/coord00/index.htm; and James McIntire and Amy Robins, *Fixing to Change: A Best Practices Assessment of One-Stop Job Centers Working with Welfare Recipients* (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation, March 1999), at http://aspe.hhs.gov/hsp/fixing2change99/index.htm. In collocated or integrated service delivery environments, TANF clients may benefit from receiving employment and training services alongside other job seekers.

How can agencies at the federal, state, and local levels facilitate collaboration? Collaboration brings mutual benefits to agencies, though the process is often challenging. Programmatic, logistical, and bureaucratic barriers can complicate collaboration between welfare and workforce development agencies. Distinct funding streams and program goals can result in different eligibility requirements, program definitions, reporting requirements, performance measures, and service priorities that make it difficult to achieve coordination or integration. Long-term leases, facilities limitations, and incompatible management information systems can pose logistical barriers. Bureaucratic barriers to collaboration include staffing issues, different organizational cultures, and concerns about information sharing and confidentiality. For more information, see Nancy Pindus et al., *Coordination and Integration of Welfare and Workforce Development Systems* (Washington, D.C.: The Urban Institute, March 2000), at http://aspe.hhs.gov/hsp/coord00/index.htm.

Notwithstanding these barriers, federal, state, and local agencies can facilitate collaboration by using certain strategies. At the federal level, some strategies to facilitate collaboration are:

- enhance coordination and communication among federal agencies;
- provide guidance, technical assistance, and training on interagency collaboration;
- support flexibility and innovation at the state and local levels;
- provide funding for demonstrations or evaluations to assess collaboration strategies; and
- disseminate promising strategies and models.

Congress and the executive branch can lessen some programmatic barriers to collaboration by, for example, simplifying requirements, loosening restrictions on blended funding, amending cost allocation requirements, developing commonalities across programs, and aligning federal rules and regulations. These steps can be taken through regulatory and policy changes, legislative amendments, and program reauthorizations. Federal agencies typically have some discretion to modify and coordinate program requirements. Agencies may also grant states waivers to modify rules and regulations that impede collaboration.

States can take these steps to improve state-level coordination:

- establish a broad policy agenda for workforce-related programs in the state;
- pursue joint planning and program coordination through, for example, unified plans;
- strengthen communication and formal and informal linkages among state agencies; and
- maximize the flexibility afforded in federal laws and use state discretion to address programmatic barriers to collaboration, for example, by establishing common goals and performance measures to the extent possible.

State can take these steps to encourage and facilitate local-level collaboration:

- develop coordinated information systems that local agencies can adopt;
- use state-level contracts to promote coordination in the service delivery system;
- provide local agencies with sufficient flexibility to enable partnerships to reflect local conditions and needs;
- provide high-level support for collaboration and offer local agencies technical assistance and training; and
- work with local agencies to identify areas where waivers of federal law and regulation could improve collaboration.

State agencies can also mandate coordination at the local level by, for example, requiring TANF agencies to be one-stop partners or requiring referral agreements between TANF agencies and one-stop centers. Effective collaboration, however, takes time to evolve even when there are mandates to collaborate.

At the local level, taking the time to address bureaucratic barriers to collaboration can help agencies create true partnerships. Local strategies include these:

- give staff the time and opportunity to build relationships and become knowledgeable about partner agencies and programs and support the ongoing process of maintaining relationships;
- develop mechanisms for communicating and for sharing client and program information;

- increase joint planning and goal-setting and include staff in planning activities; and
- provide county leadership and resources to support collaboration.

For agencies pursuing collocation or service integration, the following strategies may prove promising:

- integrate agency staff and organize them along functional lines rather than by agency affiliation;
- focus on customer needs and define a common mission;
- train staff to work in a collaborative environment and ensure staff is cross-trained on partner services;
- develop services that can meet the requirements of TANF and WIA; and
- provide child care on-site to assist TANF clients seeking services.

At the operational level, collaboration often involves some form of cost-benefit analysis. Mandates are not always sufficient leverage to get agencies to collaborate. Agencies that can create win-win situations and that can bring resources and incentives to the table – funds, facilities, client referrals, etc. – can be effective catalysts for collaboration.

How can the reauthorization of TANF in 2002 and of WIA in 2003 provide opportunities to improve collaboration between the welfare and workforce development systems? Both reauthorization debates are likely to address ways to improve collaboration between the welfare and workforce systems, such as providing incentives and encouragement for collaboration and giving states and localities additional flexibility to coordinate or integrate activities. Legislators may also consider adding mandates for collaboration, such as making TANF a mandatory WIA partner. The idea of mandating further collaboration is generating discussion. Some groups have expressed concern about the capacity of the one-stop system to serve more disadvantaged welfare clients.

TANF reauthorization is fully underway, and the U.S. Department of Labor has created a web site on "WIA Reauthorization and Linkages with the TANF Program" at http://usworkforce.org/reauthorization/. Some TANF reauthorization proposals address interagency coordination. For example, the House-passed TANF reauthorization bill incorporates, with some modifications, the Bush administration's idea for new waiver authority to facilitate program integration. For more information on TANF reauthorization proposals and legislation, visit the WIN web site on reauthorization at http://www.welfareinfo.org/tanf_reauthorization.htm. Although it is early in the WIA reauthorization process, some practitioners and advocates are already calling for more flexibility at the local level to design coordinated or integrated service delivery systems.

Changes in the TANF program following reauthorization will also affect collaboration between the welfare and workforce systems. For example, the types of work and training activities that states will emphasize, the amount of flexibility that state and local welfare agencies will have, and the amount of TANF funds that will be available for workforce development services and the one-stop system are factors that will influence collaboration.

Research Findings

According to the U.S. General Accounting Office, coordination between TANF-related programs and one-stop career centers has increased since spring 2000, when WIA was first implemented. Nearly all states report some coordination between the programs at the state or local level, though the extent of coordination, types of linkages, and challenges vary. For more information, see U.S. General

Accounting Office, *Workforce Investment Act: Coordination of TANF Services Through One-Stops Has Increased Despite Challenges,* testimony, GAO-02-739T (Washington, D.C., May 16, 2002), at http://www.gao.gov/new.items/d02739t.pdf. The U.S. Department of Labor recently released survey results on the relationship between TANF and WIA programs in each state. For more information, see U.S. Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration, Office of Policy and Research and Office of Field Operations, *State WIA-TANF Relationships Survey Results Summary* (Washington, D.C., April 2002), at http://usworkforce.org/reauthorization/policy.asp#survey.

Several research studies have examined collaboration between the welfare and workforce development systems under recent reform efforts. See, for example, Jeannine La Prad and Sharon Sand, *Integration of Welfare and Workforce Development Systems in the Midwest: Analysis of Implementation* (Ann Arbor, Mich.: Corporation for a Skilled Workforce, December 1999). Another study looked at five promising one-stop centers to identify effective approaches and practices and understand issues in serving welfare clients. For more information, see James McIntire and Amy Robins, *Fixing to Change: A Best Practices Assessment of One-Stop Job Centers Working with Welfare Recipients* (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation, March 1999), at http://aspe.hhs.gov/hsp/fixing2change99/index.htm. Still another study examined different approaches to coordination, the advantages of coordination for clients, and factors that promote and impede coordination. For more information, see Nancy Pindus et al., *Coordination and Integration of Welfare and Workforce Development Systems* (Washington, D.C.: The Urban Institute, March 2000), at http://aspe.hhs.gov/hsp/coord00/index.htm.

The Welfare-to-Work Grant program (WtW), authorized by the Balanced Budget Act of 1997, has played a role in promoting interaction between welfare and workforce agencies. Research for the National Evaluation of the Welfare-to-Work Grants program has found that although WtW is administered primarily by workforce development agencies at the local level, service delivery is often closely intertwined with the delivery of TANF work services. Even in sites where the WtW grantee agency has no formal TANF role, there are interagency agreements specifically for WtW. For more information, see Alan Hershey, Demetra Smith Nightingale, and Irma Perez-Johnson, *The Welfare to Work Grants Program: An Evaluation Update* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration, Office of Workforce Security, May 2001), at http://workforcesecurity.doleta.gov/nrc/pdf/hershey.pdf.

Innovative Practices

This section highlights examples of collaboration at the state and local levels. For more examples of innovative one-stop centers, see John J. Heldrich Center for Workforce Development, *One-Stop Innovations: Leading Change Under the WIA One-Stop System* (New Brunswick, N.J.: John J. Heldrich Center for Workforce Development at Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey, December 2001), at http://usworkforce.org/onestop/onestop-pp.htm.

The **Anne Arundel County** Department of Social Services (DSS) in Maryland has developed innovative partnerships with providers of employment, training, and support services to meet the needs of customers in its Job Centers. These Centers, which offer an array of employment and family services, serve not only public assistance clients but also any county resident on a walk-in basis. Maryland Job Service staff are collocated on-site and provide job search and job exchange services to Job Center customers. Job Service staff coordinate job fairs with DSS. Several other agencies have collocated staff at the Job Centers. In addition, DSS has developed partnerships with community organizations to help serve Job Center customers. A partnership with the Anne Arundel Community College provides access to specific skill training programs and employment

opportunities; two community college staff assist with Job Center referrals. The Job Centers are recognized as part of the WIA one-stop system, and the DSS deputy director responsible for the TANF program is a member of the local Workforce Investment Board. For more information, contact Vesta Kimble, deputy director, Family Investment Administration, Anne Arundel County Department of Social Services, 410/269-4603.

The Montgomery County Job Center in **Dayton, Ohio**, has 47 partners collocated on-site, including the Montgomery County Department of Job and Family Services (MCDJFS) and all required WIA partners. MCDJFS, the largest agency in the Job Center, administers TANF and WIA, assistance programs such as Medicaid and child care, and numerous contracts with community- and faith-based organizations. The department acts as the one-stop operator under WIA, coordinating the various programs and funding sources it administers to enhance community workforce development efforts. Job Center partner agencies bring their own resources and funding streams to the Center and lease space in the facility. In addition, Montgomery County provides $1.0 million per year to support the Job Center. Job Center partners collaborate on the operation of the Center and on service delivery issues. The Job Center Partners Council, composed of representatives from partner agencies, meets bi-monthly to solve problems, share information, discuss operational issues, and provide general oversight of the Center. Service delivery collaboration includes a multi-agency-staffed resource room; coordination of employer outreach and job development; common reception areas and a unified telephone system; integrated work teams with shared caseloads and common goals and outcomes; and a joint case management protocol that includes a commitment to share information if the customer consents. The Job Center director, an employee of Montgomery County, is responsible for promoting coordination and collaboration among all the Center partners. For more information, contact Gary Williamson, Job Center director, 937/225-4725; or visit http://www.thejobcenter.org/.

The **Florida** Workforce Innovation Act of 2000 consolidated various workforce programs and funding streams, including work-related programs for TANF clients. The act created Workforce Florida, Inc., a public-private partnership that is responsible for policy, planning, and oversight, and the Agency for Workforce Innovation, which is responsible for administrative and fiscal activities at the state level. The Agency for Workforce Innovation operates under a contract with the Workforce Florida, Inc. (WFI) board. At the state level, partnership agreements link WFI with several state agencies, including the Florida Department of Children and Families (DCF) that administers Temporary Cash Assistance, Food Stamps, Medicaid, and other programs. In addition, the secretary of DCF sits on the WFI board. At the local level, 24 regional workforce boards are responsible for workforce development activities. Workforce development services, including those for TANF clients, are provided through the one-stop system. Local DCF offices are collocated at some of the one-stop centers. For more information, contact Lucia Fishburne, Workforce Florida, Inc., 850/921-1119; or visit http://workforceflorida.com/.

The partner agencies in the **Lynnwood, Washington**, one-stop career center known as WorkSource Lynnwood have worked to create a one-stop environment that is seamless to the customer and integrated in service provision. The Department of Social and Health Services is the designated one-stop operator under WIA. Individuals can access TANF, Food Stamps, Medicaid, child care, and other supports through WorkSource Lynnwood. Key components of the WorkSource Lynnwood partnership include emphasizing customer service, designing activities to assist different customers, having all partners share resources and pay a share of the costs, and having staff rotate job functions to provide core, intensive, and training services to customers. In creating WorkSource Lynnwood, local agency and organization leaders used the maximum authority they had to develop an integrated system. Blending staff, programs, and resources has improved service to customers. Benefits for TANF clients include increased access to employers, career center activities, comprehensive

services, and education opportunities. For more information, contact Debbie Corn, manager, WorkSource Lynnwood, 425/673-3006; or visit http://www.worksourceonline.com/Lynnwood/.

The **Vermont** Department of Employment and Training (DET) and the Vermont Department of Prevention, Assistance, Transition, and Health Access (PATH), which administers the state's welfare reform program, have developed a close working relationship. PATH contracts with DET to provide case management and work services to welfare clients who are ready to begin making the transition from welfare to work. DET services are provided through one-stop career centers that are often located in the same building as the PATH office. PATH and DET staff can use the same computer system for shared clients. Staff at both agencies also participate in annual training together. In addition, DET has provided labor market training to PATH staff. At the state level, formal and informal opportunities for communication support the partnership between the two agencies. For example, management level staff from both agencies meet monthly. For more information, contact Diana Carminati, welfare to work programs director, Department of Prevention, Assistance, Transition, and Health Access, Vermont Agency of Human Services, 1-800/287-0589; or visit http://www.dsw.state.vt.us/.

For More Information...

Resource Contacts

Center for Law and Social Policy, contact Steve Savner, 202/906-8000; or visit http://www.clasp.org/.

National Governors Association, contact Martin Simon or Susan Golonka, 202/624-5300; or visit http://www.nga.org/.

The Urban Institute, 202/833-7200 or http://www.urban.org/.

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Office of Family Assistance, contact Robert Shelbourne, Policy and Program Development Division, 202/401-5150, or Lois Bell, Technical Assistance and Training Division, 202/401-9317; or visit http://www.acf.dhhs.gov/programs/ofa/.

U.S. Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration, Division of One-Stop Operations, contact Bonnie Coe, 202/693-2918, or Dick Ensor, 202/693-2792; or visit http://usworkforce.org/.

U.S. Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration, Division of Welfare-to-Work, contact Dennis Lieberman, 202/693-3375; or visit http://wtw.doleta.gov/.

U.S. General Accounting Office, Education, Workforce, and Income Security Issues, contact Sigurd Nilsen, 202/512-7215, or Dianne Blank, 202/512-5654.

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State Innovation Grants

The Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services invites state agencies to apply for grants in order to plan for, or implement, innovative approaches for the delivery of health and human Services.

For more information, visit: http://aspe.hhs.gov/state-innov-grants.htm

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