GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

Office of the Director
October 21, 2016

Dear TANF Working Group Members,

As the nation reflects on the 20th Anniversary of federal Welfare Reform, and we take account of the lessons learned nationally and in the District, we have a unique and important opportunity to shape a Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) policy that meets the needs of District families. We are grateful to be working in collaboration with you to lay the foundation for a policy that is informed by these lessons, as well as your expertise, and the reality that families in the District face.

As a result of your efforts, I am pleased to share the attached report, *Recommendations for Development of a TANF Hardship Extension Policy for Washington, DC,* created by the TANF Working Group and submitted to me earlier this week. Thank you for your participation, input and comments to the report. The recommendations of the Working Group will strongly influence our work going forward.

As the *Executive Summary* states, this report documents the recommendations, deliberations, and stakeholder feedback for developing a hardship extension policy and related improvements to the District of Columbia's TANF program. What is clear from the report you created together, is the careful and deliberate approach to ensuring the values we share as a community are reflected in the policy recommendations you brought forward: that the enrichment, security and wellbeing of children is paramount to the foundation of any TANF policy; that services to parents should increase economic stability and independence for families through access to meaningful education and employment participation, and that there are clear protections in place to support our most vulnerable families.

Thank you again, for your time, expertise, and partnership. I look forward to exploring these recommendations with you further, and together, using these recommendations as the foundation for crafting and implementing a new, comprehensive TANF policy for the District of Columbia.

Sincerely,

Laura Green Zeilinger

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Barbara Poppe and Associates
The collective for impact

Report to the Director of the DC Department of Human Services (DHS) from the Working Group to Inform a TANF Hardship Extension Policy for the District of Columbia

Recommendations for Development of a TANF Hardship Extension Policy for Washington, DC

Prepared by Barbara Poppe and Associates
in partnership with the
Economic Security Administration (ESA) within the
DC Department of Human Services
October 18, 2016

DHS Mission Statement:

The mission of the DC Department of Human Services is to empower every District resident to reach their full potential by providing meaningful connections to work opportunities, economic assistance, and supportive services.

For more information, please visit www.dhs.dc.gov.

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Executive Summary

This report documents the recommendations, deliberations, and stakeholders' feedback for developing a hardship extension policy and related improvements to the District of Columbia's Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program. The Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Act of 1996 (PRWORA) that created TANF imposed a 60 month lifetime limit on TANF assistance. If states wish to extend TANF assistance beyond 60 months, federal law provides that states must fund those services themselves but may use federal TANF funds to support up to 20 percent of the caseload beyond 60 months. Many states have developed TANF hardship policies so that vulnerable families can continue to receive assistance beyond 60 months. In 2011, the DC Council enacted a time limit to step down benefits for families who had been on the TANF program for longer than 60 months. In FY16 and FY17, the Mayor and Council chose to continue funding for families beyond 60 months and not implement a full elimination of benefits. Current law mandates that the new 60 month time limit go into effect on October 1, 2017.

The *District of Columbia Public Assistance Amendment Act of 2015* (B21-0515), introduced by Councilmembers Nadeau, Silverman, May, Todd, Orange, and Bonds on December 1, 2015, is under consideration by the DC Council and has been referred to the Committee on Health and Human Services. The legislation would change the District's current TANF time limit to continue providing cash benefits past 60 months to certain groups of TANF customers and maintain benefits for children if the adults in the grant are no longer eligible.

In preparation for the potential of a TANF time limit being enforced in 2017, DC's Department of Human Services (DHS) embarked on a comprehensive process to engage multiple stakeholders in a dialogue about options for a possible TANF hardship extension policy. DHS invited TANF customers, advocates, providers, and members of the DC Council to join a TANF Working Group and outlined a process which included listening sessions, Working Group meetings, and community meetings held over the span of two months, facilitated by Barbara Poppe and Associates, an outside consultant. This report was written to document the process and outline recommendations for submission to Laura Green Zeilinger, Director of DC's Department of Human Services.

The Working Group addressed the following questions: (1) Which families should continue to receive TANF assistance past 60 months, (2) What amount of assistance should be provided and for how long, and (3) What conditions and requirements should be in place in order to continue receiving assistance beyond 60 months. Also considered were best approaches for serving families after their TANF assistance ends involuntarily. A common goal among all Working Group members was to identify and recommend a policy that was two-generational (i.e., focused on enriching both parent and child), kept appropriate resources in the household to support children, incentivized work participation for the heads of household, and protected the most vulnerable families.

This report provides a summary description of the TANF program and its key components, qualitative and quantitative data considered by the Working Group, a set of recommendations for consideration by the Administration and Council on TANF extension policy options, suggested improvements to the Program on Work Employment and Responsibility (POWER), improvements to TANF Employment Program (TEP) services, and recommended services for which TANF customers should be eligible for after timing off of TANF.

The Working Group tried to reach consensus support for each recommendation. When consensus was not achievable, a hand vote was taken. If there was a majority in favor, the recommendation was accepted with the number of dissenting votes noted.

The group considered a number of policy frameworks for how the District could extend benefits to particular families after they have been on TANF for longer than 60 months. The Working Group identified a preferred extension policy that had the approval of a majority of group members. That proposal would create two separate TANF grants: a Child Enrichment Grant and a Parent TANF Grant with Individual Responsibility Plan (IRP) Compliance (hereafter referred to as Parent TANF Grant). The group felt that this approach embraced a two-generational policy that kept resources in the household to protect and support children and also incentivized program participation on the part of the head of household. This approach did not receive unanimous approval when a vote on this option was taken; four group members dissented. Those who dissented agreed in principle with the policy recommendation but disagreed with the suggestion that the group made with regard to how the two grants would be weighted.

Other policy options considered by the Working Group included the following:

- Providing an extension to families at imminent risk of homelessness
- Providing an extension to families at risk of entry into child protection
- Grant extensions beyond 60 months during periods of high unemployment
- An expansion of eligibility for POWER to customers with a newborn
- Improved service delivery
- Improved communication with customers about TANF program services and community resources
- Improved assessments to identify customers' barriers to employment
- The creation of more personalized Individual Responsibility Plans (IRPs) and additional supports
- Ensuring that families that are involuntarily exited from TANF receive all the other services provided by the District for which they are eligible as well as referrals to community programs that might meet a family's unique needs.

A number of other more specific policy recommendations for various parts of the TANF program were documented throughout this process. DHS will work with the Office of the Chief Financial Officer (OCFO) to determine the estimated budget costs for each of the policy options considered by the Working Group.

Background

Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) is a federal block grant that states receive to provide cash assistance and support services to low-income families with children. Federal law has a 60 month time limit on assistance for use of Federal TANF funds. However, Federal law also provides that states may use Federal TANF funds to support up to 20 percent of the caseload beyond 60 months (known as a hardship exemption).

In 2011, the DC Council voted to step down benefits for families who had been on TANF for longer than 60 months and imposed a complete cut-off as of October 1, 2015. In FY16 and FY17, the Mayor and Council twice extended that time limit. Current law mandates that the time limit go into effect on October 1, 2017.

More than 15,000 families are currently enrolled in the District of Columbia's TANF program. Approximately 5,700 of those families have received TANF benefits for longer than 60 months and are subject to a loss of benefits if the time limit goes into effect on October 1, 2017. Families on TANF are some of the most vulnerable in the District with complex challenges that prevent them from working. DC also has a particular job market where the jobs available often do not match the skill set and background of TANF customers.

Many states have developed TANF hardship extension policies that allow families with particular circumstances to remain on TANF in order to minimize harm to the family from a hard cutoff from cash assistance. Given a possible upcoming TANF time limit for District families, DHS sought to examine options for a hardship extension policy. With an effective TANF extension policy, some of the District's most vulnerable families would continue to receive critical support through TANF.

Charge to the Working Group

Laura Green Zeilinger, Director of the DC Department of Human Services (DHS), charged the Economic Security Administration (ESA) within DHS to convene a working group comprised of key constituencies to develop recommendations for a hardship extension policy. The TANF Working Group, composed of TANF customers, advocates, service providers, lawmakers, and government administrators (see preface for a list of Working Group members), was charged with submitting a report with their recommendations for an extension policy to Director Zeilinger by September 30, 2016 (however, the deadline was extended when stakeholders requested more time to review the draft report). The policy options were to address which families should continue to receive assistance, the amount and length of time that assistance should be provided, and the conditions and requirements to continue receiving assistance beyond 60 months. The charge included making recommendations based on targeted budget marks for FY18. This part of the charge was dismissed before the final Working Group meeting, however, in response to some Working Group members who preferred to provide policy recommendations outside the constraints of budget marks. The TANF Working Group was also asked to recommend approaches to more effectively serve families after their TANF assistance ends.

Overview of the Process

DHS released a competitive RFP to solicit a facilitator and awarded a contract to Public Performance Management, a locally owned business. Public Performance Management suggested Barbara Poppe and Associates as the facilitator. The TANF Working Group met three times during August and September 2016. Four separate listening sessions were conducted with TANF customers, advocates, service providers, and Councilmembers in advance of the first working group meeting. Five Community Dialogues were also held with TANF customers throughout the Working Group process to elicit feedback and explore ways to help households that would not receive a hardship extension. The Working Group also heard a presentation from Dr. LaDonna Pavetti, Vice President for Family Income Support Policy at the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, a nationally recognized expert, who discussed the history of TANF time limits and the effects of time limits on families. Agendas and notes from the Working Group meetings as well as summary notes from the Listening Sessions and Community Dialogues are included in the Appendix.

Purpose and Value of TANF

Statutory and Regulatory Background

Created by the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 (PRWORA), TANF has been both criticized and applauded for its work requirements, time limits, sanctions policy, and other features. Funded through a federal block grant, states have wide discretion in their use of TANF funds, so long as the uses meet one of four purposes:

1) Provide assistance to needy families so that children may be cared for in their own home or the home of relatives;
2) End the dependence of needy parents on government benefits by promoting job preparation, work, and marriage;
3) Prevent and reduce the incidence of out-of-wedlock pregnancies; and
4) Encourage the formation and maintenance of two-parent families.

States have wide latitude in the interpretation and implementation of the 60 month time limit. Some states have very narrowly adhered to the federally defined time limit and in some cases have even shortened it. Other states have maximized and even augmented the federal grant with local resources to support more families under more circumstances. Federal law does not impose a time limit on "child-only families" (where there is not an eligible adult[1] in the assistance unit) or on families receiving assistance funded entirely with state funds.

[1] Non-eligible adults include an immigrant parent, a parent on Supplemental Security Income (SSI), or a nonparent caregiver.

There are no two TANF programs in the nation which look alike. When PROWRA was passed in 1996, many states went through the exercise of changing their programs to conform to the federal regulations at that time. The District elected to invest local resources so that families would not lose assistance, which effectively removed a time limit on receipt of TANF benefits. However, in 2011, District law changed to enact a time limit and to gradually reduce benefits for those exceeding 60 months on TANF.

A new bill is currently under consideration by the DC Council that would amend the District's TANF time limit policy. The *District of Columbia Public Assistance Amendment Act of 2015* (B21-0515), introduced by Councilmembers Nadeau, Silverman, May, Todd, Orange, and Bonds on December 1, 2015, has been referred to the Committee on Health and Human Services. Under B21-0515, multiple groups would be exempted from the TANF time clock including children, customers who are caring for a household member who is physically or mentally incapacitated, customers dealing with domestic violence, pregnant or parenting teens who meet certain conditions, a parent or caretaker who is 60 years or older, and those who are meeting the requirements of their Individual Responsibility Plan and are enrolled in an education or training program. B21-0515 would also grant TANF extensions beyond 60 months to customers based on the following criteria:

(1) The same criteria laid out above that would qualify a customer for an exemption
(2) If customers are complying with their Individual Responsibility Plan (IRP)[2] and are not sanctioned
(3) If the unemployment rate for customers without a high school degree is higher than seven percent

Exemptions v. Extensions

Exemptions allow households to receive the full TANF grant, "stop the clock," and suspend participation requirements. Exemptions are for people who cannot engage in work activities due to significant barriers whether temporary or long-term. In the District, TANF customers who participate in the Program on Work, Employment, and Responsibility (POWER) can receive an exemption based on short or long-term issues that prevent customers from working such as mental or physical health issues (including substance abuse treatment), disabilities, domestic violence, TANF customers over the age of 60, pregnant or parenting teenagers who meet certain conditions, and those who are caring for a family member who is mentally or physically incapacitated.

An extension would allow a family to regain eligibility for TANF if they meet certain conditions and provides additional time on TANF for families who have already reached the Federal time limit. States have latitude in determining who is eligible for an extension. Factors such as a high unemployment rate, personal barriers, and preserving resources in the home for children are all examples of criteria that states have used for their TANF extension policies.

[2] An IRP is the agreed upon plan that a customer develops with the assistance of their case worker to outline their goals, action steps, and timetable for completion.

(4) If the customer experiences significant barriers to employment including low literacy, a learning disability, or physical or mental impairments
(5) If the customer is at risk of homelessness
(6) If the customer's children are at risk of entering the foster care system.

Customer Perspectives

From the perspective of families that receive TANF, as captured through the Working Group deliberations, the Listening Sessions, and the Community Dialogues, TANF is viewed as the final safety net when all other resources have been exhausted. TANF allows families to care for their children and advance their efforts to improve their family's economic stability through employment and training activities. TANF customers cited several barriers to being able to fully participate in the TANF program, including lack of access to childcare, transportation, case management, and employment leads. Customers identified and appreciated the strengths of the program and spoke highly of individualized case management and the opportunities available through the service delivery options.

Customers also articulated that even though TANF is a safety net, it is a porous safety next. The mere fact that one receives TANF does not ensure either stability or success. The lack of a broad network of support means that even the slightest bump or anomaly can send some families into a tailspin, which can be hard to stop. A car problem for one family, which could be remedied with a $300 credit card payment, may for a very low-income family quite easily result in a loss of transportation, which results in the loss of a job, which results in the loss of a home, which then leads a family to the TANF program.

Expert perspectives

In the presentation to the Working Group by Dr. LaDonna Pavetti, Dr. Pavetti discussed the history of TANF time limits and the impact of time limits on families. She stated that back in the 1990s when originally proposed, the time limit came with the guarantee of a job at the end of the timeline. However, that job guarantee did not remain in the final legislation (PRWORA) that ended up becoming law. It was never the original intent of the federal law to take away safety nets but rather to provide a sense of urgency for TANF agencies and participants to secure employment. Additionally, when the law was drafted, far less was known about the characteristics and needs of families receiving cash assistance. We now know much more and can use this knowledge to our benefit.

Dr. Pavetti suggested that given what we have learned from other states that have implemented time limits, the likelihood of employment after being cut off of TANF due to a time limit is about 30% at best. Research suggests that if people are cut off, they are not likely to find jobs on their own. If extensions are not put in place, there will be a group of families that continues to be unemployed after losing their benefits and there is a low likelihood that individuals will receive other cash benefits (i.e., Supplemental Security Income or SSI) since enrolling in SSI is very difficult. Most families who have been on TANF longer than 60 months have multiple barriers to work but not one barrier large enough to qualify them for SSI. At best, 10% are likely to receive SSI benefits.

Ethnographic research has shown that when families have no available cash, they resort to desperate measures to meet their basic needs. Such measures include moving into situations or homes that individuals know are unhealthy or engaging in risky work. Many families may scrape together money to meet their needs but these opportunities are not usually steady, creating daily uncertainty and stress. Dr. Pavetti stated that cash is a necessity for all families because other options are not enough to meet needs with consistency.

Citing a study that was conducted in Washington state where they tightened extensions for time limits, Dr. Pavetti said that the state saw an increase in homelessness as well as an increase in child maltreatment resulting in an increase in foster care and engagement with the child welfare system. Additionally, if children are in unstable situations and exposed to harm, there are lifelong health consequences which result in huge costs in the healthcare system. Dr. Pavetti stated that it is also important to consider what will happen when the next recession hits.

Dr. Pavetti commended DC for the incredible progress that has been made in employment services but said that DC's employment services are not necessarily geared towards people who are not quick to gain work. Some individuals need more time to work on mental health or other barriers and these individuals are not well served by current programs. It is very important to understand that data does not show that removing benefits leads people to work if there is not a good job market. People often do not have jobs due to their lack of skills and resources. The lack of a job may be because there aren't sufficient job openings that fit customers' schedule as parents. TANF is an important safety net that should catch people when the labor market and economic systems do not work.

Other perspectives

For some members of the Working Group, the primary importance of TANF was that it is a resource to protect children and meet a family's most basic needs. For others, the primary importance of TANF is to provide a set of tailored services to help parents achieve greater economic independence through training, education, and employment placement while receiving cash assistance to help a family meet its basic needs. Many also viewed TANF as a program that should address both core values.

All Working Group members noted that while the actual amount of cash assistance for families beyond 60 months is very low, it was in fact very valuable since there were so few other resources available to a family. For example, the ability to use TANF cash assistance to pay the utility bill was cited as a way for a family to continue to stay with a friend or family member and avoid homelessness. For some, however, tension arises when discussing whether to continue providing TANF cash assistance to households as a safety net even when the adult is not meeting TANF participation requirements. Some believe that by providing cash assistance without participation requirements is counter to encouraging and supporting work.

Stakeholders in the TANF program in the District of Columbia have diverse values with regard to the program. On the one hand, research shows that pulling cash out of an already impoverished home can harm the children in that home and create pressures on other systems in the community. Also, with the small size of the TANF grant, customers are forced to make hard choices. Those choices invariably bend towards making the best decision possible to meet the presenting need or crisis. On the other hand, TANF is designed to be a temporary support for families while the adults in the household build their capacity. It invests in parents through job training and employment programs, barrier remediation programs, and work supports. It recognizes that the only way that an individual – and by extension, a family – can build self-sufficiency, is through engaging. The TANF program in the District has been designed to define engagement in the broadest manner possible. For one, it could be a full time job; for another it could be caring for a sick child; and for another it could be attending substance abuse treatment.

All these perspectives represent reasonable values. Some identify the child as the core value, regardless of the engagement of the parents. Others identify the engagement of the parent as the core value, regardless of the impact on the child. It is important to recognize that there is also the position of some – including some customers, some providers, and some among the general public – who hold the value that "enough is enough." Some believe that 60 months is ample opportunity to pull oneself together and that each individual has personal responsibility for taking care of their families.

Description of the DC TANF Program

TANF Program Overview

The federal TANF block grant has received the same level of funding, $16.5 billion, every year since TANF's inception in 1996. Due to inflation, the real value of the TANF block grant has fallen by about one-third.[3] In FY2016, DC's TANF program received $92 million from the TANF block grant. TANF customers who have been on the program for less than 60 months receive an average of $395 per month in cash assistance. After a customer has been on TANF for longer than 60 months, their benefits are scaled back to roughly $150 per month on average.

DHS strives to implement an accountable, compassionate, and person-centered model to help customers to build their economic security, obtain or increase earnings, and transition off TANF. The agency offers a variety of services including:

- Enhanced customer assessments
- Personalized referrals to services to address barriers
- Referrals to a TANF Employment Provider (TEP) to obtain employment or increase employability skills
- Case coordination and supervision
- Efforts to unify case plans for families connected to multiple agencies
- Housing referrals and support
- Connection to employment and community services, and
- Wrap around case management and coordination.

In addition to cash assistance, TANF customers in the District can access a number of support services including job training, education, health care, mental health services, assistance with domestic violence, and substance abuse treatment. TANF customers can also access a number of individualized services to help remediate barriers that prevent them from participating fully or partially with work requirements. Examples of these services include supporting customers with parenting challenges, assisting customers with navigating their medical providers to obtain documentation to apply for POWER, and working with parents to improve crisis resolution skills. Five years ago, DHS undertook a major redesign of the TANF program. By design, the program strives to be responsive and is continually evolving to better meet the needs of families.

TANF Employment Program

The TANF Employment Program (TEP) relies on a network of service provider partners (internal, contractual, grantee, and sister agencies) to deliver work readiness, job placement and retention services, and barrier remediation assistance. The mission of TEP is to assist customers in enhancing their

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[3] Center on Budget and Policy Priorities: http://www.cbpp.org/research/policy-basics-an-introduction-to-tanf

education and skill levels to help them prepare for, find, and retain unsubsidized employment in order to ultimately earn a family-sustaining income.

The TANF Comprehensive Assessment (TCA) determines each customer's education, skills, and experience and the extent to which his/her personal health or other barriers may impede their ability to engage in work activities. Upon completion of the TCA, customers complete an Initial Individual Responsibility Plan (Initial IRP) with DHS staff. The results determine the TEP service provider that is most appropriate for the customer given his/her presenting circumstances, abilities, strengths, needs, and goals.

Work-eligible customers, that is, adults that receive TANF and are required to adhere to work participation requirements, must participate in activities that will assist them in obtaining employment. The number of hours in which a TANF customer must participate depends on the age of his/her youngest child and whether the customer is a single parent or part of a two-parent household.

DHS currently has contracts with ten TEP service providers as follows:

1. Six TEP service providers provide **work readiness** services to customers with low personal and health barriers and low levels of education and skills. Services are geared towards enhancing customers' skills and education to position them for employment:
   - America Works of Washington, DC
   - Career Team, LLC
   - Grant Associates
   - KRA
   - Maximus Human Services
   - OIC/DC

2. Four TEP service providers provide **job placement** services to customers with low personal and health barriers and moderate to high levels of education and skills with services that are geared towards rapid employment:
   - America Works of Washington, DC
   - Career Team, LLC
   - KRA
   - Maximus Human Services

DHS assigns each customer to an appropriate TEP service provider type based on the customer's TCA outcomes, accounting for all goals, unique needs, and choices in provider types. TEP service providers support customers with intensive case management by guiding and facilitating their connection to employment services, available training and education programs, and any other barrier mitigating services they may need.

Case managers with the TEP providers work with each customer to create a Detailed Individual Responsibility Plan (Detailed IRP) that acts as the customer's roadmap to securing employment. The

Detailed IRP outlines specific steps that the customer agrees to and commits to take in order to address and remove barriers and find and retain employment. It also provides the basis by which any future sanctions would be supported through non-compliance with the customer's Detailed IRP.

TEP services include but are not limited to:

1. Child care subsidy referral
2. Career exploration assistance
3. Referrals to education and training programs
4. Structured job search
5. Job development and placement
6. Coordination of services to remove barriers:
    a. Domestic violence
    b. Housing instability
    c. Mental health services
7. Wrap-around case management
8. Soft skills building:
    a. Resume writing
    b. Job coaching/interview preparation
    c. Business etiquette
    d. Professional attire
    e. Conflict resolution
    f. Time management and scheduling
    g. Financial literacy/counseling

A customer who fails to comply with requirements of the TANF program may face a financial sanction that removes a portion of the TANF grant, thereby reducing the customer's cash assistance.

TANF Sanctions Policy in DC

A sanction is a reduction in the amount of a customer's TANF cash benefit. It is imposed for failure to engage in work activities. Sanctioning is required by federal law but like other components of the TANF program, states have a wide degree of latitude in how sanctions are implemented. In 2011, the DC Council approved legislation and regulations were promulgated to implement a progressive sanction policy with three levels of sanctioning. A Level 1 sanction would lead to a 20% reduction in cash assistance (roughly $70-$80 dollars less in cash per month, on average), a Level 2 sanction would lead to a 50% reduction, and a Level 3 sanction would stop cash assistance for a family altogether.

In regulation, if a customer does not participate with their TEP service provider or other providers at all for four weeks in a row, or only participates at a low level for eight weeks in a row, s/he would receive a Level 1 sanction. If they continue to not participate or consistently participate at a low level after they

receive a Level 1 Sanction, they would receive a Level 2 Sanction. If they continue to not participate after a Level 2 sanction, they would receive a Level 3 sanction and all cash assistance would stop until the customer fully participates for four weeks in a row, within 12 months. Customers must work with their TEP service providers to ensure they are engaging with the program to avoid sanctions. Thus far, the District has only implemented Level 1 sanctions.

The District's sanctions policy is intended to encourage TANF customers to participate with service providers so that they receive the services they need to obtain employment and alleviate barriers to work and well-being. Customers can avoid a sanction by participating with their TANF service provider or vendor. They can also avoid a sanction by showing consistent improvement in their participation. It is the responsibility of the customer to communicate with their case manager to develop a plan that works for them. Customers can also re-negotiate their Individual Responsibility Plan (IRP) ***one time*** to avoid a sanction. In order to lift a sanction, customers have to re-engage with their service provider according to their IRP for four weeks in a row. Once customers participate for four weeks, their benefits will be restored to the full level. If they continue to fully participate for six months, their sanction history will be reset as if they were never sanctioned.

Data on Families Receiving TANF Cash Benefits

Data about TANF customers who have been in the program for longer than 48 months (and therefore potentially subject to an upcoming time limit) was shared by DHS during the Working Group meetings. The source of the data included but was not limited to findings from the DHS Family by Family Survey (conducted in the spring of 2016 with customers who had been on TANF longer than 48 months), the Customer Assessment, Tracking and Case History (CATCH) Database (DHS's TANF customer information management system), and TANF Comprehensive Assessment (TCA) findings.

Family by Family Survey Overview

A comprehensive outreach effort was undertaken by DHS, providers, and home visitor grantees in the spring of 2016 to administer surveys to all of the 6,559 TANF customers who had been in the program for longer than 48 months. The survey objectives were as follows:

- Outreach to as many families facing a potential loss of TANF benefits as possible.
- Learn about customers' challenges and barriers to engagement in employment and educational activities as well as their experience with the TANF program.
- Identify families who may be eligible for POWER and connect them to services.
- Encourage families to engage with existing TANF resources.
- Identify additional areas of need and support for TANF customers.

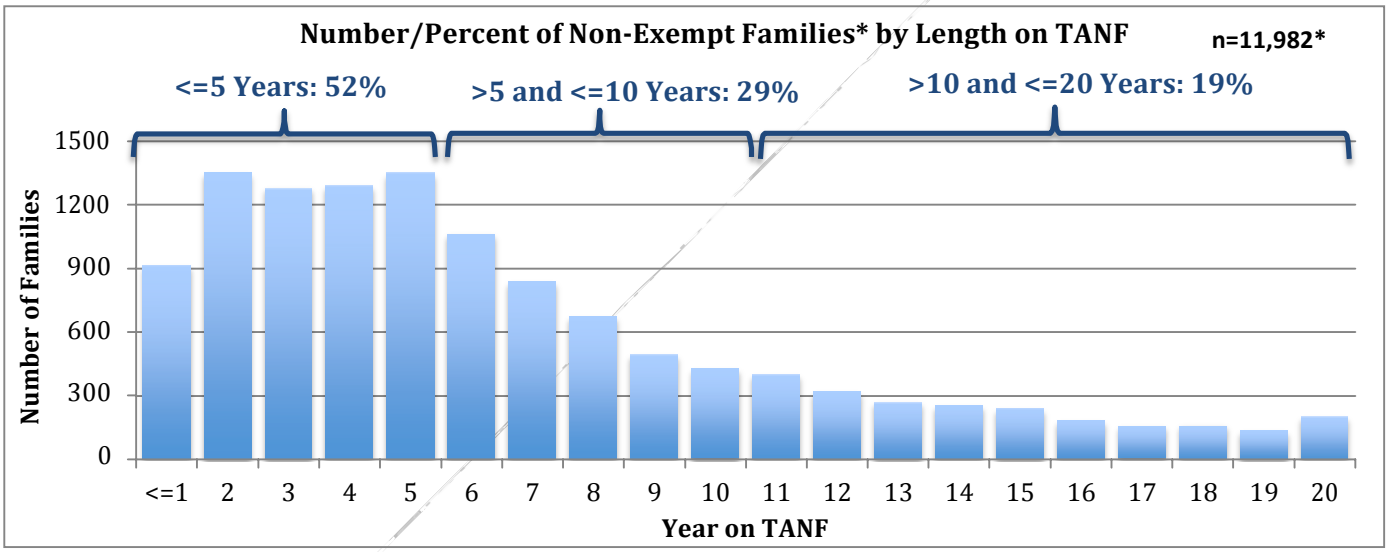
- **Survey target population**: 6,559 adults who would reach or exceed 61 months (more than 5 years) on TANF by October 2016.
- **Outreach activity:** Outreach was completed to 96% of the customers.
- **Survey participants**: 42% of the target population (2,787 individuals) completed the survey.
- **Survey method**: Phone interviews or face-to-face interviews following mailing and robo-calls.
- **Survey administration time period**: March to May 2016.
- **Surveyors**: DHS Office of Work Opportunity (OWO), TANF home visitor grantees, TANF Employment Program (TEP) providers, and DHS's Community Outreach, Response, and Engagement team.

Characteristics of Families Subject to Loss of TANF Benefits due to Time Limit

Families on TANF by Length of Stay

- Approximately 48% of families on TANF in DC (nearly 5,800) have been served by the TANF program for more than 60 months.

Figure 1. TANF Customers by Length of Stay



* *This figure does not include child only households and families served in the POWER program. The data was extracted as of July 2016.*

Age and Gender Distribution

- Ninety-six percent (96%) of heads of households subject to loss of TANF benefits are women, mostly single mothers, and their median age is 33 years old.
- More than 10,000 children are estimated to be affected by the 60-month time limit and 61% of those children are under age 10.

Figure 2. Age and Gender Distribution

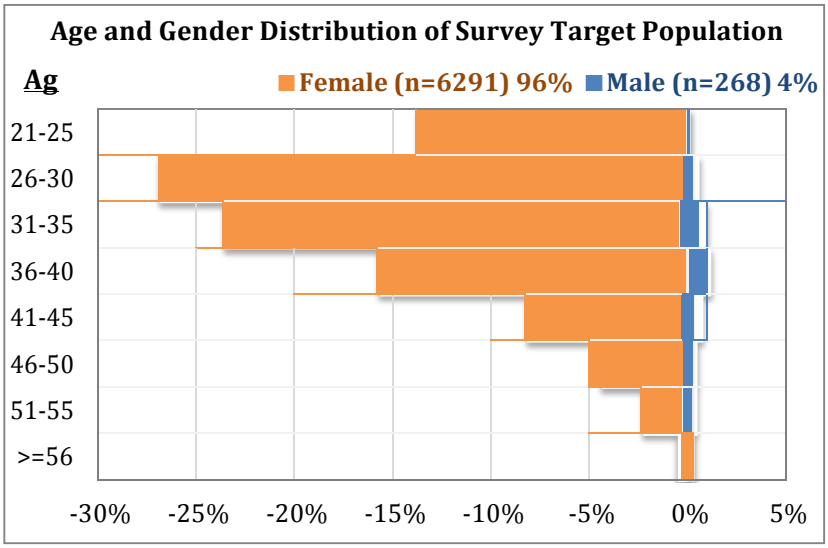
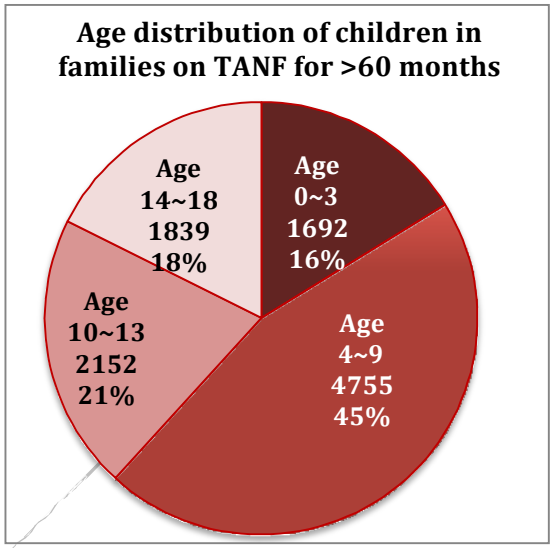


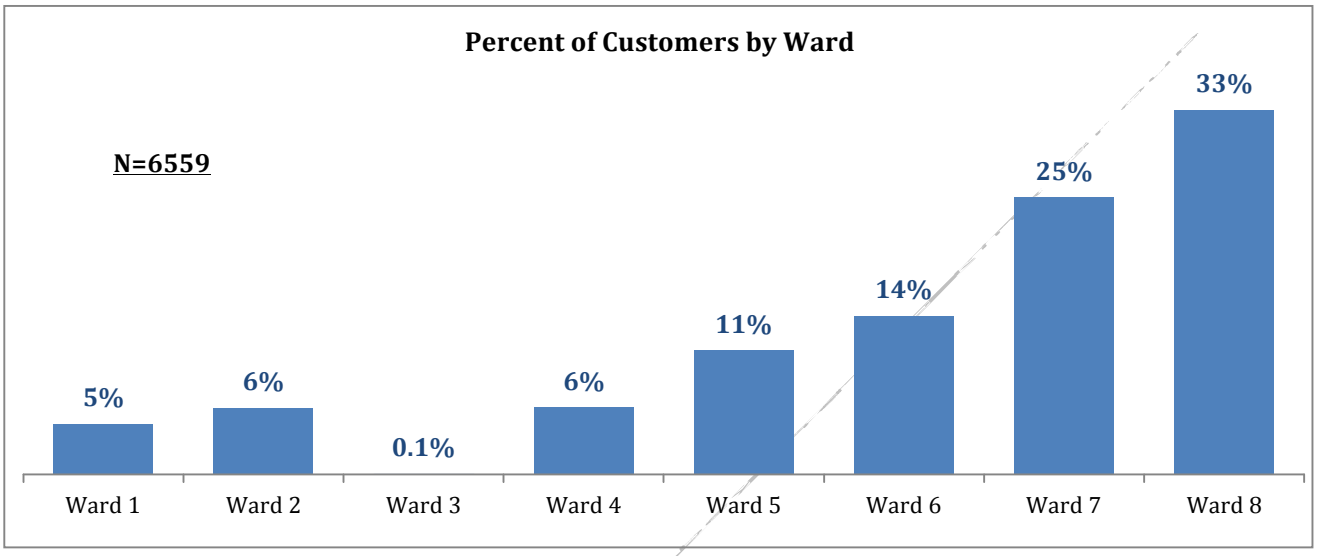
Figure 3. Age Distribution of Children



Geographic Distribution

- Almost three out of four families who are subject to a loss of TANF benefits reside in Wards 6, 7, or 8.

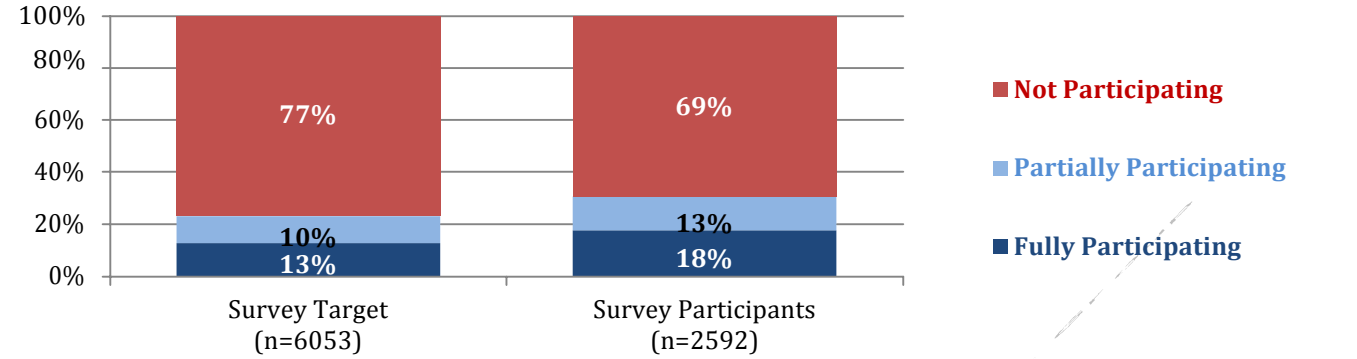
Figure 4. Geographic Distribution of Families by Ward



Engagement (Employment and Education)

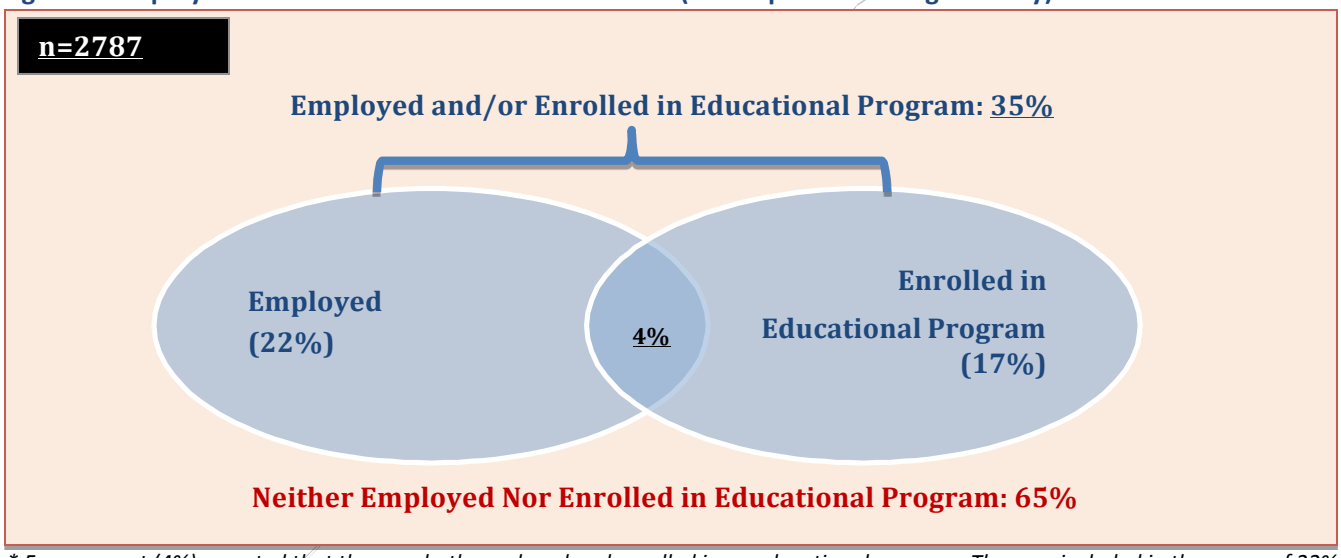
- Nearly four out of five customers subject to a loss of TANF are not engaged in employment or education.
- Two thirds of survey respondents indicated that they are NEITHER employed NOR enrolled in an educational program.

Figure 5. Engagement Level of Families >60 Months



** Each customer's engagement level is determined based on the average hours of participation in work or training activities toward their required hours. Data above is based on what's been recorded in the system (CATCH) regarding their engagement level as of March 2016 for those customers selected for the survey, NOT based on respondents' survey results.*

Figure 6. Employment and Education Enrollment Status (Self-reported through Survey)



** Four percent (4%) reported that they are both employed and enrolled in an educational program. They are included in the group of 22% that are employed and the group of 17% that are enrolled in educational program.*

Employment and Earnings

- Two out of five customers who were employed worked more than 30 hours per week but half of them made less than $500 every two weeks.
- The overall level and the median wage of TANF customers gradually increased in the last three years. However, the level of the increase in their median wage has been minimal and is not commensurate with the level of the increase in the DC minimum wage.
- The median hourly wage of TANF customers has been consistently above the District's minimum wage level but far below the DC living wage level.

Figure 7. Hourly Wage

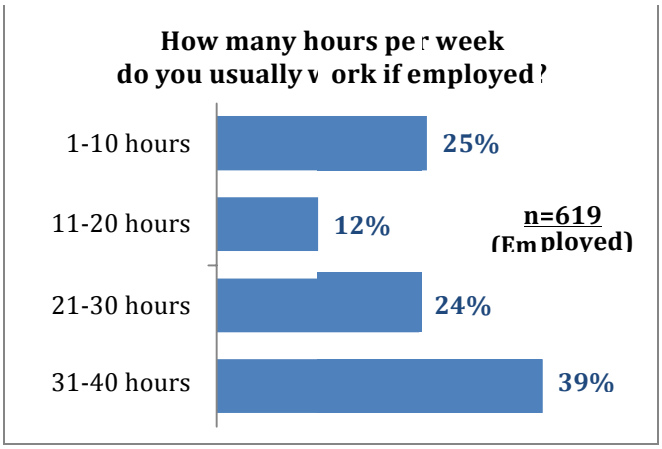
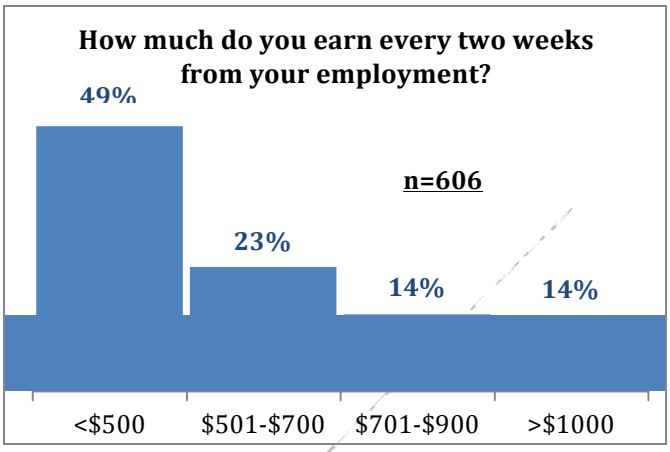


Figure 8. By-weekly Salary



* *The DC minimum wage at the time of survey was $10.50 per hour and the living wage was $13.85. The minimum wage has increased to $11.50 per hour as of July 2016.*

Figure 9. TANF Customers by Hourly Wage Level at Job Entry (FY13~FY15)

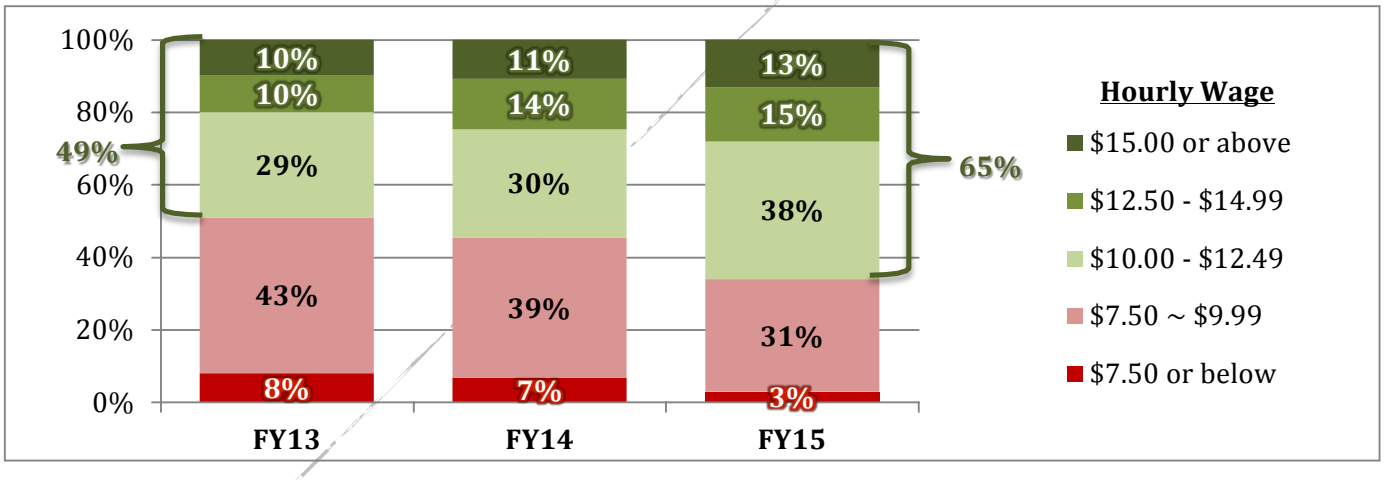
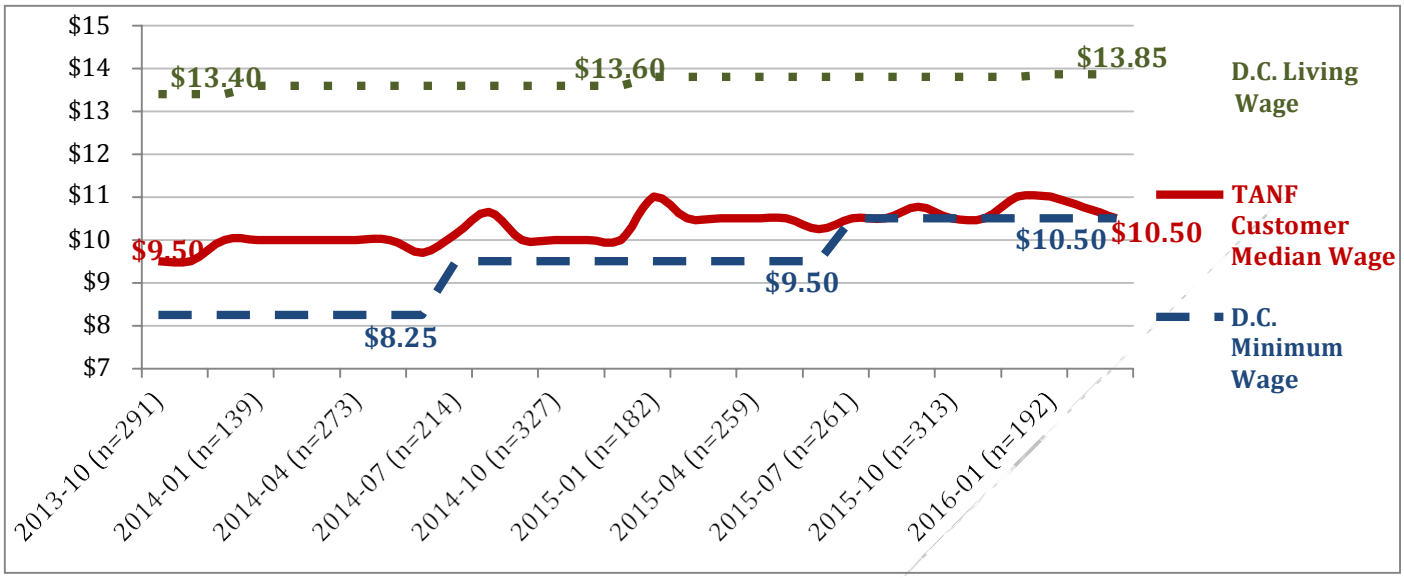


Figure 10. TANF Customer Median Wage vs. Minimum Wage and Living Wage

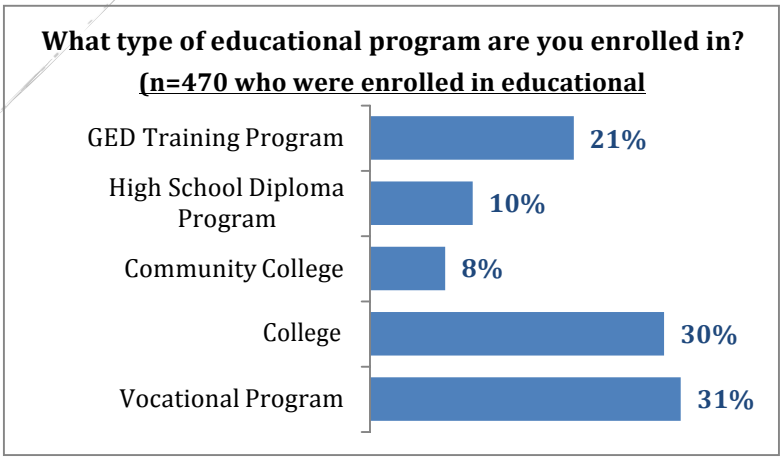


* *The Living Wage Act of 2006, Title I, DC Law No. 16-118, (DC Official Code §§ 2-220.01-.11) set a living wage for those employed by contractors or subcontractors of the DC Government and it is supposed to be reset each year to reflect cost-of-living estimates.*

Education

One third of customers enrolled in education programs were pursuing a GED or high school diploma and another third were enrolled in college.

Figure 11. Type of Educational Program



Barriers to Engagement

- More than half of customers reported that health issues prevented them from working or attending training.
- Lack of work experience and education were additional major barriers to engagement in employment or training.
- Many customers do not get proper treatment for their physical and mental health problems.

- Nearly half of families facing a loss of TANF benefits continue to grapple with child care and child well-being.

Figure 12. Customers with Health Issues That Prevent Them from Working

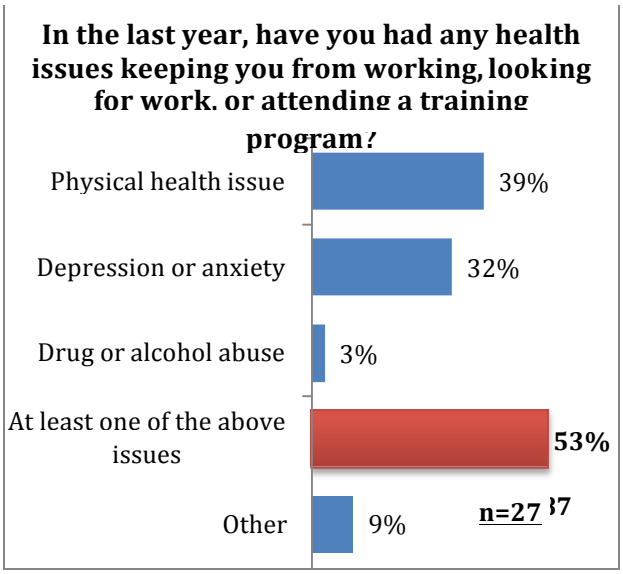


Figure 13. Other Barriers and Issues that prevent Customers from Working

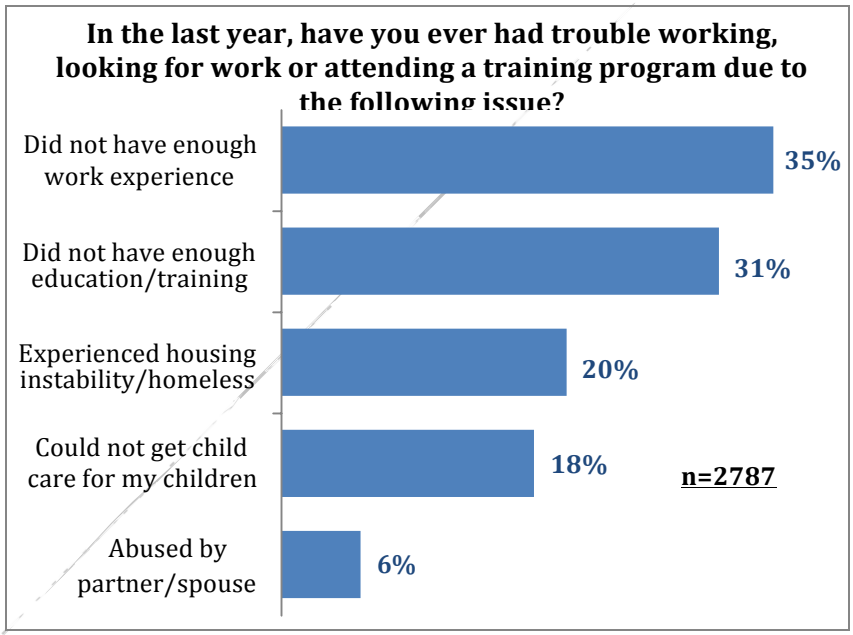


Figure 14. Seeking Treatment to Handle Health Issues

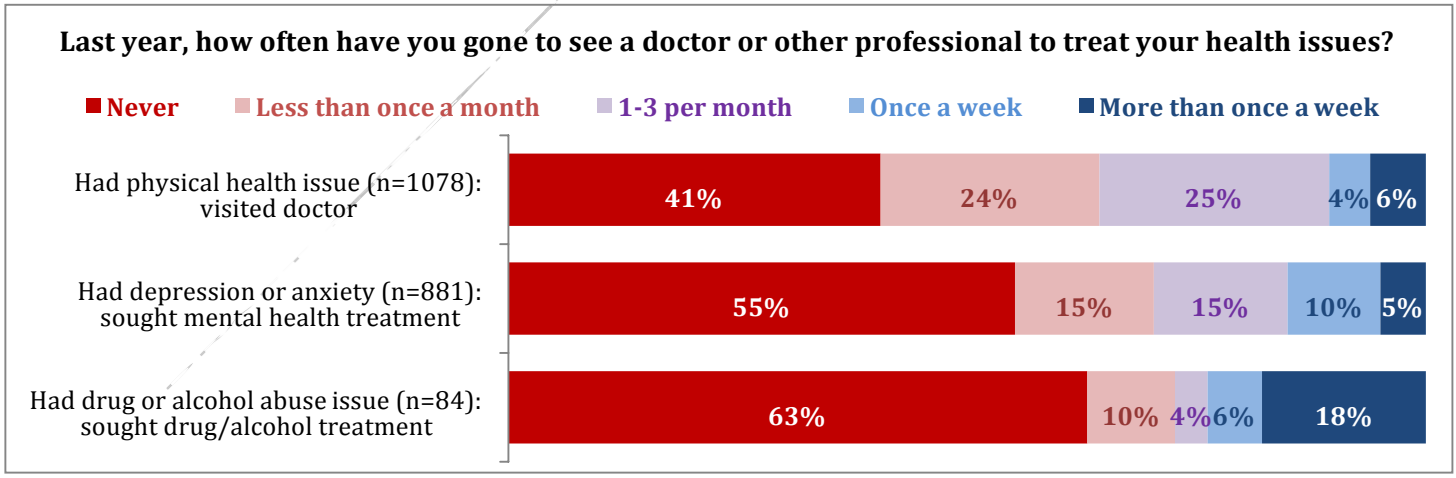
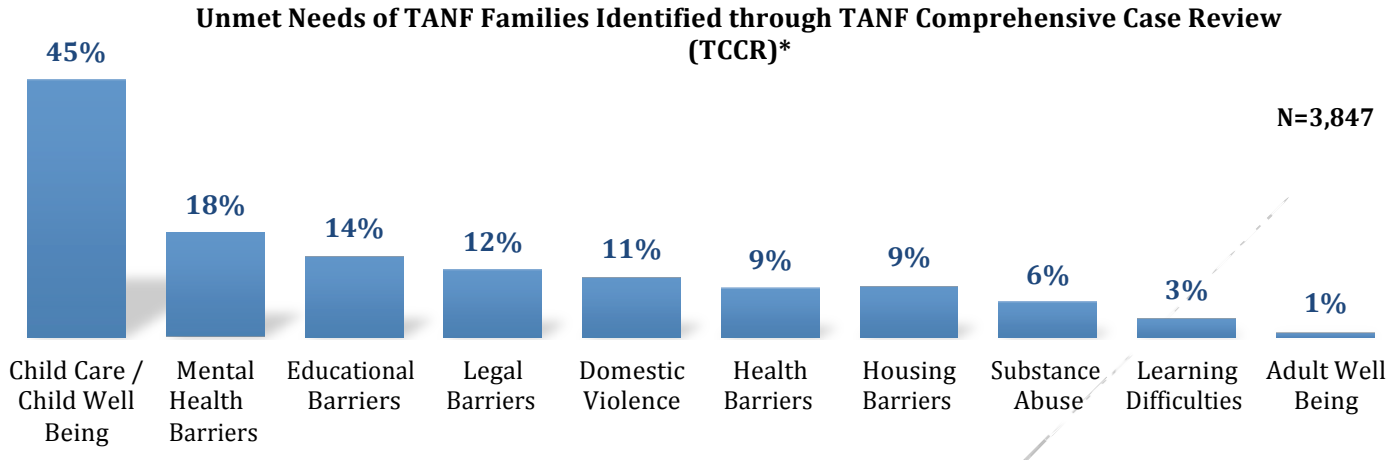


Figure 15. Unmet Needs of Families on TANF for More than Five Years



* *Between March 2015 and May 2016, DHS OWO conducted in-depth case review for a total of 3,847 TANF customers who had been on TANF for more than 60 months, and evaluated if their needs identified from the initial assessments had been met.*

TANF Experience and Expectation

Cycling On and Off of TANF

- Half of the customers surveyed had a history of leaving TANF, mostly due to earnings from employment.
- Customers who had left TANF previously returned due to loss of job or low wages.

Figure 16. Customers Cycling On and Off TANF

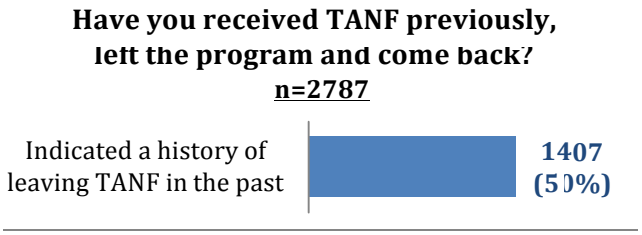


Figure 17. Reason for Returning to TANF

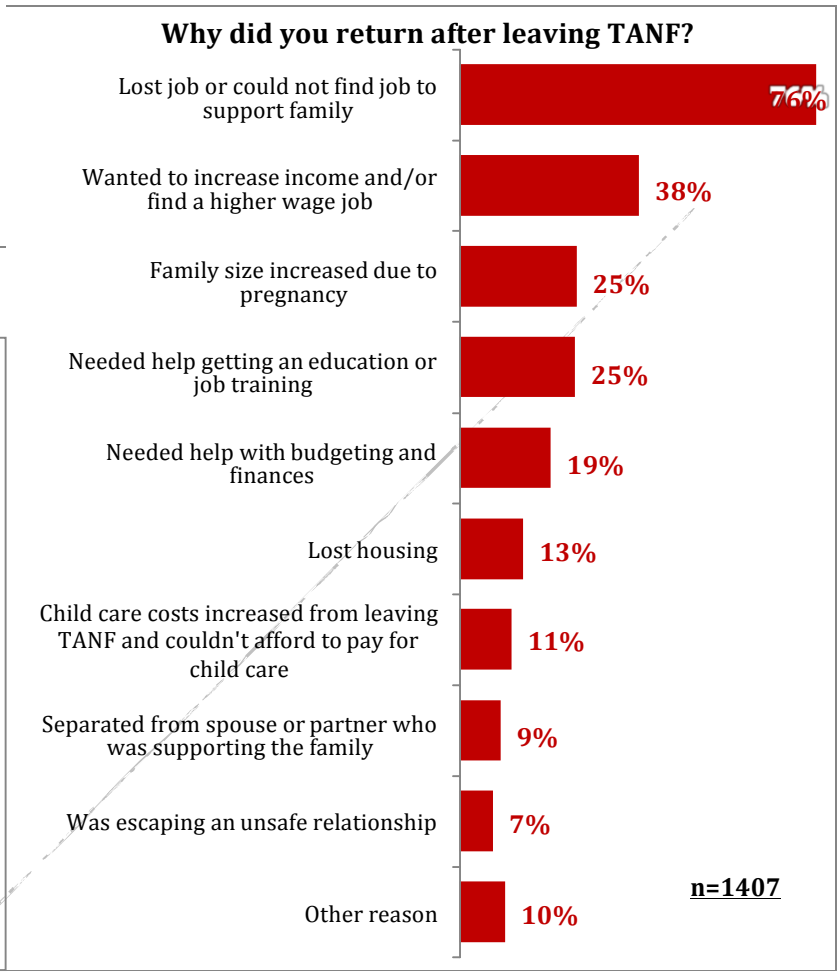
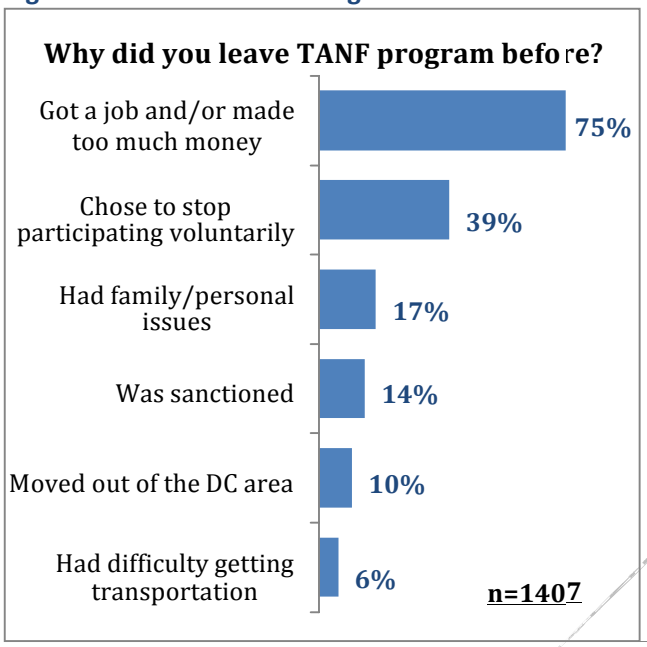


Figure 18. Reason for Leaving TANF in the Past



Current and Expected Support from TANF

- TANF helps with paying bills, housing, transportation, and child care but not so much with employment.
- Customers want more help to get training for career development and personalized case management.

Figure 19. Perceived Benefits from TANF

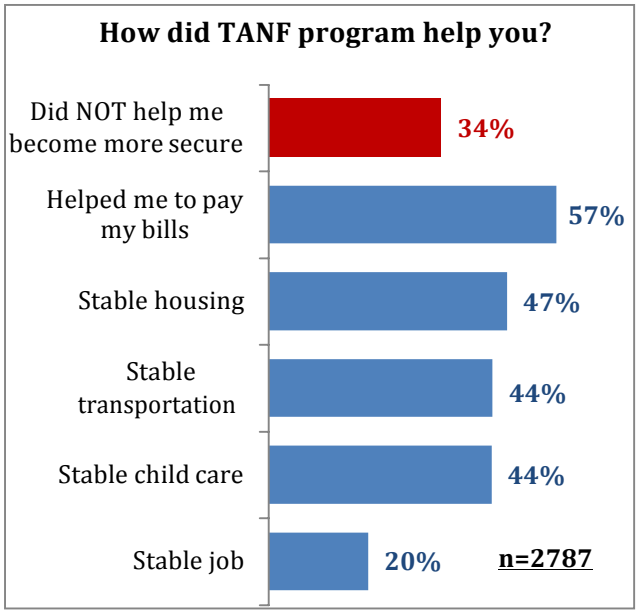
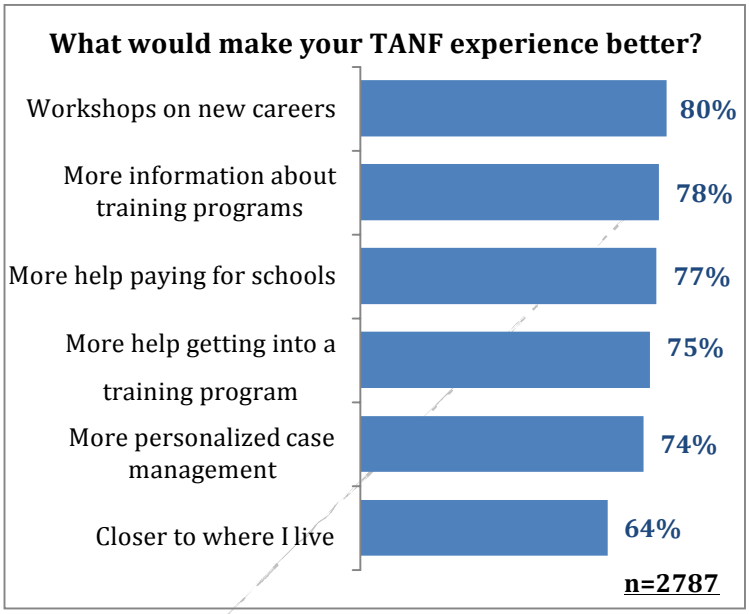


Figure 20. Areas in Need of More Support



Utilization of Government and Community Services

- More than two out of three TANF customers reported using services provided by other government agencies.
- TANF customers identified family as the strongest support resource and only a few reported seeking support from community resources.

Figure 21. Utilization of Other Government Agencies

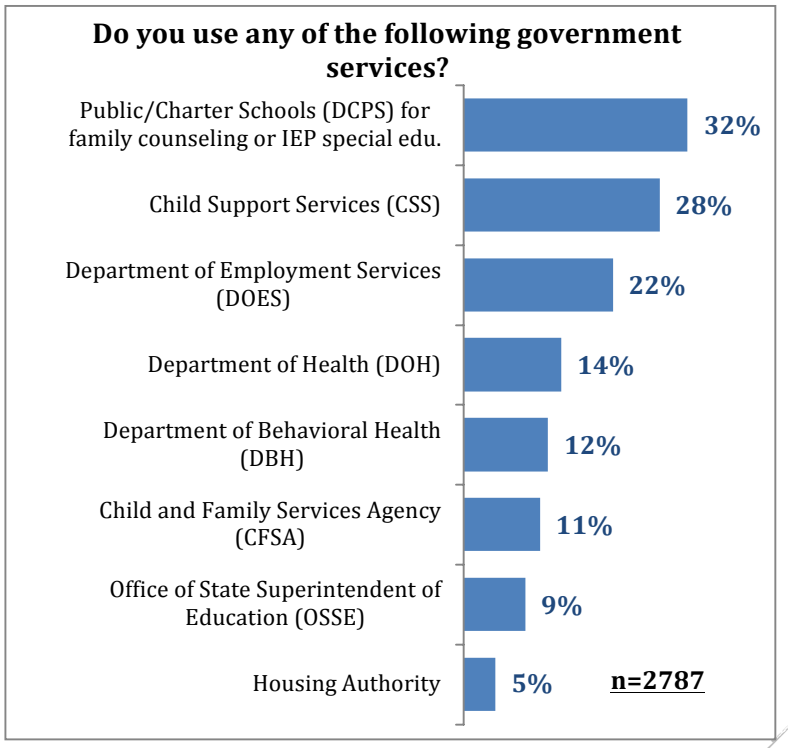
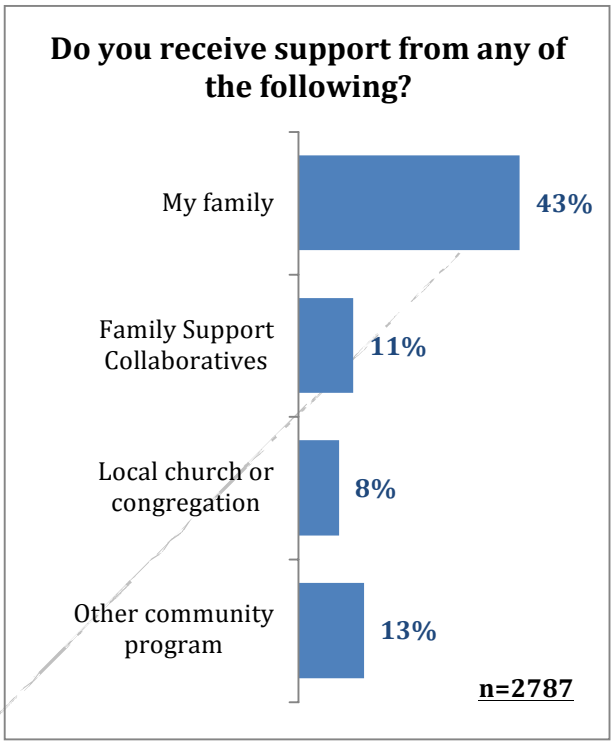


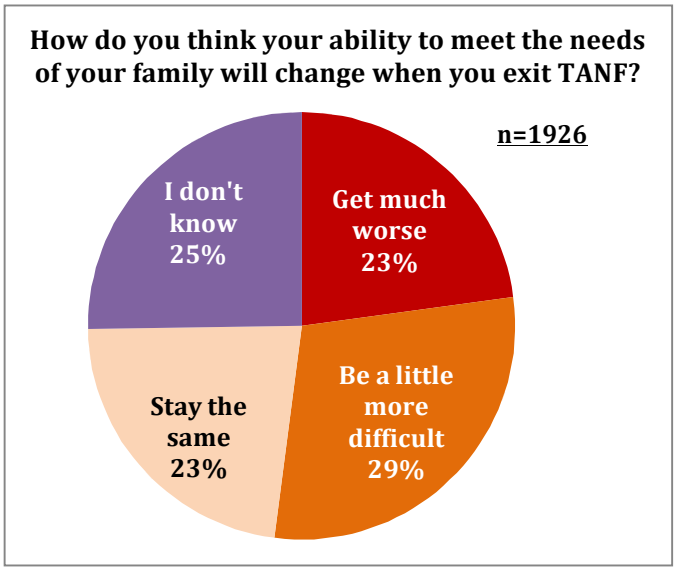
Figure 22. Areas in Need of More Support



Outlook on Post-TANF Hardship

More than half of families anticipate that losing TANF benefits would make their lives more difficult and 25% are uncertain.

Figure 23. Customers' Outlook after Exiting TANF



** Numbers indicated in the areas of intersections between circles are included in the number of each respective circle.*

Key Themes

This section summarizes the key themes about the TANF program and considerations for the development of a TANF hardship extension policy that emerged across the Listening Sessions, the Community Dialogues, and the deliberations of the Working Group. The intention of this section is to provide some qualitative context to supplement the data that was provided in the prior section.

- The District should continue the improvements to the TANF program of recent years, which provide more person-centered services to families. These improvements mean that more families should be able to receive services more rapidly and to exit TANF due to employment.

- The District should move quickly to establish a TANF hardship extension policy so that the time limit does not take effect on October 1, 2017. The implementation of strict time limits for all households who exceed the 60-month time limit would be disastrous.

- The District should increase outreach and engagement to identify and assist families who might qualify for a POWER exemption and enhance POWER to provide services whenever feasible to assist adults in the household to either qualify for federal disability assistance or prepare for employment once the family circumstances that created the eligibility for POWER are resolved.

> *"As a single parent of three children, TANF means a lot to our family. I was working and getting unemployment but had to resort to TANF because the job market changed and I needed a degree to get a better job. It has been helpful to my family, to support me and my kids. It's hard to live in DC so if we can use it in a way to get people situated and grounded it will help to get them to the next level."*
>
> *TANF customer who has received TANF for more than 60 months*

- The District needs to increase communication with TANF customers so that they understand the services and programs available through TANF, to ensure awareness of the POWER exemption process, and to facilitate more feedback.

- Many Working Group members did not know that TANF participation rates in DC as well as TANF programs nationally are low.

- The participation requirements are generally viewed as fair and reasonable but at times understanding and meeting those requirements is burdensome. There is concern that most parents who receive TANF are not complying with work participation and other requirements.

- There was a widespread belief that additional time to receive TANF cash assistance and services should be provided to parents who "play by the rules," i.e., parents who are engaged and participating in the program but despite their best efforts cannot find employment.

- For many parents who receive TANF, they believe that their primary job is to provide for the emotional, social, and physical well-being of their children. As most are single parents, the logistics of managing the family are complicated with few other reliable supports, making it difficult to also improve skills and education and their family's situation. Too often families who receive TANF live in neighborhoods that require a high level of diligence by parents to keep their children safe. The management of getting children to/from schools, especially when the child(ren) is not enrolled in neighborhood schools, is time consuming.

- There are insufficient jobs that offer full-time work in the District that aligns with the time that children are in school or after care.

> *"It's hard to be a single father of two. It's difficult to work around that. It is difficult with no support system to help with children. For example, when the kid's school had a gas leak, there was no one to call to pick up the child. It is hard to trust people with your kids. The school only offers child care until 6 pm. Job hours do not line up with daycare hours. There needs to be a support system."*
>
> *TANF customer who has been receiving TANF for less than three years*

- Some customers reported that TEP providers need to be held more accountable for helping customers find a pathway off of TANF. The pathway should be designed to meet the unique strengths and needs of each parent, not be a "cookie cutter" program that is focused on meeting job search requirements.

- The potential consequences to a household that has an involuntary exit from the TANF program are of great concern. These included food insecurity, child maltreatment, housing instability and homelessness, and negative outcomes on physical and behavioral health for children and adults. The potential for lapses in other public assistance programs was also cited as a concern.

Recommendations

This section describes the final recommendations of the TANF Working Group. The group tried to reach consensus support for each recommendation. The specific consensus question asked was: "Do you agree with including *this* in the report?" When consensus was not achievable, a hand vote was taken and if there was a majority in favor, the recommendation was accepted with the number of dissenting votes noted.

The following represents a set of recommendations to consider for TANF hardship extensions and modification for the entire TANF program. The policy options described are not cost neutral so the Administration and Council will need to consider the cost-benefit of these recommendations during the annual budget process. With each of the options below, there are variables which can be adjusted which would influence cost.

Preferred Option

Child Enrichment Grant and Parent TANF Grant with IRP Compliance

This conceptual structure was universally appealing to the group. This option would create two separate grants, a Child Enrichment Grant and a Parent TANF Grant, which the group felt created a two-generational policy that kept resources in the household to protect and support children and also incentivized program participation on the part of the head of household. As recommended with majority approval, the Child Enrichment Grant would equate to the child portion of the grant and would comprise approximately 80% of the existing TANF grant. Eligibility requirements for the Child Enrichment Grant would be the same as the current TANF grant but without work requirements or a time limit. The purpose of the Child Enrichment Grant would be to ensure that there are resources in the home to support the child even when the caretaker may not be engaging in TANF-related activities. The sentiment behind this recommendation was that there is research which suggests that taking money out of the home both causes harm to the child and often strains more expensive public systems such as the child protection system and the homeless response system. While there could be high-level requirements for receiving the Child Enrichment Grant, such as school registration or proof of vaccinations, the group was split as to the merit of such requirements.

The Parent TANF Grant would represent the other, approximately, 20% of today's TANF grant. Eligibility requirements for the Parent TANF Grant would be the same as the current TANF grant (residency, income limits, having a dependent child in the home, etc.) and would include work requirements and compliance with the IRP, with sanctions for customers who are not in compliance, but no time limit. The group also recommended that the sanction levels for the TANF Parent grant be adjusted from 20%, 50% and 100%, respectively, to 20%, 40%, and 60%. The group recommended that there should be no time limit on the Parent TANF grant.

(The table below summarizes this scenario.)

Compliance	Child Enrichment Grant (80%)	Parent Grant (20%)	Total Percent per Family (All)
		% of Benefit	
Compliant	80%	20%	100%
Sanction Level 1 (20%)	80%	16%	96%
Sanction Level 2 (40%)	80%	12%	92%
Sanction Level 3 (60%)	80%	8%	88%

The report should note that those who dissented with this recommendation agreed in principle with the policy recommendation, but did not agree with how the two grants were weighted, with the Child Enrichment Grant at 80% and Parent TANF Grant at 20%. Dissenting group members thought more incentive should be added to the Parent TANF Grant portion of the total grant, with each grant weighted equally at 50% of the total household TANF grant.

Other Options with Consensus

The following two options represent policies that the work group voted on separately. They are being recommended as secondary options.

Compliance with Program Requirements

This option would continue the TANF program as is but would implement an extension beyond 60 months for those customers who are not in a sanction status at the time they are at the 60 month mark. Effectively, if a family is engaged with their TEP service provider and NOT sanctioned, all cash benefits would continue, regardless of the time on TANF. There was unanimous agreement that all households who met these criteria should be extended and there was a majority in support of the grant being set at

the full amount. This option also came with some concern among the TANF Working Group because it would create a scenario where there would be no money in the home to support children for households that were not extended.

There were also a significant number of implementation questions that would need to be addressed to execute this policy. Specifically, if a family exceeded their TANF time limit, and was not on TANF, would they be eligible to access TANF benefits in the future or enroll directly into POWER? Although not addressed in the context of this specific policy option, based on the sense of the working group in other contexts, the answer is likely yes to both questions. The table below summarizes this scenario.

Compliance	TANF Grant	Total Amount per Family (All)
Compliant	100%	100%
Sanction Level 1 (20%)	80%	80%
Sanction Level 2 (50%)	50%	50%
Sanction Level 3 (100%)	0%	0%

Child Only Grant

This option would continue to support the family with a Child Only Grant (80% of the full TANF Grant) after 60 months on TANF. There would be no requirements associated with the grant. Resources would remain in the home to support the child. Some states have elected to implement a variation of this type of extension. This option came with concern among the TANF Working Group because it would create one set of rules for families who have received TANF for less than 60 months and then would relax those rules once the family eclipsed 60 months, albeit with a reduced benefit, but no sanctioning. The policy option “Child Enrichment Grant and a Parent TANF Grant” was preferred to this option by a majority of Working Group members. The table below summarizes this scenario.

Compliance	TANF Grant (<60 months)	Child Only Grant (>60 Months)
Compliant	100%	80%
Sanction Level 1 (20%)	80%	80%
Sanction Level 2 (50%)	50%	80%
Sanction Level 3 (100%)	0%	80%

Independent Policy Options:

The following "independent policy options" represent policies that the work group voted on separately. They are being recommended as secondary options and can be combined. They are not necessarily mutually exclusive but rather represent universes of individuals who the group feels should be protected.

In addition to the extension scenarios considered above, the TANF Working Group thought it was important to consider particular situations that should warrant a TANF extension. In the event of limited resources, the Working Group recommended considering the following factors as "triggers" which would merit a hardship extension or continuation of benefits beyond 60 months.

Majority Approval with Four Dissensions: At Imminent Risk of Homelessness

At the time a family is eclipsing their 60th month on TANF, the group recommended that extending benefits for a family who is at imminent risk of homelessness was appropriate. The purpose of this extension would be to stave-off homelessness. There were outstanding questions of whether TANF benefits should continue if a family slipped into homelessness. Supporters noted that it is counter intuitive to remove benefits for families navigating an already challenging housing situation. Dissenters noted that continuing benefits could potentially create a perverse financial incentive to enter the homeless system to gain a cash benefit for which one would not otherwise be eligible. The Working Group noted that there was considerable additional work needed by the Administration to define "imminent risk of homelessness" and to determine how to handle eligibility for families experiencing homelessness and receiving DHS services as well as households enrolled in permanent supportive housing and rapid rehousing programs. The Working Group was also divided on whether there should be participation requirements to retain this extension.

Majority Approval with 1 dissension: At risk of entry into child protection

At the time a family is eclipsing their 60th month on TANF, the group recommended that extending benefits for a family who is at risk of entering the child protection system was appropriate. Like the provision above, a series of interpretation or implementation questions would arise. While it is established that lack of financial resources alone does not constitute either abuse or neglect, research does suggest that a lack of resources can contribute to circumstances which lead to substantiated neglect. If the District should elect to pursue this as a hardship category, a specific definition of "at-risk" would need to be established. Complementing that, a definition of how to determine when that risk was mitigated or no longer present and what would then happen regarding the TANF grant, would need to be established.

Consensual Approval: *High unemployment*

At the time a family is eclipsing their 60th month on TANF, the group recommended that extending benefits under certain economic conditions was appropriate. Times of economic challenge disproportionally affect individuals in entry level jobs within the broader economy. The Working Group recommended that there should be a "hardship-trigger" based on the unemployment rate in the District for adults without a college degree. While the level would need to be established, the concept is that, if unemployment rose above a certain level, families who had already received benefits would again be eligible (and those on TANF would not have benefits terminated due to a time limit) to receive benefits and services, should they meet the other eligibility criteria.

Consensual Approval: *Create hardship extensions that match current POWER time limit exemptions.*

POWER serves TANF families whose head of household faces special challenges. When families are placed in POWER, the months of assistance they receive do not count toward the 60-month time limit and families receive the full TANF benefit amount, even if they have received TANF for more than 60 months. The Working Group recommended that the categories currently defined as POWER-eligible, also become time limit extensions, meaning a family who has reached the 60 month time limit but subsequently faces a situation that would have qualified them for POWER can get back onto TANF through an extension. Those categories include customers who are:

- Suffering from temporary or permanent incapacities that are expected to last longer than 30 days;
- Taking care of a household member who is physically or mentally incapacitated;
- 60 years or older;
- Pregnant or parenting teen under the age of 19 who meets certain conditions, such as attending school; or
- Experiencing domestic violence and have been granted a domestic violence waiver.

Majority approval with 3 dissensions: ***Add parents with a newborn infant as an eligible category for POWER and/or hardship extension.***

TANF Program Services Improvements

The following represents a set of recommendations to consider for improving the overall TANF program. There was extensive feedback across the Listening Sessions, Community Dialogues, and the Working Group deliberations that families should be better served by the TANF program and that if these improvements were made, families would achieve a more rapid exit from TANF to greater economic stability. Improved communication with customers about TANF program services and community resources, improved assessment to identify customer barriers to employment and create more personalized service plans (IRPs), and additional supports were described as the primary areas needed for program improvement. Most improvements are likely not cost neutral so the Administration and Council may need to consider the cost-benefit of these recommendations during the annual budget process.

Feedback from Listening Sessions and Working Group	**DHS Comments**
Assessments & Outreach	
We need to do a better job assessing needs and identifying barriers	DHS acknowledges the need for a set of service options for engaged and unengaged customers that differs from the current TANF Employment Program (TEP) model. As part of that acknowledgement, the following actions steps will occur within FY 17: 1. Enhance the TANF Comprehensive Assessment (TCA) and create a strategy to re-assess customers prior to a potential termination of benefits due to time limits. 2. Recommend in new TEP contracts that a home visit is included as part of a Provider's outreach attempts to engage customers prior to taking action for noncompliance. 3. DHS will pilot a program to reach those customers who have not achieved success (unengaged/sanctioned) through the traditional TEP model.
Customers should be reassessed 6–12 months prior to TANF termination	
Increased outreach, engagement, and case management services for customers (families) approaching the time limit or during the last 12 months before reaching the limit. Use evidence-based assessments for home visits. DHS/OWO needs to revise their assessment tools to allow customers a more personalized experience and improved service coordination and referrals.	
More meaningful engagement with customers long before reaching 60 months to avoid customers reaching 60 months	DHS believes that the key to assisting customers achieve success is dependent upon meaningful and engaging interactions between TEP Provider staff and customers. To address this issue, new TEP contracts (beginning in FY 17) will have smaller caseload sizes: 1:50 for Work Readiness Providers and 1:75 for Job Placement Providers. Smaller caseload sizes will create a space for

	more in-depth engagement of customers. DHS is also tightening both the case management requirements and expectations for TEP Provider engagement with community providers and service delivery partners in the new FY 2017 TEP contracts.
Specialized Services for Customers	
For some customers, especially those with mental health or other barriers, 20 to 30 hours of work requirements is too high a bar and sets customers up for failure from the beginning.	DHS agrees that for some customers experiencing crisis situations, inclusive of mental health and other barriers, the 20, 30, and 35 hour per week work requirement (based on household size composition) is too high of a bar to set. Customers experiencing these hardships have detailed IRPs that address the barrier(s) and do not adhere to an hour requirement. DHS will continue to enhance its orientation materials and process to better explain to customers facing crisis situations that they have an option to engage with internal Licensed Clinical Social Workers to address their barriers and not an hour requirement.
POWER & Rehabilitation Services	
An intensive outreach and assessment strategy to increase POWER enrollment is needed. Culture change is needed to re-brand and de-stigmatize services, especially POWER. POWER needs to be evaluated. POWER needs to be added to the common application.	The results of the Family by Family Engagement Interviews conducted by DHS/ESA staff and partners revealed that DHS still has work to do to better promote the benefits of enrollment into the POWER program for eligible customers. Within the next 180 days, DHS will review its communication strategy around the POWER program including the website, documentation, and orientation to ensure that eligibility requirements and service offerings are known to all customers. Additionally, in FY 17, DHS will implement a staff training module to ensure that staff are messaging the benefits of POWER appropriately and are assisting customers with navigating the application process. DHS will also seek the assistance of community partners to encourage customers to seek POWER assistance when necessary.
Mental health and substance abuse services	DHS agrees that services for customers experiencing mental health and substance abuse issues need to be better promoted during orientation and periodically through mass mailings, community engagement

	activities, and by TEP Providers. DHS will work to revise its orientation material and process during the next 180 days to de-stigmatize mental health and substance abuse services and encourage customers to seek help as needed.
Enhanced Educational Outcomes	
Improved access and enrollment into GED programs for customers with low literacy levels Provide more robust services to improve literacy Improve college referrals	DHS is focused on increasing educational outcomes for TANF customers and agrees that we need to improve access and enrollment into GED programs as well as other education and training programs. New TEP contracts that will be executed in FY 17 will include a more robust incentive package for providers to encourage customers to enroll in and complete education and training programs. DHS will also explore ways to encourage the use of eCASAS, a literacy and numeracy assessment for customers, to better screen for education and training needs.
Communication Strategy	
Better communication, services, and structure to ensure that customers who are trying can actually succeed	DHS is working on a five-fold strategy for FY 17 that includes the following activities aimed at engaging customers where they are at: 1. Enhanced documentation and management of the DHS website 2. Development of a TEP Customer Handbook 3. Continuous growth of the DHS Customer Advisory Board (CAB) 4. DHS will conduct quarterly listening sessions with customers at TEP locations and other locations in the community. 5. Develop a social media strategic plan
TEP Provider Employment Support Enhancements	
Training for TEP Provider staff	DHS agrees that TEP providers should convene routine staff trainings to ensure optimal service delivery to customers. To that end, DHS is adding language to new TEP contracts (to be executed in FY 17) that requires potential TEP providers to articulate how they will conduct ongoing staff training to include but not be limited to: 1. Customer Service 2. Coaching/Case Management standards 3. Cultural Competency

	4. Working with customers experiencing mental health, substance abuse, and domestic violence issues
Collaboration with the DC Department of Employment Services (DOES) and Paid On-the-Job Training for hard to place customers	DHS will work closely with DOES to collaborate on training and employment opportunities for customers; DHS is currently working with DOES to co-locate services for customers as part of the District's implementation of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act.
Other	
More intensive services for immigrants and English as a Second Language (ESL) households Ensure that all materials for the entire TANF program are translated in other languages and include methods of communicating with hard of hearing and deaf customers.	Within the next 180 days, DHS will work closely with its Language Access Coordinators to create an outreach and engagement strategy to inform members of the Limited English Proficient/Non-English Proficient (LEP/NEP) community about the services offered through the TANF program. DHS will work with the appropriate Mayoral Offices to coordinate these activities.
Housing and utility assistance	DHS will further develop relationships and coordinate services with sister agencies and government partners to support a family's housing stability. DHS intends to add language to FY 17 housing contracts requiring the coordination and integration of services for customers accessing both TANF and housing services.
Strict daycare benefits (6 months maximum) More childcare options (non-traditional hours and more slots and more hours, ability to serve children with special needs)	DHS is currently exploring the feasibility of decoupling eligibility for child care subsidies from participation requirements to ensure that children have access to early learning services. A final determination will be made in FY17 between DHS and the Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE).

POWER Program Services Improvements

The following represents a set of recommendations to consider for improving POWER. There was extensive feedback during the Listening Sessions and the Community Dialogues indicating that POWER was not well understood by many TANF customers. There was general agreement that DHS should increase outreach and engagement to identify and assist families who might qualify for the POWER exemption. It was also recommended that POWER needed to be enhanced to assist the adults in the household to either qualify for federal disability assistance or prepare for employment once the family circumstances that created the eligibility for POWER are resolved. Parents with a child less than 12 months of age are not subject to work participation requirements, however, the group suggested the need to include parents of infants as eligible for POWER.

Finally, there was feedback across the Listening Sessions, Community Dialogues, and the Working Group deliberations that households that were eligible for POWER exemptions should also be able to enter the program outside of the current TANF process. This would include the ability to apply directly into the POWER program if one has exhausted their TANF eligibility based on months of receipt.

Consensual Approval Recommendations:

- Allow households to apply directly to be served by POWER from the common application process in lieu of being first admitted to TANF and then referred for POWER.
- Allow households who have exceeded the 60-month time limit to be served by POWER including those who have exited off TANF.
- Include a six-month transitional period following POWER eligibility for households who have exceeded 60 months.
- Conduct an evaluation of POWER including assessment of whether POWER should be renamed and rebranded to reduce stigma.
- Increase communication about the POWER program to TANF customers: mail letters, disseminate brochures, use websites, build partnerships with community organizations, advocacy groups, and sister agencies.
- Incorporate orientation about POWER during the TANF Orientation and Assessment process.
- Streamline and centralize service delivery for potentially eligible customers to apply for SSI or Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI).
- Continue to train DHS staff to use the SSI/SSDI Outreach, Access, & Recovery (SOAR) model with TANF customers in order to increase access to SSI or SSDI benefits.

- Continue to improve DHS service delivery to customers who are approved for POWER including case management, counseling/support groups, assessments, personal development, career development, and financial coaching.
- Further develop the relationship between the DC Department on Disability Services and DHS to enable TANF customers to receive vocational rehabilitation services.
- Implement a staff training module to ensure that DHS staff and TEP Providers are messagingthe benefits of POWER appropriately and are assisting customers with navigating the application process.
- Require the assistance of community partners to encourage customers to seek POWER assistance when necessary.

Post TANF Services

The following represents a set of recommendations to consider for households who are involuntarily exited from the TANF program. There was extensive feedback across the Listening Sessions, Community Dialogues, and the Working Group deliberations that the potential consequences to a household that has an involuntary exit from the TANF program are of great concern. Concerns included the potential for food insecurity, child maltreatment, housing instability and homelessness, and negative outcomes on physical and behavioral health for children and adults. The potential for lapses in other public assistance programs were also cited. Initially, the charge was to develop recommendations for a "warm hand-off to community services." There was resounding sentiment from Working Group participants, however, that this was not feasible as community organizations were ill-equipped to assist these households. The input evolved to recommending that families be offered services provided by District Government and also be referred to community programs that might meet the family's unique needs. Depending on the policy option that the Council adopts, the need for services at exit may be altered. Most services are likely not cost neutral so the Administration and Council may need to consider the cost-benefit of these recommendations during the annual budget process because some could bear significant costs.

Consensual Approval Recommendations:

The following services should be offered by DHS and its sister agencies to households who are involuntarily exited from the TANF program:

- Transportation/stipend
- Child care
- Access to case management
- Job readiness and job placement

- Paid job training
- Family mediation
- Homeless prevention
- Mental health services
- Substance abuse treatment
- Basic needs: housing, food, healthcare

Appendices

About the TANF Hardship Extension Facilitator

Barbara Poppe
Founder and principal
Barbara Poppe is the founder of Barbara Poppe and Associates and the former executive director of the United States Interagency Council on Homelessness. During her tenure, Opening Doors, the first comprehensive federal strategic plan to prevent and end homelessness was launched in June 2010. Ms. Poppe is a nationally recognized expert on homelessness and results-driven public-private partnerships. Barbara Poppe and Associates, established in 2014, is an independent consulting firm that develops the capacity of communities and organizations to tackle complex issues using a collaborative systems approach to achieve results and impact. Ms. Poppe is a frequent national, state, and local speaker on homelessness and serves on the national boards of the Enterprise Community Partners and the Siemer Institute for Family Stability.

Appendix 1

Listening Sessions:

1. TANF Customers: August 9, 2016; 15 participants
2. Advocates: August 9, 2016; 10 participants
3. TEP Service Providers: August 10, 2016; 12 participants
4. City Council Staff: August 10, 2016; 6 participants

Themes

Improve services before 60 months

- Need to have meaningful engagement with customers long before 60 months to avoid hitting time limits.
- Increased outreach, engagement, and case management is needed during the last 12 months before a customer reaches the time limit.
- Intensive outreach and assessment for POWER enrollment is needed.
- Intensive and specialized work preparation for TANF customers with severe challenges is needed including:
    - Vocational rehabilitation for those with significant mental health challenges and/or developmental disabilities that are difficult to identify through traditional assessments and case management
    - Improved access/enrollment in GED programs for those with low literacy
    - More intensive services for immigrants and ESL households.

Improve POWER

- Increase access to voluntary services for POWER households to prepare for work while on POWER
- Be aware of stigma attached to POWER
- Increase outreach and engagement to identify and assist customers that qualify for POWER

TANF customers that should receive an extension (across multiple listening sessions)

- Households that meet existing POWER categories:
    - Adult with an incapacitating or disabling medical condition
    - Adult that is needed in the home to care for a physically or mentally incapacitated household member (e.g. caring for a child in the home)
    - Household headed by someone 60 years or older
    - Pregnant or parenting teen in high school or GED program
    - Customers experiencing domestic violence
- Parents who "play by all the rules," i.e., parents who despite their best efforts cannot find employment
- Under-employed and part-time working parents
- Families who are at risk of becoming homeless or who have unstable housing
- Families who are at risk of their child entering foster care
- Parents with low literacy levels (defined as <8th grade and no GED) and/or ESL and not yet ready to work without longer assistance
- All children regardless of parent participation

Other Customers to Extend (single listening session)

- Parents facing high unemployment in the District
- Parents with low cognitive ability, low achievement, or a learning disability
- Parents who have physical or mental impairment(s) and not able to work even if not qualified for SSI/SSDI
- Parents who are veterans
- Parents who are housebound (can't get out of bed)
- Parents in witness protection
- Parents with social/mental disorders who are engaged in treatment/counseling

What should be the conditions/requirements of an extension?

- Must meet all participation requirements and follow IRP (not be sanctioned)
- Must be enrolled in education or training program; confirmed career path
- No requirements - just have children

What should be the benefit levels?

- Full benefits – increase to full TANF benefit
- Full benefits – at level receiving in 60th month
- 75% of TANF benefit in 60th month
- 20% if capable of working; 100% if not capable of working
- Based on number of children in household
- Increase with cost of living
- Based on budget for program

How long should benefits be provided?

- As long as needed with periodic review/recertify
- Dependent on reason for exemption or specific to individual needs
    - One year after receiving GED/High School
    - Until they are employed in permanent job
    - After they complete probationary period for job
    - 6 months after last cycle of training
    - After complete training
    - Extensions connected to conditions/requirement not only of family but of TANF providers (ex. if services not available the family not punished)
    - Until family catches up with financial issues
- Fixed time periods: 12 months or 6 month with recertification

Appendix 2

Community Dialogues

Community Dialogues were originally planned to occur in four neighborhoods to explore ideas for the hardship extension policy and ways to help households that will not receive a 'hardship exemption'. Intent was to host these events in public meeting spaces and conduct 2 dialogues in Ward 8; 1 in Ward 7; 1 in Ward 6. The invitation was extended to community organizations, key stakeholders, and TANF Customers. The very low attendance at the first two dialogues, prompted changes in the meeting locations. The widespread concern that time limits might increase homelessness, resulted in decision to host an additional dialogue at DC General for parents who were currently experiencing homelessness. Overall 39 TANF customers participated in the five community dialogues. The dialogues were facilitated by Barbara Poppe with technical support from DHS/ESA staff. The general content for each session is described below. The actual format varied depending on the participants but the content and requested feedback was constant across all five sessions.

General Agenda

1) Welcome, framing and flow – Barbara Poppe, facilitator

2) Check in: Why did I decide to participate in today's dialogue and what do I hope to contribute?

3) Project overview

4) Small Group Dialogue #1 on policy for '**TANF hardship exemption**' to the TANF limit of 60 months for recipient families who have complex, difficult problems that are not easily or quickly resolved

    a. Who should be **eligible** for TANF cash assistance beyond 60 months?

    b. What **conditions/requirements** do you think families should meet to receive cash assistance beyond 60 months?

    c. What do you think should be the **amount of cash** benefit for TANF hardship exempted households who will receive cash assistance beyond 60 months?

    d. What do you think should be the **lengths of assistance** for TANF hardship exempted households who will receive cash assistance beyond 60 months?

5) Small Group Dialogue #2 on ways to help those households who will not receive a 'TANF hardship exemption' and therefore will **not be eligible for continuing TANF cash assistance**, including how to connect them to other public and community services.

    a. What do you think are the key services that need to be provided to help those households who will not receive a TANF hardship exemption?

b. What agencies and community organizations do you think need to be involved to help these families who will not receive a TANF hardship exemption?

c. What do you think would be the best way for a family who will not receive a TANF hardship exemption to be connected to these services?

6) Report out

7) Thank you, check out and adjourn

TANF Community Dialogue #1

Benning Neighborhood Library
August 18, 2016
6:30-7:30 PM

Community Participants: Three TANF customers

Format: Attendees met with members of the DHS TANF Team and Barbara Poppe to discuss their individual experiences while on TANF. Below are a few of the themes along with specific examples that emerged from the informal discussion.

Theme 1: TANF does not connect people to sustainable jobs

TANF program was supposed to change 5 years ago to get people to be self-sufficient and have jobs. She took her grandson to the work program office. They did not have anything for a job. They only provided food stamps. Went to the community collaborative and they didn't have anything for a job. There were no jobs at the Norton Job fair. It's frustrating when DHS does not have anything for people to be self-sufficient. TANF helps a lot of people, but they need jobs.

Theme 2: TANF should be strictly monitored and connect people to jobs

TANF should have strict security and documentation. Everything should be monitored on the inside and outside. We should make sure the assistance goes where they are supposed to go. There needs to be job training/jobs, but the assistance should not cut off immediately. All the job details should be documented. The voucher can be downsized after steady employment. They should be eased off the assistance gradually. A lot of job training programs are not producing. Everything has to be monitored. Some places like CC Prep (adult school), need more monitoring. The schools need monitoring to ensure they are doing their job.

Theme 3: Step-Down Assistance once employment is achieved

There needs to be job training/jobs, but the assistance should not cut off immediately. All the job details should be documented. The voucher can be downsized after steady employment. They should be eased off the assistance gradually.

Theme 4: Additional government employment programs are needed

You used to be able to get a decent job with the government. You can't participate in programs like Project Empowerment if you are receiving TANF. This program shouldn't be limited to people in jail.

Theme 5: Women, especially mothers, have different needs than men

Single males don't have as many needs as mothers, for example. It is wrong when money is taken away from mothers and children for single males. Some males sell their food stamps. This is a lot of money that could be put toward mothers who need it more.

Customer Experience: I worked 13 years in medicine, first applied to TANF when I was 16. I am used to being in the working environment, and I quit to take care of my mother.

Theme 6: It is difficult to exit TANF to a stable job without a college degree

A lot of the jobs need college degrees. Without a degree, it's difficult to get these jobs. Customer applied to college to get into the career field. There has to be an extension for things like that. Also the economy is important. Many jobs are only paying around $25,000 a year. The housing is expensive, how are people supposed to live? Is someone can do something, it should be done. People shouldn't be dropped and let go, knowing something that can be done.

Theme 7: Transportation is an issue to finding a job

Transportation is an issue because it's too expensive. Customer couldn't let her grandson to take a job in Virginia because it was too far.

TANF Community Dialogue #2

Benning Neighborhood Library
August 19, 2016
10:30 AM -12:00 PM

Community Participants: Two TANF customers

Format: Attendees met with members of the DHS TANF Team and Barbara Poppe to discuss their individual experiences while on TANF. Below are a few of the themes along with specific examples that emerged from the informal discussion.

Theme 1: People need services beyond help with getting a job

There are issues that people grow up in difficult situations and think that is the only way. Some people have been "beaten up." You have to get the soul fixed. We need mentoring sessions and classes. The

hours need to be set up around therapeutic services. There needs to be something other than, “go get on a computer and job search”.

Theme 2: It is difficult to be a single parent on TANF and take care of a child while getting an education or working

When you are a single parent it is hard to line up a job with hours to take care of children. I had to put my 10-year-old on the metro. It is hard to line things up. It takes time, and I have been getting certificates and schooling. There is no support and am about to lose TANF. It is difficult and time consuming to get children into programs.

Customer enrolled in school while her children were in school. TANF was about to expire, but was not done with her program. The program is ongoing for certificates. Customer hopes certifications will get her a decent job, and hopes to go back to college. She needs to help her children first. It is hard to get a stable job without a college degree. It’s difficult to get the college degree without any benefits left. “I made a decision [to go back to school], but I have children that I have to make sure are ok.”

It’s hard to be a single father of two. It’s difficult to work around that. It is difficult with no support system to help with children. For example, when the kid’s school had a gas leak, there was no one to call to pick up the child. It is hard to trust people with your kids. The school only offers child care until 6 pm. Job hours do not line up with daycare hours. There needs to be a support system.

There is a recreation center near his house to help take care of the children, but someone was recently shot there. There are few resources in the neighborhood to help. Surviving on TANF for a month is difficult. He was paying all $400 a month from TANF for child support payments.

Theme 3: It is difficult to find work without reliable transportation

Customer worked all of his life. He planned on using TANF for a few months. He had license suspended and car taken away. Without a vehicle, he couldn’t get back to work.

Theme 4: How TANF is used

With $150, she pays car insurance, and the most urgent bill, such as keeping electricity from turning off. Nothing else is coming in for resources. She has to use her child’s money to pay for necessities.

She has had to use $450 toward housing, car insurance, transportation, and cell phone. He gets the money on the first of the month, and it is gone by the second or third. You have to find a way to get by and survive.

Theme 5: TANF extensions would be useful to help achieve educational goals

Customer wants to work part time and go back to college full time. If I got an extension to achieve that goal, it would take the stress off of finding money. I would go back to school if I had the time or income to do it. The current $150 is nothing, but it pays something. It is working for something.

Theme 6: Programs need to be held accountable, not just customers

There are 300 students at CC Prep. 200 students are on TANF. There should be more emphasis on places like that. People bounce around programs too much. This makes a revolving door. Places with a lot of turnover need to be looked at closer. There needs to be outside accountability/monitoring. Customers need to be able to say what is going on instead of bouncing around. Right now it looks like the customers are bouncing around for no reason. In reality there is a reason this is happening. Customers are the only ones looked at.

TANF Community Dialogue # 3

America Works

August 31, 2016

10:00 – 11:30 AM

Attendance: 13 TANF Customers who also participated in America Works program

- **Should there be an extension for a parent that follows the rules (play by the rules)?**
  - Most attendees agree that parents should receive assistance.
  - If parents are meeting all requirements they should receive full benefits until they find employment (i.e., they should not be punished).
  - If parents cannot find employment: Reevaluate goals of the parents, enroll in education, create programs to support children from 0-15 years of age, remove the daycare barrier by assisting parents with childcare, inquire as to why parents cannot find work.
  - All situations and individuals are not the same. Need to figure out barriers to employment.
  - After figuring out barriers to employment, give 2-year extension (after 60 months) with full benefits.

What Conditions and Requirements?	Amount of Cash?	Length of Assistance?	Why?
Proof of activity. Child(ren) must be 0-15 years of age	Depends on age of child	Depends on situation of the individual	All situations are not the same
Stay on it as long as they are doing what they are required to do		Until they find employment	
Address barriers of why they can't get employment	Full benefits	2 years	
	Full amount	Until they find employment	
Yes, must be meeting requirements	Full	Until they find employment / 2 years	Shouldn't punish
Proof of activity. Birth to 15 years of age if they have children	Depends on age of the child and if they are actively pursuing to be better	Depends on the situation of the individual	All situations are not the same

Could work but in need of daycare	Full amount	6 months or longer	They are doing everything they can and

			it is hard to find employment
They are addressing reason for unemployment	Full amount	2 years	They figured out why
If they stay I could it could be 2 to 3 years	Not sure		
If they are doing everything	Not sure, no more than $500	As long as you have proof or at least trying	Because I believe TANF will never be erased but reduced
Do not recommend	None	Do not recommend	Do not recommend
Reevaluate goals. Maybe enroll in education /Work Experience (WEX)	Some	1 year	There has to be something holding them back

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Should there be an extension for people who have jobs but are underemployed?

- Vote is that a few feel it's good for an extension
  - They should receive 50% benefits until they secure fulltime and stable employment.
- People who agree with extending benefits do not think this was a good idea
  - The reduction in benefits would be a motivator to find a better situation
  - Must be looking for fulltime, extension is only for 2 years. 2 years will help with individuals who are in college.
  - Or some suggest 6 months to 1 year extension as max, to be done on a case by case basis addressing barriers to finding fulltime employment.

What Conditions and Requirements?	**Amount of Cash?**	**Length of Assistance?**	**Why?**

Proof	Depends on full participation, full benefits		

Don't cut the whole TANF when they only work part time		6 months – 1 year, case by case basis	
Case by case basis	50%	2 years	
No, because should be able to make it			
Proof	Depending on full participation, full benefits		
	40%	6 months	

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Should there be an extension for families at risk of homelessness?

- Keep benefits if you can provide proof of homelessness.
- Benefits provided in a case by case basis until stable housing is found.
- People must be engaged with housing providers to show they are trying to find housing.
  - Virginia Williams Family Resource Center is not a welcoming environment and there is a lot of hassle associated with going to use these services. People feel belittled. Available housing options are not always clean, or rental payments are limited.
- After 60 months should be full benefits if you are engaging with TEP and housing providers (i.e. following IRP). If you are not engaging with TEP and housing provider (i.e. not following IRP) then 60% benefits.
- The clock should be stopped if you are homeless because this is a very hard situation and takes longer to recover from.

What Conditions and Requirements?	**Amount of Cash?**	**Length of Assistance?**	**Why?**
Proof			
Don't cut after 60 months		To seek housing and employment, do all requirements	
Should be engaged in a program	60%	1 ½ years	
In shelter/ transitional but need time	Full	Until in stable housing/employed	Hard to be stable without housing

Proof			

None	All parents		
None	All benefits	Until they improve their living situation (shelter)	Because they are homeless
Engaged with a housing provider	60%	1 year	Very large population and limited services
Working with housing coordinator/ enrolled in vender	Unchanged	2-3 years	No additional income

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Should there be an extension for families at risk of having child enter foster care?

- Extension should apply if parent needs help and can show proof that you are trying (i.e. playing by the rules)
  - Especially you played by the rules, did well with your older children previously, but now you have another child and are back at square one.
- Parents need to play by the rules but support should be provided to those at risk of foster care regardless
- A condition of taking a parenting course and seeking parenting assistance to ensure foster care does not happen
- Extensions should be applied to individuals with special needs children.

What Conditions and Requirements?	**Amount of Cash?**	**Length of Assistance?**	**Why?**
Proof			
Don't cut, must seek parenting classes			
Yes, must meet a correcting risk	Full	Until everything is fixed	Without benefits, won't care for kids
Proof			
Sometimes parents need parenting classes			

Some type of parenting classes			

Must engage in for at least two months meeting all requirements	60%	1 year	Special needs

- **Should there be an extension for adults who have low literacy?**
  - No extension because there are literacy and GED programs provided. They need to play by the rules.

What Conditions and Requirements?	Amount of Cash?	Length of Assistance?	Why?
Proof			
Need to enroll in a class to assist them			
Needs and play rules	60%	1 ½ years	Length of Program
Yes, must be in school and participating	Full	Until GED / skills acquired	Need extra skills
Proof			
GED	Some	2 years	They can't underemployed
High school diploma or GED	Some	2 years	They can't understand
Enrolled in TANF program meeting literacy requirements	60%	1 ½ years/ 2 years	Length of program
Enrolled in GES/diploma program	Unchanged	? 2 years	Due to the lack of education / length of GED program

- **Should there be an extension for households with children to receive extension regardless of whether parent is participating?**
  - Resounding NO!!
  - There is not incentive to address your barriers, seek employment and move forward
    - No, by providing extensions you are essentially doing worse because parents are not forced to work on these barriers, potentially making a worse environment

        - Before people are cut of a home assessment need to be completed to make a case by case decision on who receives extensions.
        - 2 years of benefits with a focus on making improvements
    - Do you think cutting check worked as a motivator?
        - Some but not really

What Conditions and Requirements?	Amount of Cash?	Length of Assistance?	Why?
No age requirement but how many children?			
Disagree			
None	0%	0 years	Not recommended
	Full amount		Children should not have to suffer because of parents
No – must participate			
No age requirement, but have many children			
Single parent and child shouldn't suffer	Full amount	6 months or longer	Taking care of 2 children alone
No!	0%	0	Customer has no reason to work is assistance is not conditioned
None	0		

- **Are there any other situations that should be considered for extensions?**
    - Extensive criminal background that create a barrier
        - These people may need a bit more time to get on their feet
        - Receive benefits as long as meeting requirements
    - Enrolled in education program should be extended

        - Should receive full benefits
        - 48 months to get more assistance so that they have time to finish the program
    - Everyone reaching 60 month limit need more intensive case management
        - At 48 months, more intensive case management should kick in.
    - Single parents should receive extension
        - It is difficult to move forward
        - Mixed view on this some feel single parent playing by the rules receive extension some feel all single parents should be extended.
    - Volunteer to Work (comment on attendees worksheet)

- **What services should be provided to families cut from TANF?**
    - Access to job readiness services (TANF Job Readiness program and other city job readiness program)
    - Child care services
    - Transportation services
    - Some case management should be provided to people with barriers
- **What improvements are needed to the TANF program to make it more effective?**
    - Job partnership programs (i.e. companies based in DC that will take TANF customers)
    - More training and education programs provided with TEP Providers (onsite) for certification. This would encourage people to come to providers.
    - Intake process needs to be adjusted. Barrier to work problems are not being addressed (i.e. GED, mental health, literacy)
    - Why isn't it working for some folk?
        - Some feel it is because they are given the option NOT to engage with providers. People need more motivation.
        - If individuals are about to be sanctioned then home assessments need to take place prior to sanctions
            - There was shock in the number of families that are sanctioned and then the low percentage of families that responded to cure these sanctions.
        - There needs to be restrictions and more programs to move people forward towards economic security because we need to think ahead about the children.

TANF Community Dialogue # 4

DC General Family Shelter

August 31, 2016

1:00 – 2:30 PM

Attendance: 9 TANF customers who are also residents of DC General Family Shelter

- Background on why we're talking to you and then get your feedback/ideas
    - Feedback on POWER exemptions
        - Most not aware of POWER
        - Customer must take care of counseling services, feel they are not yet ready to work
        - Did not realize the POWER program stopped the work requirement.

- Feedback on sanctions.
    - Yes, some have experienced that already.
    - Feel it is not always fair, because it was hard to access services. Providers are not always in the office.

- General feedback on Extension Policy
    - People who play by the rules or people who have real barriers (i.e. POWER or criminal backgrounds) should receive an extension or be offered apprenticeships.
    - Grant Associates does a good job, but not all vendors are like them. The other Providers she worked with before were not as proactive.
    - The behavior does not seem to change based on threats, sanctions or cuts.
    - The extensions should depend on how engaged they are.
    - Not everyone should receive and extension.
    - If play by the rules you should receive extensions.
    - There are situations where people claim DV and it is not true, that is a tricky one.
    - She lost her job due to losing child care, friend that watched child could not do so anymore.
    - Children under the age of five should receive the child only benefit, not benefits for full household just because there is a child.
    - Documentation is important.
    - Conclusion:
        - if the parent plays by the rules then the family should be extended but graduated down services and receive transportation stipend
        - if they do not play by the rules, then should still receive benefit but reduced
- Should homelessness or risk of homeless be a reason for exemption or extension?
    - No. This does not matter because there are a lot of services for homeless families and shelter covers cost of housing/food/etc. If you don't play by the rules, then you should not receive benefits
- Why do you think so many parents are not compliant?
    - They are lazy, or may have some disability.
    - Many people do not want to do job search with the Providers
        - Hate going to the Providers, doing the time sheets and paperwork
        - Want to do this on their own terms
        - Providers are extremely overwhelmed with customers in DC who have higher barriers so it's easier to focus and provide services for customers with lower barriers
        - Biggest barriers – Some customers are so young, there is some much drama and they are not focused on employment because of mental health and other stressors.
- Do you feel DHS is good at identifying needs/ barriers?
    - No, they do not connect you well with other services and helping you to get necessary of documentation
    - TEP Providers are all different, a lot of running around
    - PSI has been very good at helping get documentation.
    - For mental disability it is very hard get SSI
- What could TANF do better?

- There are so many sign in sheets and sometime you may miss something resulting in a missing stipend.
- DC General Family Shelter can sign off on a time sheet which is helpful but not everyone has that support.
- The TANF benefit has been reduced after 60 months; there is a fear more families will become homeless. DC is an expensive city to live in; $150 is not a lot but it can help with bills. Maybe you are staying with someone and picking up the power bill.
- DHS Service Centers should have better communication, message is not consistent and things get lost between the departments
  - Things are lost when they are put in the drop-box. She was not able to see a case worker and this was frustrating. She reapplied in June but was told she only needed to give a bit more information. She was assured she ONLY needed give a few more info then heard nothing…later she finds out she need to reapply. She received a hard time everywhere she went. In total 3 months to get through the system.
- POWER exemption does not have homelessness. Should homelessness be included and what are the requirements expected of them?
  - It's good that they have requirements, must participate. At DC General Family Shelter it is good that they are required to participate. The clock stop is a bad idea because you could live in DC General Family Shelter and be on TANF for three (3) years. That is a lot of support.

- If a family is getting cut from TANF, what services should be available?
  - Services to help them gain employment, see a TEP Provider or go to a DOES program. Not sure on if they should still receive child care – this should only be received if they are in school or job.
  - Should not receive transportation stipend.

TANF Community Dialogue # 5

CC Prep Academy

September 12, 2016

10:30AM – 12:00 PM

Attendance: 12 TANF customers who are also students at CC Prep Academy

Feedback requested on policy for TANF Hardship extension (questions below). Customers worked in small groups with DHS staff available to answer technical questions.

1. Who should be eligible for cash assistance beyond 60 months?
2. What conditions/requirements do you think families should meet to receive case assistance beyond 60 months?
3. What do you think should be the amount of cash assistance benefit for TANF hardship exempted households who receive assistance beyond 60 months?

4. What do you think should be the length of assistance for TANF hardship exempted households who will receive cash assistance beyond 60 months?

Compiled responses from the report out:

- People with disabilities with an annual review, with full benefits or 50%.
- People with mental illness who are in compliance to plan and check in annually with full benefits.
- People who are pursuing education – extend them up to 4 or 5 years with full benefits if in compliance.
- People seeking employment/education who are participating – full benefits until employed.
- People who are homeless until they are housed and employed. They will need to show that they are compliant and seeking employment or participating in education, receiving full benefits.
- Everyone should be extended who is seeking employment or education because no one is prepared for leaving the program. There should be a three (3) month assessment that includes assistance. After three (3) month assessment there is no progress, all benefits should be stopped.
- Extend children up to 15 years old. (discussion of ability for 15,16,17 year old to work and manage money)
- Extend children up to 8 years old.
- If someone has used their 60 months and then is laid off or terminated (and not eligible for unemployment) they should be able to eligible again.

Feedback requested on what services those no longer eligible for cash assistance due to involuntary exit from TANF. Compiled responses from the report out:

- Housing – a case manager review to ensure housing stability
- SNAP (Food Stamps) eligibility
- Medicaid
- Employment/education assistance/training/job readiness/connections to employers/internships
- Childcare
- Transportation

Additional comments:

- Home visits to assess children and adult circumstances.
- TEP Providers need to offer what the recipients want and need.
- Some recipients have other sources of funds that aren't being reported.
- Some have been on TANF for many years so being exited due to time limits will be major shift.

Appendix 3

Working Group Notes

Working Group Meeting #1 notes:

Working Group: To Inform a Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) Hardship Extension Policy for DC (Meeting #1)
Thursday, August 18, 2016
Anacostia Neighborhood Library – 1800 Good Hope Rd. SE
2 pm to 5 pm

Committee Members Present

Name	Organizations
9 individuals (5 voting)	Customers
CM Yvette Alexander/ Yulanda Barlow	Councilmember Yvette Alexander
Brian Campbell	DHS
Curt Campbell	Legal Aid
Darrell Cason	DHS
Tamitha Christian	DHS
Andrea Gleaves	DC Coalition Against Domestic Violence
Monica Kamen	DC Fair Budget Coalition
Jeremy Lares (non-voting)	Grant Associates
Ed Lazere	DC Fiscal Policy Institute
Tai Meah	Councilmember Nadeau
Ginger Moored	OCFO

David Ross	DHS
Judith Sandalow	Children's Law Center
Anthea Seymour	DHS
CM Elissa Silverman/ Kelly Hunt	Councilmember Silverman
Lisa Simmons (non-voting)	Maximus
Jennifer Tiller (non-voting)	America Works

Community Members Present

John Coombs	EOM
Christine Wong	Bread for the City
Kate Coventry	DC Fiscal Policy Institute
Erin Larkin	DC Coalition Against Domestic Violence
Tony Lopez	Neighborhood Legal Services Program
Kathy Haines	DMHHS
Damon King	Children's Law Center

Other participants: Laura Zeilinger, DHS; Barbara Poppe, Barbara Poppe and Associates; Todd Ives, Barbara Poppe and Associates

1. **Welcome** – DHS Director Laura Zeilinger (2:21 pm)

   - Many different voices are represented in the room – Council, DHS, advocates, service providers, TANF customers – thank you for participating.
   - October 1, 2017 law goes into effect that does not permit extension of TANF cash assistance past the 60-month limit.
   - The goal is to develop a robust TANF policy to develop recommendations for TANF hardship extensions.
   - Barbara Poppe was hired to facilitate as a neutral third party in order to hear from all different perspectives.

2. **Agenda review and introductions**– Barbara Poppe (facilitator)

Scope/Charge of Working Group

- Develop recommendations to DHS Director Laura Zeilinger for TANF hardship exemption policy by September 30, 2016
    - Priorities and suggestions for hardship extension policies to support vulnerable District families who should be eligible to receive TANF assistance beyond 60 months. Budget assumptions/options: a) All extended; b) $25 million; c) $17.5 million, d) $10 million
    - Developing the best approaches to serve families whose TANF benefits have ended.
- Review of process timeline (August 2016 – September 2016 formation of working group, listening sessions, community dialogues, data analysis).
- Meeting 1 (8/18/16): Stage setting, listening session report, data about families, cost examples, preliminary policy ideas for hardship exemptions from time limits
- Meeting 2 (8/30/16): community dialogue report, national expert presentation, financial impact of time limits, risks & benefits if all families are exempted from time limits, prioritize policy ideas within budget marks
- Meeting 3 (9/13/16): community dialogue report, fine tune all recommendations, vote on final recommendations.
- All working members will have opportunity to comment on final report before submission.
- The purpose is to gain consensus at the end for policy recommendations. If consensus is not possible, a voting process will be used.
- The final report will include everything that came out of the meetings.

Questions:

- Ed Lazere (DCFPI): Nervous about the process, especially hemming into a $10 million budget mark. We should decide what the best policy is and then price it.
- Barbara: The budget questions get at the core issue of priorities. We have been given this task and the budget will help us be clear on priorities. The report will also highlight what are the risks and benefits of total exemption.
- Ed Lazere: Can we figure out what is the best time limit policy and go from there? This could be all exemptions or not.
- Barbara: The next meeting will discuss benefits and risks of no time limits and present an impact analysis of costs of time limits. There may be options between the $25 million budget mark and providing exemptions for all.
- Ed Lazere: Re: third meeting voting, would like to report out the consensus items and then list the non-consensus items separately (without voting on them).

Barbara: Time to begin our work together. Invited extroverts to step back, introverts to open up. Keep an open mind, be positive. Listen with intent to understand others' perspectives. Facilitator commitment: fair, open, inclusive, responsive process. Capture the conversation and recommendations as accurately as possible. Provide members opportunity to review report before submission.

Activity: Turning to your neighbor: "Why did I decide to participate and what do I hope to contribute to the Working Group?" (2:43 pm)

3. Project Overview – Anthea Seymour, Economic Security Administration Administrator

- DHS Mission
- TANF overview
    - Provides cash assistance and support services to families
    - DC has a 60-month time limit going into effect October 2017
    - DC does not currently have a hardship extension policy; all states have the option of having one
    - 2011 District law created a time limit, which has been postponed twice
    - More than 15,000 families currently participate in TANF (nearly 5,800 have received benefits for more than 60 months)
- POWER Program Overview (Program on Work Employment and Responsibility). Participants with particular circumstances can enter this program; stops your TANF clock while you are in the program
    - 815 in POWER, 527 of these are 60+ month status; (DHS believes this is an undercount of who may qualify for POWER.)
- Displayed list of 16 possible exemption categories used by other states
- Graduated sanctions exist now (3 levels); Level 1: 20%, Level 2: 50%, Level 3: 100% (But only Level 1 has been implemented; Levels 2 & 3 will come right after DCAS updates).
- For hardship extension policy: Who should be eligible? What qualifications? What amount of cash? Lengths of assistance? How to help those who don't qualify?

4. Presentation: Themes from Listening Sessions - Barbara Poppe

- Held last week (separate sessions for TEP Vendors, TANF recipients, advocates, and Council). The following common themes emerged across all sessions:
    - Improve quality of services before 60 months
    - Increase engagement, especially in last 12 months
    - Importance of intensive services

- Improve POWER (increase outreach for enrollment, access to work preparation services, be aware of stigma attached to POWER)

- Families to exempt from time limit: many of the categories that listening session participants named are already qualifying factors for POWER, which stops the TANF clock anyway and so do not need an extension
- Recommended families to exempt from time limit (6 themes, pervasive in all listening sessions):
  - Families who play by all the rules (yet can't find employment)
  - Under-employed/part-time working parents
  - Families at risk of homelessness/have unstable housing
  - Families at risk of child entering foster care
  - Parents with low literacy levels (<8th grade or no GED) and/or ESL and not yet ready to work without longer assistance
  - All children regardless of parent participation
  - Question: is this for exemptions or extensions?
    - This refers to hardship extension after 60 months
- Themes from a single session (not across multiple listening sessions):
  - High unemployment in DC
  - Parents with low cognitive ability, low achievement, learning disability
  - Veterans
  - Housebound
  - Parents who cannot work because of physical or mental impairments
  - Witness protection
  - Engaged in social/mental health treatment/counseling
- Conditions/requirements similar across groups
  - Must meet all participation requirements with TANF
  - Must be enrolled in education/training on a career path
  - No requirements – exempt all children from time limits regardless of parental participation
- Benefits Level. Recommendations varied widely:
  - Customers should receive full benefits

    - Customers should receive partial benefits
    - Benefits should be determined by annual budget
    - Benefits should be determined by number of children
- How long? 3 themes: 1) extension as long as needed (with periodic review), 2) dependent on a specific reason, 3) fixed time period extension (e.g. 6 or 12 months)

5. TANF Family Data (3:08 pm) – Anthea Seymour

- Length of stay: roughly ½ of families have been on TANF for less than 60 months, ½ over
- Average age: 32 years
- Metrics chart: in FY 13, about 25% of customers were waiting for referrals to service providers, now that number is down to nearly zero
- Customers leaving due to wage has increased over the past two years
- There is still a DHS concern that TANF families are not earning as much as they would like
    - Question: why are some people making less than minimum wage on TANF?
        - Anthea - Some people may work outside of the District or work jobs that rely on tips
- Educational background (self-reported): 76% report HS degree/GED; 22% report post-high school education (Anthea notes that these numbers may be elevated, based on reports of experiences from TANF Employment Program or TEP vendors).
    - Comment: One participant noted that DC Public Schools (DCPS) does not retain education records very long, so some may have high school credentials, but not be able to prove this.
        - Brian Campbell: POWER is an opt-in program; some participants might opt-out because no stipends are available (as they are for TEP vendor participation in traditional TANF)
- More families should be using POWER then currently do. There is an underlying stigma with being a program for people with disabilities that may drive some people away from using it.
- About 1,900 customers on TANF live in public housing and have been receiving TANF benefits for 60+ months
- 1,086 60-month families have entered shelter annually over past three years
- 60+ month outreach plan: did direct mail, Home Visitors Program, outreach through Community Based Organizations, customer feedback (through Advisory Board, roundtables, surveys)

- Characteristics of families on TANF for more than 60 months
    - Benefit is about $150 (varies based on household size). This is down from $428 a month in 2011.
    - 96% of heads of households subject to loss of TANF benefits are females, mostly single mothers.
    - More than 10,000 children are expected to be impacted by the 60 month time limit. 61% are under the age of 10.
    - 75% live in Wards 6, 7, and 8
- In Spring 2016, DHS administered a survey to over 6,000 families who would be subject to the loss of TANF benefits due to the five year limit. The survey was based on self-reporting. There was a 42% response rate.
    - About 77% of the target population (n=6,053) were not participating in TANF program requirements/TEP vendor; for survey participants (n=2,592), engagement levels were similar with 69% of respondents not participating in TANF program requirements
    - 65% were neither employed nor in education programs
    - Two out of five of those employed worked more than 30 hours but bring home less than $500 every two weeks
    - Of those enrolled in an education program, roughly 1/3 college, 1/3 vocational training, 1/3 working on high school diploma/GED
    - Many customers reported health issues but have not accessed treatment
    - Question: CM Alexander: has there been any coordination with healthcare/Managed Care Organizations about particular customers? Concerned about non-compliance with MCOs; this needs to be addressed
        - Anthea Seymour: in-depth follow-up visits are ongoing with customers based on the responses of the survey.
    - About 66% had problems looking for work because they didn't have enough education or work experience; 18% could not get child care
    - Detailed review of CATCH system (TANF case notes) found that about 45% of all TANF customers are having difficulties with child care/child well-being; 18% of customers have mental health issues
    - 50% go on and off TANF, most often due to income
    - Customers who left TANF and returned, mostly was due to a loss of job or wage

- 34% said, "TANF did not help me become more secure," 57% stated that TANF "helped me to pay my bills" (multi-select answer)
    - Comment: participant note: these respondents are only getting about $150/month now; their answer might have been different when they had higher TANF amounts
- Asked customers how we can improve TANF. 80% said workshops on new careers (amongst other responses that each received 70+% approval; this question was multi-select)
- Use of other government services: 32% reported DCPS Individual Education Plans (IEPs)/DCPS counseling
- Support from other sources? 43% family
- More than 50% said that losing TANF would make their lives more difficult
- Question: how much do families receive before 60 months?
    - Anthea - the average is $450 a month. After 60 months, it is $150.

6. Small Group Dialogues: Develop policy concepts (3:42 pm)

- Format: small table group discussions
- The purpose is to develop "policy ideas" by family situation/characteristics. The small groups had the option of working up the Listening Session ideas that had emerged across multiple sessions (below) and/or develop additional ideas.
    - Parents who "play by all the rules," i.e., parents who despite their best efforts cannot find employment
    - Under-employed and part-time working parents
    - Families who are at risk of becoming homeless or have unstable housing
    - Families who are at risk of child entering foster care
    - Parents with low literacy levels (defined as <8th grade or no GED) and/or ESL and not yet ready to work without longer assistance
    - All children regardless of parent participation
- Read-out: The options were placed on the board, letters A-J.
    - Listening Session ideas that were further developed were posted
    - Additional ideas were developed and posted
        - Wants to make sure POWER participants are included.

- Education – those that don't have a GED/high school diploma.
- Child care – not having stable child care.
- Two-generational approach to working with the children as well to address intergenerational poverty.

- DHS will need to cost out the ideas that are prioritized. Barbara had asked DHS to work on costing the data.
- Voting will take place by voting members using sticker votes. Place a sticker on the ideas that are important to you. DHS can create cost estimates for the prioritized ideas.

7. Presentation: Examples of financial scenarios – Anthea Seymour

- Anthea presented a sample cost analysis; this was done as a sample, with certain baseline assumptions. For example, $450/month for <=60 months; $150/month>60 months, incorporated Cost of Living Adjustment, focused on cash benefits only. No staff costs, system rebuilds or other technical adjustments to the system.
- Anthea presented OCFO estimates of a cost extension for different types of customer groups under CM Nadeau's Bill (items 1-7) and two additional scenarios.

No	Criteria	FY18	FY19	FY20	Projected # of Families
1	Customers in Job Training or Post-Secondary Education	$ 11,435,152	$ 12,751,553	$ 13,076,931	1,800
2	Single Parents w/ Children under 6 Months	$ 2,602,993	$ 2,898,001	$ 2,972,880	288
3	Single Parents w/ Children under 4 Months	$ 1,787,233	$ 1,985,981	$ 2,038,059	192
4	Adult Learners	$ 2,873,874	$ 3,206,918	$ 3,288,306	457
5	Extension at Full Benefit if Comply w/ IRP	$ 33,796,937	$ 37,784,975	$ 38,729,600	5,524
6	Comply w/ IRP + Full or Partial Participation	$ 20,483,734	$ 22,900,814	$ 23,473,335	3,348
7	Comply w/ IRP + Full Participation	$ 11,379,852	$ 12,722,675	$ 13,040,741	1,860
8	Continue at Current Benefit Level: 65% Reduction from Full Benefits after 60 Months	$ 11,383,115	$ 12,726,323	$ 13,044,481	6,200
9	20% Reduction from Full Benefits after 60 Months	$ 36,491,392	$ 40,797,376	$ 41,817,311	6,200

- Question:
  - Judith Sandalow: Is the calculation offset by cost of covering families who fall into other services?
  - Anthea - No, that analysis will come for the second meeting.

8. Prioritize policy ideas for development of cost estimates

- Based on the input from the small groups, members were asked to vote with dots on policies from the idea sheets for DHS to cost and bring back to the next meeting. Each voting member of the working group was given five dots.

Idea A: Parents who play by all the rules, i.e. parents who despite their best efforts cannot find employment

Idea A1: Parents who "play by all the rules" should receive full benefits with recertification. IRP should be individual and be the determinate and intention of playing by the rules. Best efforts look different. The concern with this category is that it creates a notion that some families are "more worthy" of services. But it also fails to acknowledge that families who can't "play by the rules" have greater barriers.

Idea A2: Parents who "play by all the rules" should receive the full benefit amount for 6 months with review. Upon review additional time may be granted.

Idea A3: Parents who "play by all the rules" should be in full compliance in consistent assessments or face sanctions. They should receive full benefits until sanctioned on an interim basis based on assessment.

Idea A4: Parents who "play by all the rules" must show participation and receive full benefits because of income and economic rationale.

Idea A5: Parents who "play by all the rules" must show proof of your best efforts (need to determine how to show proof) and proof of participation and more mandatory training or mock classes with feedback from prospective employers. They should receive full benefits with 6 month review because they are playing by the rules.

Idea A6: Parents who "play by all the rules" must show full compliance with the IRP and receive full benefits. Is there another alternative to time limits so that the children aren't impacted?

Idea B: Under-employed and part-time working parents

Idea B1: Under-employed and part-time working parents - If someone is working there should be no extension, or just a 6 month extension with full benefits pending review. It should be the same as play by the rules. Some felt that low work hours is a reflection of poor performance. The group was split on this.

Idea B2: Under-employed and part-time working parents should be in full compliance (almost like Idea A) with a sliding scale of benefits pending interim assessments.

Idea B3: Under-employed and part-time working parents must demonstrate active participation in finding better employment with the provider and receive partial benefits with recertification up to 12 months. Cost of living within DC. Improvement of economic stability is greatly needed.

Idea C: Families who are at risk of becoming homeless or have unstable housing

Idea C1: Families who are at risk of becoming homeless or have unstable housing should have low barriers to participation and receive the max amount of assistance. Length of assistance is case-by-case. The rationale for the benefit is DC's current housing market (too unaffordable), lack of housing opportunities for large families, the potential burden on the shelter system, and research shows that if you can put people in housing it leads to better outcomes.

Idea C2: Families who are at risk of becoming homeless or have unstable housing must be in a multi-family household, in a rent burdened situation (30% + of income toward rent), and receiving no housing subsidy to qualify for full benefits for the household. This assistance should last until one of the three conditions is not met or the child ages out because housing stability is at core of household stability and health.

Idea C3: Families who are at risk of becoming homeless or have unstable housing should receive full benefits based on housing risk only for as long as needed because homeless costs lead to a downward cycle.

Idea D: Families who are at risk of child entering foster care

Idea D1: Families who are at risk of child entering foster care should receive full benefits as long as the child is within custody and the risk continues with no other requirements. Benefits should continue as long as the risk continues with attention paid to how the family uses the benefits because it is very important to keep the family together. Some parents are not spending the money on the well-being of the child.

Idea E: Parents with low literacy levels and/or ESL and not yet ready to work without longer assistance

Idea E1: Parents with low literacy levels and/or ESL and not yet ready to work without longer assistance should receive the $150 dollar amount of benefits based on compliance with conditions and requirements along "Idea A (play by the rules)." The benefits should continue with 6 month review.

Idea E2: Parents with low literacy levels and/or ESL and not yet ready to work without longer assistance must be in an education program and be in full participation at all times. Parents receive full benefits with no limit but must recertify. There is a competitive job market in DC without college education.

Idea E3: Parents with low literacy levels and/or ESL and not yet ready to work without longer assistance must follow “play by the rules” (IRP) conditions and requirements and be in an education program to receive benefits. Benefits should go up if they have special needs. The benefits have no limits if they follow IRP because the parents are not able to earn.

Idea F: All minor children regardless of parent participation

Idea F1: All minor children regardless of parent participation should remove parent head of household family from the benefit basis. They should receive the full benefit amount with an average 20% reduction based on family size until the child is 18/19 (CA model). We should never cut children off from assistance – we know from research children will fall into further poverty without assistance.

Idea F2: All minor children regardless of parent participation should receive the original benefit amount for household size with the requirement of having a minor in the household. Benefits should extend yearly with recertification to ensure (1) residency and (2) parenthood of minor child. There has to be a safety net for minor and this addresses a multigenerational approach to TANF.

Idea F3: All minor children regardless of parent participation should receive $250 until the oldest child reaches 15 years with the requirements that safeguards are in place to prove money is benefiting the children and there is program money for certain items.

Idea G: POWER families

Idea G1: POWER families – the program should keep existing conditions with intention of better implementation/screening/application. They should receive full assistance as needed with recertification because these are the most vulnerable families

Idea G2: POWER families – the program should make new categories to qualify for POWER if you are at risk of homelessness or foster care and move all extension categories into POWER.

Idea H: Not having childcare

Idea H1: Those with kids 6 weeks – 3 years cannot afford childcare and should receive full benefits. They may have non 9-5 work hours.

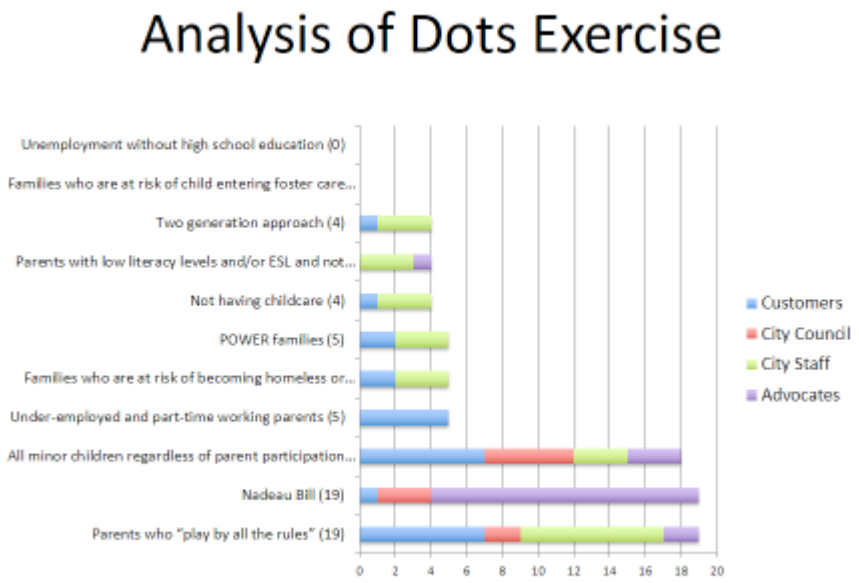
Idea I: Unemployment without high school education

Idea I1: Unemployment without high school education should receive max benefits until the program ends conditional on meeting the IRP.

Idea J: Two generational approach

Idea J1: Two generational approach - acknowledgement of efforts to outcomes as well as acknowledgement of outcomes and goals. Assistance should be child only.

- Question:
  - Judith Sandalow: Can we add CM Nadeau's Bill as an option on the board? (Option K?).
    - Barbara: Yes.
    - **Idea K: Nadeau bill was added**
  - Ed Lazere: Can we have more dots? Expressed concerns about having to value one policy over the other.
    - Barbara: No. This is meant to be a prioritization process. Many are not comfortable with prioritizing. One strategy would be to wait until the end of the process to place dots, so that under covered areas can be covered with your dots. We are trying to bring back the most important pieces with cost analysis through this process.
  - Judith Sandalow: Would like to know the number of persons in each group because that would be priority. We don't have accurate/enough information to prioritize.
    - Barbara: This is not the final vote. Based on what you know, what are your priorities? You can opt not to participate.
  - TEP Provider: how will non-voting members be heard? (E.g. non-voting TEP vendors)
    - Barbara: Her understanding – if you have a financial interest in this process, you cannot vote. The TEP providers have had the chance to voice their ideas in small groups. There is an even mix of voting members among advocates, customers, City Council, and city staff. The ideas input will show up in the report, not just the priorities. The process is open to suggestions as well.
    - Laura – This is one of many pieces before any policy becomes law. There are other processes through city council to give public input on the Nadeau Bill.
    - Barbara – We will come back in two weeks; please give us feedback. We want this to be inclusive.
  - Judith Sandalow: how do we pick priorities among choices, when an option should be extending it to every family who needs it?
    - Barbara - this is just a process to determine which options DHS costs and brings back to the Working Group. The next meeting we will be working toward recommendations. None of the options go away based on today's voting.
- [Voting began at 4:50 pm]



- Strongest interest: Parents who "play by all the rules" (19 votes); the Nadeau bill (19 votes); minor children regardless of parent participation (18 votes);.

9. Closing and next steps - Barbara

- The next meeting will include
  - Report from community dialogues
  - National expert presentation
  - Develop recommendations for households who will not receive a "TANF hardship exemption" and will not receive continuing TANF cash assistance
    - Review Listening Session themes
    - Review financial analysis of costs to other services for exited households; clarifying questions
    - Discuss ways to help Cost analysis of policy ideas
  - Evolve policy
    - Review and evolve benefits and risks of no time limits
    - Review financial analysis of policy options
    - Organize options within budget breaks

The meeting adjourned at 5:12PM.

Working Group Meeting #2 notes:

Working Group: To Inform a Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) Hardship Extension Policy for DC (Meeting #2)
Wednesday, August 30 @ 11 am to 2 pm
DHS Headquarters – 64 New York Ave, Sixth Floor

Committee Members Present (voting and non-voting)

Names	Organizations
6 individuals	Customers
Brian Campbell	DHS
Curt Campbell	Legal Aid
Jennifer Tiller (non-voting)	America Works
Sharra Greer	Children's Law Center
Susanne Groves	DC Council
Anthea Seymour	DHS
Tai Meah	Councilmember Nadeau
Kelly Sweeny Mcshane	Community of Hope
Jen Budoff	DC Council
Jeremy Lares (non-voting)	Grant Associates
Ed Lazere	DC Fiscal Policy Institute
Yulonda Barlow	Councilmember Yvette Alexander

David Ross	DHS
Christina Okonkrus	DHS
Monique Graham	FSFSC
Andrea Gleaves	DC Coalition Against Domestic Violence
Won-ok Kim	DHS
Ginger Moored	OCFO
Lisa Simmons	Maximus

Community Members Present

Melissa McClure	Legal Aid Society of DC
Kathy Haines	DMHHS
Chris Vera	DHS
Ann Pierre	DHS
Kate Coventry	DC Fiscal Policy Institute
Renee Murphy	Children's Law Center
Jennifer Mezey	DC Legal Aid
Ruth Rich	DHS/OWO
Linnea Lassiter	DC Fiscal Policy Institute
Kelly Hunt	Councilmember Silverman
Monica Kaman	FBC
Debbie Fox	DC Coalition Against Domestic Violence
Damon King	Children's Law Center

Other participants: Donna Pavetti, CBPP; Barbara Poppe, Barbara Poppe and Associates; Kelsey Weber, Barbara Poppe and Associates.

Welcome – Anthea Seymour, ESA Administrator DHS

- Many different voices are represented in the room – Council, DHS, advocates, service providers, TANF customers – thank you for participating.

Agenda review and introductions– Barbara Poppe (facilitator)

- Reminder of the Scope/Charge of Working Group: Develop recommendations to DHS Director Laura Zeilinger for TANF hardship exemption policy by September 30, 2016
    - Working group held Meeting 1 on 8/18, and a few requests were made which have been taken into consideration. These requests were
        - An interim mark to support policy objective be included into the budget assumptions.
        - An additional meeting be held to further discuss and develop recommendations. This will be put to a vote at the end of this meeting.
- Review of process timeline (August 2016 – September 2016 formation of working group, listening sessions, community dialogues, data analysis).
    - August, 2016, listening sessions were conducted with TANF participants, advocates, service providers and city council in advance of the first Working Group meeting.
    - August – September, 2016: Community Dialogues are being held.
    - August – September, 2016: Data Analysis to understand TANF participation characteristics, needs, barriers to employment and program participation.
    - September 30, 2016: Final Report to DHS Director with recommendations for TANF hardship policies.
- Review of working group meeting
    - Meeting #1 (8/18/16): Completed. We set the stage, listened to session reports, reviewed data about families and cost examples, and started preliminary policy idea for hardship exemptions from time limits.
    - Meeting #2 (8/30/16): community dialogue report, national expert presentation, financial impact of time limits, risks & benefits if all families are exempted from time limits, organize policy ideas within budget marks,
        - Based on recommendations from Meeting 1, we will NOT develop recommendations for service for families exiting due to time limits during today's meeting. This will be completed during Meeting 3 to allow for the policy discussion to be completed today.
    - Meeting #3 (9/13/16): community dialogue report, develop recommendations for services for families exiting due to time limits, fine tune all recommendations, vote on final recommendations and priorities.
    - All working members will have opportunity to comment on final report before submission.
- Time to begin our work together. Everyone is an expert on TANF in some way, therefore we would like everyone to share. Last session many people did not feel respected by other members of the working group. We want to ensure everyone is able to express their views and

feels respected in doing so. There are a wide range of views, which we encourage and want to remind everyone to explore all ideas with an open mind. Please listen and understand others, do not try to convince others of your perspective.

- Barbara Poppe, as facilitator, commits to listen and be responsive to everyone during this process. Quite a few changes based on suggestions from Meeting # 1. She will continue to update and adjust the process as we move forward. As with meeting 1 a meeting record will be shared. Please let Barbara know if you want to propose any adjustments to theMeeting 1 record.
- Today's Agenda:
    - Setting the stage with panel discussion and a national expert onTANF,
    - Key drivers: review of cost analysis for potential unintended consequences and policy options
    - Rolling up our sleeves to discuss risks and benefits of policy options and evaluating cost scenarios of all policy options. This is the important work we need to complete so we can have deliverables to move forward into Meeting #3. Based on feedback following Meeting 1 this activity will be organized by constituent group to ensure all groups feel comfortable and heard. We will complete with a share out to ensure all perspectives are heard.

Questions:

- No questions on the Agenda

Activity: Introductions and check-in: Turning to your neighbor, "Who am I? What did I learn so far from this process that I am brining forward to this meeting deliberations?

Update on Community Dialogues – Barbara Poppe

- Two community dialogues are completed. They were not well attended but they were deeply attended which caused a shift in the focus of these dialogues. They will be shifted away from public locations, in favor of locations where TANF customers are more likely to be engaged.
    - There are two community dialogues tomorrow, one at America Works (10:00 – 11:30 am) open to the public, one at DC General Family Shelter (1:00-2:30 pm) not open to general public due to the shelter rules.
    - DC General community dialogue was added based on the extensive conversation regarding homeless individuals that was expressed during prior dialogues.
    - The final dialogue was moved to Community College Prep Academy (9/12 10:30-11:30 am) because many TANF customers participate in this program.

4. Panel Discussion on the "Value of TANF" customer and advocate perspectives.

- This panel was included into the meeting in response to working group feedback. Members felt that is was important not to lose sight of the value of TANF, understand the community wide perspective and the customer perspective.
- Panelists: Matthew and Mona, TANF Customers; Curt and Monica, Advocate representatives.
- Questions to Mona and Matthew: What has TANF meant to you and your family?

- Matthew: TANF has meant a supplemental income. Without work and being unable to receive unemployment benefits, this is the only thing to fall back on. So with TANF I can use it to help provide for my family; without TANF, I am not sure what I would have done or how I would have made it this far.
- Mona: As a single parent of three children it means a lot. I was working and getting unemployment but had to resort to TANF because the job market changed and I needed a degree to get a better job. It has been helpful to my family, to support me and my kids. It's hard to live in DC so if we can use it in a way to get people situated and grounded it will help to them get to the next level.

- Questions to Curt and Monica: Why is TANF a resource to the DC area?
  - Curt: I will come at this from two angles so just to give you some background. I work in legal aid, but was on TANF as a child in Hoboken, NJ. Like DC, Hoboken was rapidly gentrifying and becoming a difficult place to live. DC is one of the most expensive places to raise a child. He and his wife, who are both well employed, are about to have their first child. They are already feeling overwhelmed with the prospect of providing well for their child. If they have these concerns and anxieties, then how do others feel? Others who cannot find stable employment, fear leaving their home due to domestic violence, or are just scraping by to feed and clothe their family. My family had been through TANF and it provided a sense of stability, allowed him and his siblings not to miss school and participate in after school programs because there was transportation support. This allowed him and his sibling to succeed, get degrees and go to college. There was recent a Radio program talking about triage, i.e. the need to prioritize medical resources in war zones. The doctors in these areas were making increasingly questionable decisions about who to help and who to leave behind based on the best use of limited resources. This realization led to creating working groups for developing guidelines on who to help when resources are tight. They developed a system which would help people with the best chances of having a high quality of life and leaving others behind eg, those who usually have chronic illnesses and would not have a high quality of life. The doctor speaking said she saw this system acted out in Haiti after the earthquake where a chronically ill patient was triaged into an area that was targeted to be helped last. The patient slowly received less and less resources (this case being oxygen) until she would eventually pass. Thankfully the doctor interceded and the patient was transferred to a different hospital. However, our approach to TANF is much like this view of triage in low resource areas. When we are talking about the exemptions and deciding on who would qualify, it is important to think about the people who would be left out. What if your family was on the verge of homelessness, need transportation to a job interview or had children who may end up going to school hungry? DC is NOT a war zone, we do NOT need to triage TANF. We can find creative solutions to help as many people as possible.
  - Monica: I work for the Fair Budget Coalition, where we address a variety of human needs. Running the full gamut from health care, to employment, etc. In this work we see how all systems are working together to leave people out. The economy is not creating adequate jobs; there are only low income jobs available where people cannot survive on the wages. The housing market is shoving people out. People are only able to access reactive health care such as ER services. People live in areas with limited access to groceries stores and adequate health food options. All of these different issues are

keeping people at the bottom. TANF should be a net to catch families with the systems fail. We recognize that all humans deserve a certain quality of life, which include education, health care, a home, etc. If systems don't provide this, then TANF is a safety net to provide it. While it is important to continue to look at the big picture system reform, a safety net is needed as an interim to ensure people have basic dignities. Especially to ensure all children in the city are protected, have a quality of life and all pipeline of opportunities.

- Questions to Mona and Matthew: What do you want the working group to think about when making decisions on the 60 month TANF timeline and setting priorities of who should be exempt and extended.
    - Mona: you should be thinking "what would I want if this were me, my child, my grandchild, what will my future hold?" Think of the future and become problem solvers. We need to start putting ourselves in people's shoes. This happened to me. I used to give my cousins a hard time for being on TANF, never did I think I would be here. As a parent you don't know what is in front of you. You want to make sure you get back on track and go higher. It's important to make sure you have morals and values when you think about TANF and everyone, because this is not just about me or you, it is about everyone.
    - Matt: What Mona said is exactly correct. This could be any of you. Many people are only one pay check away. You never know what could happen to you in your life.

Presentation by national TANF expert.- Donna Pavetti, CBPP

Brian introduced Donna: She has been a leading national voice for over 20 years. When states and cities want to adjust their programs they go to LaDonna first. She helped DC 12 years ago, then again 6 years again and is here today to help us turn the page and look at things critical.

- Want to ensure everyone is clear on the rules and regulation of TANF.
    - Federal law set a 60 month time limit on federally funded TANF benefits but does not state that people cannot be served after this period. DC can use federal funds to serve 20% of people after 60 months and can use local funds to support all families and still be in compliance with federal regulations. DC has been providing extensions for 20 years and has not gone against federal policy in doing so.
- Understanding the history of the time limits.
    - Time limits on cash, when originally proposed, came with the guarantee of a job at the end of the timeline, however this job guarantee did not remain in the legislation. It was never the intend of the federal law to take away safety nets, but rather to provide them with a sense of urgency for TANF agencies and participants to secure employment. Additionally, when this law was drafted we knew far less about the characteristics and needs of families on TANF. We now know much more and can use this knowledge to our benefit.
- Things to consider

- Think about what it means to be on TANF for 60 months. People tend to go on and off TANF over the years resulting in a combined time of 60 months. There is also a broad range of circumstances that cause individuals to go on and off of TANF.
- What we've learned from other programs that implemented time limits is that the likelihood of employment is about 30% at the best. If people are cut off of benefits they are not likely to find jobs on their own, and these results were found during a much better job market. If extensions are not put in place there will be a group of families that continue to be unemployed after losing their benefits.
- There is a very low likelihood of individuals who will receive other benefits (i.e. SSI). We know that enrolling in SSI is very difficult. Most families on TANF long term have multiple barriers in their lives but not one barrier large enough to qualify them for SSI. At best 10% of participants will receive SSI benefits.
- Ethnographic research has shown that when families have no available cash they resort to desperate measure to meet their basic needs. This can mean anything from moving into situations or homes that individuals know are unhealthy to engaging risky work. Many families may scrape together money to meet their needs but these opportunities are never steady, creating daily uncertainty and stress. Cash is a necessity for all families because other options are not enough to meet needs with consistency.
- TANF is a service that catches many people and provides opportunity and options. It provides services that most people do not have access to otherwise, such as child care.
- A study was done in Washington State on tightening extensions for time limits. As a result, they saw an increase in percentage of people who were homeless, an increase in child maltreatment resulting in an increase in foster care and children in the child welfare systems. Additionally, if children are in unstable situations and exposed to harm there are life time health consequences which result in huge costs in the health care system.
- It is important to consider what will happen when the next recession hits. A lot of families have been on TANF for more than 60 months. If there is a recession this number will increase but budgets will already be limited.

- Key Elements of the Path Forward
  - Most initial assessments do not accurately identify the existence of significant employment barriers. Incoming TANF customers are asked to divulge a large amount of personal information. This is uncomfortable, even intimidating, therefore first assessment is usually not reflective of the actual situation. How do we do a better job assessing needs and identifying barriers initially and over time?
  - Exemptions- View this as people who cannot be expected to find work due to signification barriers (mental health, physical, a combination of issues, etc.)
  - Extension- View this as people who have the potential of gaining employment and moving forward but it will take them a bit more time. There can be many reasons for this and we need to consider all factors, such as the current job market, personal circumstances and what will happen to the children if benefits are stopped.

- It is very important to think of alternative pathways to employment. DC has made incredible progress in employment services, but it is not geared towards people who are not quick to gain work. Some individuals need more time to work on mental health or other barriers and these are individuals are not well served by current programs. Realistically some adults may only be able to participate in services at 1 or 2 days a week; 20 -30 hours of work is too high of a bar to set for many individuals at the beginning, therefore we are setting people up to fail.
    - For example, there is a community based program called MOMS partnership. This program met with women on TANF, in their community, to assess their needs. Based on their requests an 8-week stress reduction program was created. It was so successful, with 80% completion rate, that a job component has recently been added. This demonstrates that for some groups other issues need to be addressed and work completed prior to entering the workforce.
- It is very important to understand that data does not show that removing benefits leads people to work if there is not a good job market. People often do not have jobs due to the lack of skills and resources, the lack of a job may be there aren't sufficient job openings that fit the schedule as parents. TANF is an important safety net that will catch people when the labor market and economic systems do not work.
- <u>Questions</u>
    - Thank you for clearing up the law regarding the timeline of TANF. I understand what you said about exemptions versus extension but what is the actual definition of these terms?
        - Donna- Exemptions stop the clock and say an individual is not expected to participate in the required activities but will still receive TANF. An extension provides additional time on TANF to someone who has already reached the time limit and continues to work with them on moving forward and completing required activities.
    - In terms of local framework, is the goal that we meet the budgetary markers indicated? What are we trying to align the policy recommendations with?
        - Barbara- Consider that DC has a hard stop for all households receiving TANF for more than 60 months. Which of these households or individuals should be extended and try to offer those recommendations within the noted fiscal marks.
    - The TANF grant has not increased since 1996. So how much additional local funding do we expected to be included?
        - Donna- DC is in line with the national average for the funding amount allocated to cash assistance. However, it has also put a large amount of TANF funding towards child care services. In comparison to other states, DC has stayed within pretty narrow range of how TANF funding is used.

6. Stand Up Exercise: Barbara Poppe

- We want to talk a bit about values. In this topic there can be constant conflict between morals and values, therefore it helps to know where the group and our individual values are grounded.
    - Activity: In this topic there are two conflicting values "Servicing more families to assure a greater number of people receive some assistance" and "Helping those who help themselves or those who cannot help themselves as much as others." The working group members will put themselves on a continuum between the two juxtaposing values to indicate what they value the most, one the other or somewhere in between.
        - Comment by Ed – Please remember during this exercise that the two values only indicate the actions of needs of the parents, it does not take into account the children.
    - Results: Members were grouped closer to the "Servicing more families" value. However, members are looking for solutions that provide balance between the two values.
        - Comment by Rita- When looking at recommendations we need to prepare for the future. Prepare DHS better for the customers that they receive and ensure customers are preparing for their future.
        - Ed – It is my experience that most people want to help themselves and do not like the implication, by this wording, that some people do not want to help themselves. It is better to think about the barriers people face that will explain why it is perceived that they are not helping themselves.
            - Barbara – There are all kinds of values held on this topic and the "helping themselves" value is held people in the community. I agree with your reservations, but this has been included to make sure we are all thinking about the conflicting and varied public values that are held regarding TANF.

7. Presentation: Cost Analysis: Policy Options. – Anthea Seymour

- Presentation on the additional cost analysis was completed since the working group meeting 1.
- Analysis of Dot Exercise:
    - In meeting 1 Members were asked to vote with dots on policies from the idea sheets for DHS to cost and bring back to the next meeting. Each voting member of the working group was given five dots.
    - Parents who "play by all the rules" and Nadeau Bill received the most votes at 19 each. With Advocates heavily supporting the Nadeau Bill and customers and city staff supporting parents who "play by all the rules."
    - All minor children regardless of parent participation received 18 votes with an even mix of support from customers and city council/staff.
    - We can see that unemployment without high school education and families who are at risk of child entering foster care received no votes
    - This shows where which policies people most supported but this does not mean we are aligning our policy with this exercise outcome.

- Feedback on the Nadeau Bill: Anthea explained the genesis of the Nadeau bill and what policies it proposes.
    - This was a collaboration between some Councilmembers and advocates, and proposes to:
        - Continue benefits for children in households that have reached the time limit,
        - Fund the POWER categories to include individuals in an education program and individual with a child under 6 months of age.
        - Extend benefits for the entire family beyond 60 months under the following circumstances
            - Those complying with their Individual Responsibility Plan;
            - A lack of employment opportunities within the District for individuals without a high school diploma;
            - Those affected by significant barriers to employment (low literacy, learning disabilities, or physical or mental impairment);
            - Individuals that are homeless or at risk of homelessness; and
            - Children are at risk of entering foster care.
- Assumptions for cost projections
    - Projections were done by DHS alone with many assumptions built in to the projections. Remember these are not bottom line numbers, as we still need to speak with the OCFO, and DHS cannot provide final costs without working in partnership with the OCFO.
        - Average of TANF cash benefit per family in FY17 is an average of $450 per month at full benefits (less than 60 months) and an average of $150 per month at reduced benefits (more than 60 months). These amounts fluctuate per household but are averages across the program.
        - FY17 start in October and projections are based on FY18, with the inclusion of the 3 COLA increased to be expected over the next 3 years.
        - The TANF extension will include other benefit in addition to cash assistance but today we are only discussing the cash assistance portion. These are the amount projected and the other benefits will be included back into the extension proposal.
        - Cost Projection for "No Time Limit Group" focuses on families projected to exceed 60 months. The assumptions for each criteria are listed.
            - CHILD only coverage – for sanction process the head of household is removed. We assume remove 20% and keep 80% coverage
            - Full benefits to all families – 100% benefit for all
            - Reduced benefits with COLA for all families– recalculation reduced benefit but with COLA increase. We also reduced the number of families to 5,800.
            - Reduced benefits without COLA for families – this is currently extended

to all families

- Play by the rules group – These include conservative estimates of the projected families.
  - Not Sanctioned – conservative estimate of 75% of 5,800
  - Full and partial compliance- again conservative estimate of projected families
  - Enrolled in Education/Training programs- conservative estimate of projected families
  - Employed (including part-time)- This includes all types of employment.
- Other Criteria
  - Homeless or at risk of becoming homeless – about 25% is projected, but this number is likely to change.
  - Household heads with low literacy– original projected number of families was low; therefore, it was increased to 45% based on article by American University
  - Nadeau bill
- The comparative slide shows the projected number of families that can be served within budget limits. This does not mean we need to fit within these budget limits they are just hypothetical situations that allows us to visualize the numbers and fiscal implications.
- Some categories were not costed due to time constraints and lack of working group priority, these were families who are at risk of child entering foster care, unemployment without high school education, POWER families, families who do not have childcare and two generational approach.

- Question:
  - On the no time limit group, 5,800 is the projected number of families that will exceed 60 months. Does this number fluctuate?
    - Anthea – Yes, it does fluctuate. It was previously 6,200 but this projection is not much lower and we will continue to monitor the projection. The final number will be updated before the final report
  - Would like to clarify why unemployment without high school education not costed.
    - It was not costed because we do not want to redefine unemployment for DC as a whole, which currently included individuals with college degrees. In the Nadeau bill it is only representing individuals with high school diplomas or lower because they are most adversely affected by a recession.
  - In regards to the cost of extending TANF services beyond cash assistance, will this be a large fiscal cost as well? I am meaning services such as case management and transportation services.
    - We do need to spend time to analyze the cost of these additional services and include them into any future budget proposal. We would also like to look at other services families should receive outside of cash assistance or if they no longer receive cash assistance.
  - Where did the assumptions come from for the project number of families on the Play by the Rules group?
    - These percentages of the projected number of families was an estimate correlated to the data we provided in meeting 1. However, those projections

were quite conservative and we felt it was beneficial to increase the projections to ensure we are fully covered in our budget projections.
        - In our analysis we do not have full data on 60% of participants because they were not engaged in the services. By increasing the projected the number of families compared to the data, we are ensuring that we account for individuals for whom we do not have full data. For the final data and projections, we will be working with the OCFO.
    - How do we measure or deal with families that fall under two or more categories? What does that do for these projections?
        - Barbara- This is actually a good thing to think about during the small groups exercise. So reserve that questions for a bit later.
- In projecting the negative impact, societal cost and negative outcomes on families if TANF is stopped after 60 months we drew from experience in other states. From this we know that there is an increased risk for families if they lost TANF, which include food insecurity, child maltreatment, housing issues and homelessness, access to medical care and other support services.
- We also need to do a better job of ensuring families that qualify for SSI are moved on to this program.
- Bottom line on cost analysis is that we were not able to analyze and project unintended costs of the program, but DHS is open to any suggestions to include additional cost into the analysis.

Small Group Dialogues – Barbara Poppe

Activity: The working group members are broken in to 4 small groups based on constituency, (customers, providers, city council/staff, and advocates). Each group will discuss the benefits and risk of policy options including no time limits and then develop scenarios of policy options with in the suggested budget markers. Please note that the advocacy group will not be doing the budget activity because they feel it is more important to decide on the necessary policy and would not want budget markers to influence their policy decisions. Other groups are welcome to do this as well, if they do not want to follow the budget markers set out on the sheets.

Report out from small groups:

Providers: Decided not to go by the budget marks because further clarification is needed to make budget and policy options decisions and had a few questions/concerns.

- Risk and Benefits
    - For all scenarios exempt/extended families should receive full benefits. Advocates also support extensions for periods of high unemployment in DC, families with children under 6 months and families at risk of foster care placement.
    - No time limit
        - Added the benefit that domestic violence victims do not have to risk safety and privacy by having to disclose status as a victim
        - Disagreed with the risk of financial stability because DC can afford the proposed extension. They also would like to know if there is evidence of taxpayer frustration and in-migration of families.
        - Studies show (per LaDonna) that most families do not find work after TANF benefits are cut, which suggest that time limits are not an incentive.

Furthermore, most families go on and off of TANF showing that the time limit is not an incentive.

- Child only
  - All risks were removed except the risk of increase in homelessness and associated cost along with families may face food insecurities and greater housing instability (including right to shelter in this jurisdiction).
  - Added the risk of increased trauma and stress for parents, increase in foster care and will take away an important protective factor for children recovering from complex trauma. There is also a risk of increase health care costs in the long term due to ACEs and in mothers that return to abusers for financial reasons.
  - This option should include the option for parents to reengage to receive full benefits.

- Policy options within in budget limits
  - Is there a reduced amount option for the Nadeau bill? No
  - No budget option can be chosen until assessment are addressed
    - Family assessment, which make sure the full family is included, could lead to less than 5,000 projected families. This assessment may require a different tool than that currently being used.
    - Service plan/assessment inclusive of all services is need in order to make decisions about the fiscal implications.
  - The policy options are presented as singular but they are not. Many households/individuals may fall under multiple options.
    - A lot more discussion needs to be had and feels that discussion cannot be limited to these working groups. There is concern about the time limits and unintended consequences, such as unstable housing/homelessness. A discussion should also be held on expanding the POWER categories.

City Council and City Staff: Did not go by the budget marks but rather spent time discussing the policy options presented especially no time limits, play by the rules no sanction, play by the rules IRP and focus on 2 generational approach. The group struggled with prioritizing playing by the rules IRP which promotes the work and the child only option because protecting children an important value. These are two juxtaposing issues so what is the core value of TANF, having resources in the home or a program for parents to avail themselves?

- Risk and benefits
  - Nadeau bill
    - Added the benefit that it is cheaper than hotels
    - Added the risk that it would be difficult to implement
  - No time limit
    - Added the benefit that it is less expensive to extend benefits because other service systems (housing) are more expensive.
    - Added the risks that it removes pressure to improve service delivery and sanctions families with high risk factors.
  - Child Only
    - Strongly agreed that families may face food insecurity and greater housing instability/homelessness.

        - Added the risks that no services for workforce development, cannot sanction household heads and individual are not eligible for stipends and incentives.
    - Play by the rules following IRP
        - Added the benefit of compliance based on customer needs and HCA model= capacity
        - Added the risk of who will decide compliance?

Advocates: Did not follow the budget marks but rather discussed the pros and cons of each possibility. Who would this help? What are the cost/benefits to the city? What are the values on the bill? What do we think is important for the citizen of the city? Is this protecting children and prevent homelessness? Looked at all outcomes to find the best solution. Did not come to a conclusion as to the best options and want additional conversations with everyone about the programs.

- Risk and Benefits
    - Household heads with low literacy
        - Cost should not be a factor in making decisions on options.
        - The risk that parents are not incentivized to participate fully in education/training is not true as they can still be expected to fully participate.
        - Added the risk that if people are not protected then they will face closed doors and significant barriers to employment
    - Play by the rules enrolled in education/training
        - Again cost should not be a factor
        - Added the risk that parents who are not playing by the rules may be suffering from PTSD caused by domestic violence.
    - Unstable housing/homeless
        - In risks we mush thing about the families. With this option we do not agree that parents are not incentivized, that there is tax payer frustration and in-migration of families.
- Final thought: Are we focusing on incentivizing people to work or do we want to protect children?

Customers: Discussed what would best benefit the home and feel the best option to ensure everyone has assistance because each household or individual has their own set of barriers. However, prioritizing parents who play by the rules and child only coverage were the most important of the specific policy options. However, TANF also needs to be managed better with the better communication, services and structure to ensure people trying can actually succeed.

- Risks and Benefits Identified were as such:
    - Nadeau bill
        - Benefit of cost savings in other services.
        - Deleted all risks provided and had questions regarding the financial sustainability for DC
    - No time limit
        - Agreed with the benefits of families facing time limits may have multiple

barriers (physical, education etc.), recognizes that a permanent exit form TANF is difficult for some families even work-focused, and believe that stuff happens in everyone's life.
        - Agreed with all provided risks. They know of families migrating in to DC to utilize TANF and one person has experienced discrimination because she is on TANF.
    - Play by the rules following IRP
        - Agreed with all provided benefits and included that is gives people the chance to be economically successful
        - No comments on risk
- Policy Options within budget limits were as such
    - <$10 M – providing either reduced benefit for all with no time limits (option A) or providing full benefits to parents who play by the rules and are enrolled in education/training programs
    - <$17.5 M – a few scenarios were given.
        - Full benefits for play by rules who are enrolled in education/training programs and Unstable housing/homeless
        - Child only and Unstable housing/homeless
        - Child only and play by the rules working part-time
        - Families of household heads with low literacy
    - <$25 M – a few scenarios were given
        - Play by the rules not sanctioned
        - Reduced benefits for child only and play by the rules following IRP
        - Reduced benefits for child only and families of household heads with low literacy
    - <$35 M – a combination of providing full benefit s for play by the rules not sanctioned and reduced child only is the most important. We should prioritize covering everyone but also providing better TANF services and structured IRPs to ensure those "playing by the rules" are actually able to succeed.
    - All covered – providing coverage to everyone is the best options because each family has their own barriers however only 80% of benefits should be provided.
- Final Thought: If all coverage is given then the program needs to be managed better. Currently people get shuffled around until they are over 60 months. It is important to ensure the all the services in the TANF program are better communicated and customers provided with all of the available resources.

<u>Questions and final comments:</u>

- Do you feel if we chose child only option that the money would get to the child?
    - Latoya- in most cases probably not but that is not all households. Perhaps with a better structured program this would not be the case. Sometime the household head is not the one running the household. Many times there is a 2nd person that needs to be brought into the program. Benefits need to be provided to the full household to ensure children's needs are met.
    - Mona- Some customers have not seen people in TANF that are doing all of the necessary steps. I like to have resources and research options, and even still it is hard to understand/know all of the services available. I am working towards my degree and try to encourage others to do the same. Sometimes a seed just needs to be

planted.

- Participant – We do feel clear and concise coordination of TANF needs to happen. We are a group of smart people here so I know this can happen.
- Ed – Today we heard a lot of people with really goodwill to make sure children are getting protected and help people move forward. We need to have a policy conversation which asks what options should be considered rather than trying to meet the arbitrary budget numbers.

Closing and next steps – Barbara Poppe

- As people are leaving please assess if there is a need for an additional meeting/time.
  - 11 people voted - all indicating the need for an additional meeting.
- The next meeting will include:
  - Report out from community dialogues sessions
  - Review results from small group exercise
    - Benefits and risks of options
    - Organize options/scenarios within budget breaks
  - Discuss recommendations for households who will not receive a "TANF hardship exemption" and will not receive continuing TANF cash assistance

Working Group Meeting #3 notes:

Working Group: To Inform a Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) Hardship Extension Policy for DC (Meeting #3)
Tuesday, September 13, 2016 @ 9 am to 3:30 pm
DHS Headquarters – 64 New York Ave, Sixth Floor

Committee Members Present (voting and non-voting)

Names	Organizations
5 individuals	Customers
Jennifer Tiller (non-voting)	America Works
Jeremy Lares (non-voting)	Grant Associates
Lisa Simmons (non-voting)	Maximus
Kelly Sweeny Mcshane	Community of Hope
Monique Graham	Far Southeast Family Strengthening Collaborative
Curt Campbell	Legal Aid
Ed Lazere	DC Fiscal Policy Institute
Sharra Greer	Children's Law Center

Renee Murphy	Children's Law Center
Andrea Gleaves	DC Coalition Against Domestic Violence
Councilmember Brianne Nadeau	DC Council
Tai Meah	Councilmember Nadeau
Yulonda Barlow	Councilmember Yvette Alexander
Jen Budoff	DC Council
Susanne Groves	DC Council
Anthea Seymour	DHS
Brian Campbell	DHS
David Ross	DHS
Won-ok Kim	DHS
Tamitha Christian	DHS
Ginger Moored	OCFO

Community Members Present

Kathy Haines	DMHHS
Kate Coventry	DCFPI
Christine Okoker	DHS
Jennifer Mezey	Legal Aid
Linnea Lassiter	DC FPI

Facilitator: Barbara Poppe, Barbara Poppe and Associates

Welcome: Laura Zeilinger, Department of Human Services Director

Updated Charge for the Working Group

- Charge: Develop recommendations to the DHS Director Laura Zeilinger for TANF hardship exemption policy by September 30
    1) Develop priorities and suggestions for hardship extension policies to support vulnerable District families who should be eligible to receive TANF assistance beyond 60 months. Consider "hybrid" options that can be adjusted during budget process. Based on feedback from earlier work groups, budget considerations are no longer a part of today's conversation and prioritization process.
    2) Make recommendations on best approaches to serve families after their TANF assistance ends.
- Subsequent meetings:
    1) September 13, 2016 at 9:00 AM – 3:30 PM – this is an extension of the originally scheduled work group which was scheduled 9am to noon. Because of feedback from the group, the meeting was extended to 3:30, allowing more time while keeping to the 9/30 deadline.

Agenda overview and review of process: Barb Poppe, Barbara Poppe & Associates

- Meeting #1 8/28/16
  - Setting the stage
  - Listening session report
  - Data about families
  - Cost examples
  - Preliminary policy ideas for hardship exemptions from time limits
- Meeting #2 8/30/16
  - Community dialogue report
  - National expert presentation
  - Financial impact of time limits
  - Develop risks and benefits if all families exempted from time limits
  - Develop recommendations for services for families exiting due to time limits
  - Organize Prioritize policy ideas within budget marks
- Meeting #3 9/13/16
  - Community dialogue report
  - Develop recommendations for services for families exiting due to time limits
  - Fine tune all recommendations
  - Vote on final recommendations and priorities
- Opportunity to comment on final report

Today's meeting agenda:

- ✓ Setting the stage
  - Agenda Review and Introductions
  - Final Report Process
  - Report: Community Dialogues
- ✓ Rolling up our sleeves
  - Discussion and Recommendations:
    - Policy Options for Extensions
    - Program Improvements
    - Services for Households not Extended

Barb reviewed of definition of consensus and the goal of this meeting: Definition: A general agreement. A middle ground in decision making, between total assent and total disagreement. Consensus implies that everyone accepts and supports the decision, and understand the reason for making it. General consensus question: Do you agree with including this in the report? When consensus is not achievable, a vote and report out count will be used.

Barb presented the process steps for the day.

- Straw Poll (taken as attendees checked in)

- Policy without budget considerations - What types of hardship extensions; Time limits/conditions/requirements
- Risk and benefits of options – captured from previous meetings/ vote on the updated document
- DHS hybrid approaches, based on input from the group in previous sessions.

Question: Why are the four options selected? Response from Barb: if there is time we can discuss further however, the 4 are based on what bubbled up in the community conversations AND many of the other options mentioned by Ed are covered in POWER (example Domestic Violence). Other options for extensions that may be discussed will be recession, foster care, newborn in household can be discussed as time permits but note that these items did not get raised at the same rate as the four selected for today's broad discussion.
Question raised regarding the Nadeau bill introduced to city council. A clarification was provided by Barb that this is a process to get the perspective of customers, advocates, providers etc. This process is not intended to be a review of the bill. Discussion of POWER is a small group discussion on the agenda for later today.

STRAW POLL results were presented:

1> 20 agree, 0 disagree "I believe that DC should extend TANF households if the parent participates and "plays by the rules".
2> 15 agree, 4 disagree "I believe that DC should ensure all children receive TANF case assistance regardless of whether the parent participates.
3> 14 agree, 6 disagree" I believe that DC should extend TANF households who are "at risk of homelessness" regardless of whether the parent participates.
4> 12 agree, 9 disagree " I believe that DC should extend TANF households at full TANF cash assistance regardless of whether the parent participates. "

Ranked responses: (sum of scores 4=most important; 1= least important)
50: Should all HH that "play by the rules" receive an extension? "Play by the Rules" defined as: 1.adult is enrolled in education/training or working P/T OR 2. adult is participating and in compliance -- IRPs are not the sole measure of compliance, often looking at it as participation at some level in education/training/employment OR 3. not sanctioned
38: Should TANF be extended for all HH who are "risk of homelessness" regardless of whether the parent participates?
38: Should TANF be extended for all HH regardless of whether the parent participates?
33: Should TANF be extended for child only grants to cover all children to receive TANF case assistance regardless of whether the parent participates?

Comment: 70% TANF customers are currently not in compliance but only 10% have been sanctioned

Consideration of Play by Rules option

- Should this be recommended? Hand vote: if play be rules #1: unanimous yes – Consensus approval
- If play the rules reenrolled : unanimous yes - Consensus approval
- Compliance requirements : unanimous yes - Consensus approval
- Not sanctioned: no- 1 but can live with group decision – Consensus approval
- Not time limited – unanimous yes - Consensus approval
- Dot voting for the amount for the extension payment : 100%: 18 votes ; 75% 1 vote; 50% 0 votes; 25% 0 votes

Consideration of Child Enrichment policy option – intent is to serve the child, not the adult (change in language form earlier meetings due to definition issues)

Conditional requirements and age limits were discussed in earlier meeting s and can be discussed in small groups if desired.

- Should there be a child only extension, regardless of participation of parents? All yes except 2 no , both can yield to the group – Council member staffer holds the continuing concern and would like to have concern reflected and also agreed to yield to group. – Consensus approval
- Should there be conditions or requirements to receive this? - Initial vote divided so those who said yes, should explain why
    - Yes: the parent actually gets the benefit, want to see that the benefits actually goes to the child and that the child is enrolled in school and receiving health checks.
    - If family is not in compliance they should be more engaged in order to find out why are they not participating, including additional interventions.
        - Increased DHS engagement to parent to get to know about enrollment/health checks. Concern: Cost and ability to track – administrative burden; tracking attendance may not take into account the situation of the family and legitimate reasons to miss school
        - Suggestion: voucher in lieu of cash. Concern: voucher in lieu of cash would be the burden to the family in how it is used,
        - New vote: no consensus so hand vote
            - Should there be Voucher in lieu of cash ? 0 Yes
            - Should parent be required to enroll child in school and get health checks to receive TANF assistance? – 6 No (after discussion – moved to 2 people who support this option)
            - Increase DHS and sister agency engagement to parent to get at additional support to address barriers to why child not in school/no health checks – 6 Yes
            - Should there be no restrictions? 10 Yes

    - Sharra Greer: When a household is receiving child only, a parent who is not in compliance should trigger increased DHS engagement.
- Should there be time limit for exemption for child enrichment (leaving in place TANF eligibility rules re: age, income)? No time limits. All children eligible regardless of age. Consensus approval
- Dot voting for the amount for the extension payment: 100% 14 votes; 75% 5 votes; 50% 0 votes 25% 0 votes

Consideration of "Imminent risk of homelessness" policy option

Barb reviewed background on this topic so far: A review of DHS records showed that 25% of TANF HH are currently experiencing homelessness or at "imminent risk of homelessness". Homeless families in focus groups did not agree that "homelessness" should be an exemption or extension. It was stated that because of the benefits available to those who are in the homeless system, including meals and lodging TANF extension should not apply to this group.

- Should TANF be extended if at 60 months if a family is assessed to be at imminent risk of homelessness: 4 voters were opposed.

  Opinions shared by those opposed:

  - If HH is assessed to be at risk of homelessness, the IRP should reflect that and therefore there is another intervention.
  - Cash benefit may pay for "couch surfing", keeping family from becoming homeless.
- If assessed to be at imminent risk of homelessness – should there be conditions? Yes. Consensus approval

  Concern: impact of possibly creating disincentive for families to leave rapid rehousing or PSH if tied to benefits.

  Question raised as to how often and how quickly do IRPs change- response from customers was that this happens quickly. IRP modification can be every few days if needed. IRP and family housing stabilization plan is the same thing.

- Reframing of question: should there be an extension if you are not in compliance and you are at imminent risk of homelessness? Sense of group: if at imminent risk of homelessness, should have an extension BUT there are definitions to be clarified and a need to make this work. City needs to figure out a way to capture this group and provide an extension. – Consensus approval

Moving on, running out of time.

Consideration of "No time limits regardless of parent participation" policy option

- Should TANF be extended with no time limits regardless of parent participation? Divided regarding no time limits– consensus does not seem possible so will do as a count
    - Opinion shared regarding the 5 year limit that is too short if have children, run into employment problems, and offered that 10 year would be better.
    - Suggested that if recipient has a work history (example 3 years) that would allow the person to restart the clock in the event found that they needed the benefit again.
  - Everyone gets up to 10 years – no consensus
  - F/T employment reduces time limits and restart – no consensus
- Vote: no vote due to lack of consensus. "No time limit/no restriction" – 7 votes; "Some form or restriction/time limits" – 10 votes.
- Vote: Should TANF be extended with sanctions managing restrictions/time limits?: sense of the group (one person against)
- Dot voting for the amount for the extension payment for "no limits with sanctions managing restrictions" options: – 100% 12 votes; 75% 5 votes; 50% 0 votes; 25% 0 votes

Update/Approve the Benefits/Risk document (available in all folders) –
Barb reviewed the document with the group which was generated through listening sessions then modified in workgroup 1, workgroup 2 and brought forward. Today is a chance to correct is needed. Request any glaring issues that need modified. Document will appear in the final report.

Question raised: do tax payers really have objections to lifetime benefits? How were items picked to be included? Barb replied that themes were raised multiple times/more than one group. The may be conflicting feedback as this is broad feedback from multiple audiences.

Question raised: Some of the risks are listed in one area only but would apply to all – such as risk of harm to child is a risk in all, not just the child-only assistance? Barb requested that give corrections to Beth if there is language that needs corrections.

Comment: Need to clarify that this document should reflect that this is a flection of opinions, not facts.

Group consensus that they can live with the document. Consensus approval for updated document.

Hybrid Policy Options
Barb noted that following presentation we will be moving to small group process. Based on feedback from the first workgroup that when there were mixed groups many people felt shut out and unheard. As a result we will be breaking into constituent groups. Four hybrid policy scenarios are being presented to debate/ discuss. Will break at ½ point to discuss and then a report out at the end. Hope is to decide which, if any, of the scenarios to bring forward and/or other scenarios to consider. Group is free to bring forward all the scenarios, none of them or any combination.

Anthea Seymour DHS/ESA presented the hybrid policy options/scenarios. These are based on the feedback received through out the process. TANF isn't permanent. TANF is for children, if parents are not compliant, do we really want to remove children from the program. Invite feedback within the small groups. There are hypothetical budget figures in the sheets listing the scenarios. Budget mark is arbitrary but intended to ground the discussion.

Values and beliefs: 4 themes

- Recognize that TANF participants should be successful, and success should be defined by them
- Providing resources in the home for child, regardless of the engagement of the parents, recognizing two generational issues
- Promote and encourage TANF participants to build their capacity

Scenarios are for discussion purposes only not intended to represent DHS policy positions.

Scenario 1: Child enrichment + program compliance (no time limit)

- This scenario would create a Child Enrichment Grant (X%) and a Parent TANF Grant (X%) = 100% Grant.
- Eligibility would be the same as the current TANF eligibility.
- No time limit would apply.
- All rules, including work requirement, sanctions and stipends, would apply to the Parent TANF Grant (est X% of the existing grant)
- To receive the Child Enrichment Grant, some requirements would be applied.
- The Parent TANF Grant is subject to compliance with program requirements.

Laura shared that the $200 used as budget placeholder for discussion purposes rather than actual grant dollars to families. In order to make these changes, would need to revisit the program overall so that there is not a relaxing the rules, and inherently in conflict, for those who are over 60 months.

Question: if family was terminated in the past because of being a TANF recipient for 60 months in the past, how would they be treated under the extension scenarios? Barb that will be considered by small groups.

Scenario 2: Compliance with program requirements with modified sanction stepdown and XX% reduction after 60 months

- This scenario would require compliance with program requirements as a condition of eligibility, but would modify the sanction amounts to an estimate of 80%, 60% and 40%, respectfully.
- There would be no time limit but the maximum grant would be reduced by XX% after 60 months of receiving TANF benefits.
- Under this scenario, resources remain in the home.
- Sanction rules (including rules to cure) would apply.

Scenario 3: Child Enrichment with No Time Limit + Parent Grant with Five Year Time Limit

- This scenario would create a Child Enrichment Grant (X%) and a Parent TANF Grant (X%).
- Eligibility would be the same as the current TANF eligibility.
- No time limit would apply for the Child Enrichment Grant.
- Eligibility for the Parent TANF Grant would be limited to 60 months.
- All rules, including work requirement, sanctions and stipends, would apply to the Parent TANF Grant (X% of the existing grant) up to 60 months.
- To receive the Child Enrichment Grant, some requirements would be applied.
- No Parent TANF Grant resources would be available after 60 months period.

Scenario 4: Program Compliance (No Time Limit)

- This scenario would continue the TANF program as is.
- Implement a TANF extension beyond 60 months for TANF participants who are in compliance with program requirements.
- Families are eligible for cash services if not under any level of sanction (participation requirements vary by program compliance)

Question: what has research shown about sanctioning policies and their impact? Barb noted that during workgroup 2 – a discussion was held about sanctions. The scope of the work here does not include sanctions, however, we have ended up talking about this and other issues that impact an extension policy. This is imperfect process because these issues do impact the issue at hand but are not on the table now.

Question: Does everyone know the sanction policy currently works? Barb noted that it was covered in other meetings but some have missed that. Laura offered a DHS staff to use the lunch hour to hold a discussion regarding sanctions for those who are interested.

Other considerations:
POWER – available without time limit consideration
Should there be a transitional time period for these timing off of POWER?
Services only/transportation stipend as an on-going option?

Clarification: if someone has timed off of TANF (60 month time limit) and not eligible for POWER at that time, consideration of eligibility of their ability to access POWER at some point in the future if a situation arises in which they are not eligible (such as Domestic Violence).

The Working Group broke up into four constituent groups (Customer, Advocates, Providers, and City) and were given 30 minutes to consider the 4 scenarios before lunch. Reconvened as large group following lunch break.

Barb reported that the agenda was modified due to time overage in the morning. Hard stop at 3:30, recognizing that there are parents who need to do child pick up.

POWER Improvements

Barb directed the group to consider the summary of POWER improvements suggested on the slide.

Question: Are parents of newborns exempted by POWER? DHS clarified that families with newborns currently get a one year exemption from participation requirements but the clock doesn't stop and that there are a maximum of 2 kids permitted to receive this exemption.

The group was asked to vote on each statement for areas to improve POWER:

- Increase communication: yes - Consensus approval
- Participating in POWER is personal decision: yes - Consensus approval
- DHS will streamline and centralize services: yes - Consensus approval
- DHS will continue to train staff to use SOAR motel or other ways to access SSI – yes - Consensus approval
- DHS will continue to improve service delivery to customers who are approved for POWER: yes - Consensus approval
- POWER participants should have access to same type of services without the participation requirement of TANF. Yes - Consensus approval
    - Question: What is the purpose of POWER ? DHS responded that POWER was intended to meet needs for those with additional, significant barriers.
- Should Newborn be added to POWER: No- 3. No: did not yield to the group – Approval with 3 dissenting.

The group then considered other suggestions posed by working group members

- Should POWER be available regardless of number of months on TANF? – yes - Consensus approval
- Can enroll in POWER if timed off TANF? – yes - Consensus approval
- Should there be a 6 month transitional period when no longer on POWER? – yes - Consensus approval
- Should monitoring requirement for POWER providers comparable to those for TEP provider (quarterly basis, 5 benchmarks) measure the level of services provided?
    - Comment: DHS needs a better way to measure accountability for POWER providers, informed by customers.
    - Hand vote: no one voted in favor.

Hybrid Policy Options Feedback

<u>Scenario #1 Child enrichment + program compliance (no time limit)</u>

General support by group: This scenario had the strongest appeal across all groups—bring to report w/improvements

- Advocates: yes
- City: yes
- Providers: yes
- Customers: yes

<u>#2 Compliance with program requirements with modified sanction stepdown</u>

- Advocates: no
- Customers: no
- Providers: no
- City: no

<u>#3 Child Enrichment with No Time Limit + Parent Grant with Five Year Time Limit</u>

- Customers; no
- Advocates: no
- Providers: maybe
- City: no

<u>#4 Program Compliance (No Time Limit)</u>

- Advocates: no
- Customers: no
- City: split
- Providers: no

Final Decisions on Hybrid Policy Options:

Scenario #1 – improvements

- Proportional to kids or greater
- Change % of sanction level of benefits: 100, 80, 60, 40 (from 100, 80, 50, 0)
    - Question raised – where is evidence that sanctions work? Response: in customer community dialogues a lot of feedback that in some households it does changes behavior – in others is does not. Federal law requires some sanction law but doesn't say what it must be. The move to this new % will result in less dramatic sanctions.
- Hand vote with changes: 4 No. Approval with 4 dissenting.

Scenario #2 include in report? NO, in appendix only (by consensus)
Scenario #3 include in report? No (by consensus)
Scenario #4 include in report? No (one vote to keep in report)

Discussion of additional options

Policy option: If HH at risk of child going into foster care as a result of losing assistance, should they be eligible for extension? Yes (all but one voter).

Policy option: Should there be an extension across the board if high rate of unemployment (rate predetermined) for those without college degree (ex. DC rate of unemployment) for types of positions typically sought by TANF recipient.? Yes unanimous. – Consensus approval

Services after TANF ends

Yes/no vote to include in report. These were gathered from listening sessions. Question to group: Are any missing? None missing, all to be included in report. Consensus vote of slate – Consensus approval

- Transportation/stipend
- Childcare
- Access to case management
- Job readiness/job placement
- Paid job training
- Family mediation
- Homeless prevention
- Mental health
- Substance abuse
- Basic needs – housing, food, healthcare

TANF Employment Services Improvements

Feedback from Listening Sessions and Working Group and DHS recommended improvements based on the feedback was presented by David Ross (DHS/ESA)

Assessments & Outreach slides. Accepted with additions:

- Add: Enhanced educational outcomes

Specialized Services Accepted

POWER and rehabilitation services Accepted with additions:

- Evaluation of POWER then consider rebranding of POWER to be less stigmatizing
- Common application that includes POWER (making it easier to apply)

Enhanced Educational Outcomes Accepted with additions:

- provide more robust services for those with low literacy
- improve college referrals

Communication strategy Accepted with additions:

- add social media strategic plan

TEP provider employment support enhancements Accepted with additions:

- add trauma training on self-care and trauma for staff (will lead to decreased turnover)
- add DHS staff trained re: wage/labor laws

Housing and utility assistance Accepted with additions:

- add DHS work with sister agencies to improve services for TANF customers for assistance in payment of bill.

Childcare – recommendation by WG. Consensus Approval.

- Daycare benefits: decouple from if parent is participating. Intent is that child needs access to this service, don't connect it to the parent doing work/training.

Other assistance– recommendation by WG. Consensus Approval.

- Training for DHS staff regarding the requirements of sister agencies. Intent – better referrals

ESL/Immigrant HH. Accepted with additions:

- Add: entire TANF program is translated/ include hard of hearing and deaf customers.
- Change to slide from "TEP" program to "TANF" program

Other recommendations by WG.

- Prioritize TANF customers to fill positions at DHS and providers. Vote: all in favor. Consensus Approval.
- Insure that definition of "high wage" and "minimum wage" are updated. Vote: all in favor. Consensus Approval.
- Create resource guide for TEP providers of what is available through TANF community. vote: all in favor. Consensus Approval.
- More childcare options (non-traditional hours and more slots and more hours, children with special needs) vote; all in favor. Consensus Approval.

Additional suggestions working group (no vote taken):

- Customized options for unengaged
- Assessment should not disconnected from eligibility
- Home visiting program needs evidence based tool for assessment

Final Voting

Each working group member was asked to vote on the policy options that will be included in the report. There was discussion of different ways to structure the vote. Barb asked that the Hybrid #1, Play by the rules, and child only be ranked: 1 lowest to 3 best option (0 is don't like at all). Then vote yes/no for these extensions: Homeless, Foster Care, High unemployment.

The votes were collected and counted following adjournment. The results are below.

Ranking of policy:

- Hybrid #1: 41;

- Play By the Rules: 30;
- Child Only: 27.

Extension categories:

- Homeless: Yes: 11; No: 2
- Foster care: yes: 10; No: 3
- Unemployment: Yes: 11; No 2

Closing Circle: What do I hope is the impact of my contributions to the working group on the lives of children and parents who participate in TANF?

- More communication between and among – not just when needed
- More communication with customers
- Work leads to more families lifted out of poverty
- A policy emerges, not another 1 year extension and not knowing
- Increase stability of families and children in the DC
- It all comes down to the individual
- Stability to families and children
- Be a better resource to council
- Hope that you all are thinking of those who are trying to get on their feet and become more self-sufficient – more being done and not look at customers in a bad way as has been done
- Be a part of creating policy that helps
- Begin to fight the stigma of TANF and the racial injustice it reflects
- More recipients will be asked to participate in and be heard in the future.

Adjourned: 3:35PM

Appendix 4

TANF Hardship Extension Policy Options: Risks and Benefits

The following summary represents opinions that were expressed by members of the Working Group or by participants in Listening Sessions and Community Dialogues. Only opinions that were expressed by multiple individuals were included. These opinions were organized among the broad range of policy options that emerged from these same processes. This summary includes policy options that were recommended by the Working Group as well as options that ultimately were not included. The entirety of options is included to represent the body of work by the Working Group.

Policy Option: No time limits regardless of parent participation

Benefits

- Families with children protected from additional hardships.[4]
- Families facing time limits may have multiple barriers to employment so receiving continuous cash assistance and services may help them remove these barriers over time and achieve employment.
- Recognizes that permanent exit from TANF is difficult for some families, even in a work-focused, time-limited system.
- Customers experiencing domestic violence should not have to risk safety and privacy by having to disclose status as a victim in order to receive benefits.

Risks

- Some believe that parents may not feel incentivized to participate as it creates a program where there are requirements for the first five years a family is receiving benefits but then no requirements (and possibly no services).
- Some believe that there is taxpayer frustration with "welfare for life."
- Some believe that in-migration of families from other states that have time limits may occur.

Policy Option: Nadeau bill

Benefits

- Families with children protected from additional hardships.
- Families facing time limits may have multiple barriers to employment so receiving continuous cash assistance and services may help them remove these barriers over time and achieve employment.
- May be less costly to the District than paying for hotels for families that may become homeless under other options.
- DC may avoid additional costs associated with providing other services for families that would be impacted by imposition of time limits.

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[4] Children are negatively impacted by extreme poverty and have poorer educational, health, and lifetime earnings than children who do not live in extreme poverty.

Risks

- Some believe that parents may not feel incentivized to participate as it creates a program where there are requirements for the first five years a family is receiving benefits, but then no requirements (and possibly no services).
- Some believe that there is taxpayer frustration with "welfare for life."
- Some believe that in-migration of families from other states that have time limits may occur.

Policy Option: Child only assistance regardless of parent participation

Benefits

- Children are protected from additional hardships.
- Recognizes that permanent exit from TANF is difficult for some families even in a work-focused, time-limited system.
- Reduces the potential for an increase in homelessness and associated costs if grant reduction increases housing instability.
- Reduces the risk that families may face food insecurity and greater housing instability and homelessness.
- Decreased trauma and stress for parents than if the entire household is exited from the program.
- Reduces potential risk of increase in foster care due to family instability resulting from reduction in grant amount.
- Does not remove of important protective factor for children recovering from complex trauma.
- Reduces risk of increased health care costs in the long term due to ACEs (Adverse Childhood Experience) and in mothers that return to abusers for financial reasons.

Risks

- Parents lose access to services for workforce development and transportation stipends which reduces potential for improved economic circumstances for the family.
- Reduces impact of sanction on household heads.
- Families may increase use of SNAP and other public benefits to cover loss of parent portion of grant.
- Some believe that parents may not feel incentivized to participate as it creates a program where there are requirements for the first five years a family is receiving benefits, but then no requirements (and possibly no services).
- Some believe that there is taxpayer frustration with "welfare for life."
- Some believe that in-migration of families from other states that have time limits may occur.

Policy Option: At time of Hardship Extension, family is at imminent risk of homelessness and extension granted regardless of parent participation

Benefits

- Housing insecure families with children are protected from additional hardships.
- Families that are not time-limited face less food insecurity, housing instability, and homelessness.
- Fewer families may enter the homeless system.
- Reduces associated costs to the District of providing homelessness services for these families.
- Children in families that are not time-limited are protected from additional hardships.

Risks

- Some believe that parents may not feel incentivized to participate as it creates a program where there are requirements for the first five years a family is receiving benefits, but then no requirements (and possibly no services).
- Perception that this may incentivize "homelessness."
- Some believe that there is taxpayer frustration with "welfare for life."
- Some believe that in-migration of families from other states that have time limits may occur.

Policy Option: "Play by Rules" with participation requirements – household not sanctioned at time of Hardship Extension

Benefits

- Provides opportunity to all customers who are participating and protects housing stability for those households.
- Parents are incentivized to participate or face sanction/loss of cash assistance.
- Children in families that are not time-limited are protected from additional hardships (e.g. less food insecurity, housing instability, and homelessness).

Risks

- Families that are time-limited may increase use of SNAP and other public benefits.
- Some believe that parents may not feel incentivized to participate as it creates a program where there are requirements for the first five years a family is receiving benefits, but then no requirements (and possibly no services).
- Some believe that families in this extension category may do minimum to avoid sanction but not fully participate.
- Families that are time-limited may face food insecurity and greater housing instability and homelessness.

Policy Option: Play by Rules with participation requirements – parent is meeting program requirements (following IRP) at time of Hardship Extension

Benefits

- Provides opportunity to all customers who are participating and protects housing stability for those households.
- Parents are incentivized to fully participate.
- Compliance is based on customer needs.
- Children in families that are not time-limited are protected from additional hardships (e.g., less food insecurity, housing instability, and homelessness).

Risks

- Families that are time-limited may face food insecurity and greater housing instability and homelessness.
- Children in families that are time-limited are not protected from additional hardships.
- Families that are time-limited may increase use of SNAP and other public benefits.
- Potential for increased costs to the District of providing homelessness services for families that are time-limited.

- Does not protect children whose parents are not "playing by the rules" due to suffering from PTSD caused by domestic violence.

Policy Option: "Play by Rules" with participation requirements – parent is enrolled in education/training at time of Hardship Extension

Benefits

- Provides opportunity to customers who are participating and protects housing stability for those households.
- Parents are incentivized to fully participate in education and training which can lead to greater future earnings and improved family economic stability.
- Improved taxpayer acceptance since time-limited benefit with clear rationale.

Risks

- Families that are time-limited may face food insecurity and greater housing instability and homelessness.
- Children in families that are time-limited are not protected from additional hardships.
- Families that are time-limited may increase use of SNAP and other public benefits.
- Potential for increased costs to the District of providing homelessness services for families that are time-limited.
- Does not protect children whose parents are not "playing by the rules" due to suffering from PTSD caused by domestic violence.

Policy Option: "Play by Rules" with participation requirements – parent is working part-time at time of Hardship Extension

Benefits

- Parents are incentivized to fully participate in education and training which can lead to greater future earnings and improved family economic stability.
- Improved taxpayer acceptance since time-limited benefit with clear rationale.
- Encourages work.
- Children in families that are not time-limited are protected from additional hardships.
- Families that are time-limited may increase use of SNAP and other public benefits.

Risks

- Families that are time-limited may face food insecurity and greater housing instability and homelessness.
- Children in families that are time-limited are not protected from additional hardships.
- Families that are time-limited may increase use of SNAP and other public benefits.
- Potential for increased costs to the District of providing homelessness services for families that are time-limited.
- Does not protect children whose parents are not "playing by the rules" due to suffering from PTSD caused by domestic violence.

Policy Option: Families of Household Heads with low literacy regardless of parent participation

Benefits

- Recognizes challenges families face when the head of household has low literacy level and cannot find employment.
- Families that are not time-limited will not face food insecurity and greater housing instability and homelessness.
- Children in families that that are not time-limited are protected from additional hardships.

Risks

- Parents with low literacy may not be incentivized to fully participate in education and training which can lead to greater future earnings and improved family economic stability.
- Families that are time-limited may face food insecurity and greater housing instability and homelessness.
- Children in families that are time-limited are not protected from additional hardships.
- Families that are time-limited may increase use of SNAP and other public benefits.
- Potential for increased costs to the District of providing homelessness services for families that are time-limited.
- Does not protect children whose parents are not "playing by the rules" due to suffering from PTSD caused by domestic violence.

Appendix 5

Comments on draft report from Working Group members

Appendix 5 - Feedback on this Report from Stakeholders

Feedback from Office of Council Member Silverman, Submitted by Kelly Hunt

TANF Report Comments

General notes on information missing from or unclear represented in the Report

Time Limits: The report does not accurately reflect the history of TANF time limits, the current requirements, or any of the research regarding time limits. There is no historical mention of the fact that the federal law stated from the beginning that 20% of the population would need more than 60 months of assistance and therefore allows for 20% of a state's TANF funds to be carried past 60 months. The report also conflates the federal TANF time limit and the local time limit that was created at Council's direction in 2010. This is an important distinction if we're going to accurately represent the current situation. Lastly on this subject, extensive information was presented by Dr. Pavetti detailing the harmful impact of time limits on families that are not financial stable after 60 months. The report does not include any information presented by Dr. Pavetti. I believe this information is critical to a report that accurately reflects the Working Group's work. It would also be helpful to mention this is a lifetime limit and that people can have multiple spells of unemployment that lead them to cycle on and off of TANF.

Rationale behind Initial Extension of Local TANF Benefits: There is no mention of the historic problems with TANF services that led to the decision to extend the local 60 month time limit. An accurate representation of our discussions and reasoning behind supporting extensions must reflect the original decision to extend TANF benefits. While DHS has worked hard to improve those services, TANF customers continue to claim services are a significant hurdle to their ability to secure employment.

Panel Discussions: The information provided by the panels, especially those that included TANF clients, was beneficial information for the Working Group and should be included in the report. These panels provided insight into the specific benefit of both the cash assistance and the employment and education services. One panel member even spoke about growing up in a family that received TANF assistance and went on to become an attorney that provides assistance to the same families. Personal stories of the impact of TANF assistance should not be omitted from the report.

Extension Option Preference: The report does not make it clear that Hybrid Option 1 was the preferred choice of the group. The remaining options were only supported if Hybrid Option 1 wasn't available.

Appearance of Two Distinct Opinions on TANF Benefits: The report makes it appear that there were two distinct factions evaluating the importance of TANF benefits. The report claims one faction believes cash assistance is the most important TANF benefit and the other benefits the employment and educational services are more important. That is not my recollection of the discussion. All of my discussions involved speaking of the two benefits as equally important to assisting families. The description can discuss the tension between being a program that has a dual role, without pitting the working group members against each other.

Participation Rates: The report claims the group was largely surprised at the low level of participation in services by local TANF recipients. My recollection is that the group was surprised to learn participation is low across the country, not just in the District.

Omission of Two Group Recommendations: The group made two recommendations that are not in the report. The first is that the current POWER Time Limit exemption should also be an extension and that parents with newborns should be included in POWER. The second is that there should be expanded child care options for families receiving TANF assistance.

DC's Current TANF "Step Down" Practice is Considered a Worst Practice: The current practice of providing very low cash assistance to TANF families who have exceeded 60 months is considered one of the worst policies in the country. There is no mention of the practice or the detrimental impact in the report.

Child Only Benefit: This needs to be explained better. Those of us in the group understand what it is, but readers outside the group will not.

Working Group Participants: Jen Budoff is not listed as a member of the Working Group. I was under the impression she was a member. She attended most of the meetings and provided valuable information and insight and should be recognized for her contribution.

TANF Funding: It would be helpful to have a breakout of how TANF dollars are spent in the District. It should include how much DC spends in local dollars.

Sanctions: Sanctions are defined and the report indicates that only Level 1 sanctions have been applied. There's no mention of why the remaining levels haven't been applied or when they will be applied.

Feedback from Office of Councilmember Nadeau, Submitted by Turia Meah

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- Include additional information regarding TANF services in the District, particularly from a historical standpoint

- Include a summary of the presentation by LaDonna Pavetti

Feedback from Advocates (Judith Sandalow, Sharra Greer, Damon King and Renee Murphy; Children's Law Center Andrea Gleaves, Debbie Fox, and Erin Sweeny Larkin; DC Coalition Against Violence Ed Lazere, Kate Coventry, and Linnea Lassiter; DC Fiscal Policy Institute Monica Kamen, Fair Budget Coalition Curt Campbell, Jr., Jen Mezey, and Melissa McClure; Legal Aid Society of the District of Columbia Christine Wong; Bread for the City)

Thank you for convening the TANF Working Group and for the opportunity to comment on the Working Group report. We have reached out to the agency directly to suggest changes to the report to make a few issues clearer including federal time limit policy and the Working Group's desire for current POWER time limit exemptions to also be time limit extensions. We also discussed that the majority of the Working Group wanted parents caring for newborns to be eligible for POWER and/or a time limit extension. The following are our other suggestions to ensure that the report reflects the Working Group's thinking and clearly describes the issues in a way that the average reader could understand.

Include information on what other states do

Federal law governing the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program granted states a great deal of flexibility over time limits and other policies, and most have used this flexibility to create time limit extensions for families who need more time. States have:

- **Partial Flexibility with Federal Funds**: DC and the states generally cannot provide cash assistance with federal TANF funds to families who have received TANF for more than 60 months. But recognizing that some families need more time, states can use federal funds beyond 60 months for up to 20 percent of the families they assist at any given time.

- **Complete Flexibility with State & Local Funds**: DC and the states are allowed to create policies that "stop the clock" for families or that extend assistance beyond a time limit. If these provisions would lead to assistance beyond 60 months for more than one-fifth of families on TANF, states must use their own funds, rather than federal dollars.

Most States Have Flexible Time Limits

Most states built flexibility in their TANF time limits through a variety of exemptions that "stop the clock" – meaning a month of assistance does not count towards the family's time limit – and extensions that allow a family to continue receiving assistance after they have reached the time limit.

- **Exemptions:** Thirty-nine states have "stop the clock" exemptions for some families, such as those in mental health treatment or have a child at risk of entering the foster care system.

- **Extensions:** Forty-four states have extensions, giving parents more time to deal with issues like domestic violence or caring for a family member with a disability. Such extensions also allow people who have exited TANF to receive future TANF benefits when facing new hardships.

- **Continued Assistance after the Time Limit:** Six states have other time limit policies to protect families. New York has a separate state cash assistance program that continues to provide benefits to families. California, Indiana, and Oregon remove the parent from the TANF case but allow children to continue to receive benefits. Vermont and Maryland allow families participating in work activities to continue to receive benefits, and in practice almost all families have continued to receive assistance.

Include information on the history of TANF services in the District

The District's time limit was retroactive even though families had received inadequate services. The District's time limit applied to anyone who had been on aid for 60 months at the time of enactment. Yet

most families had not had access to the services needed to address their barriers. Prior to a redesign of DC's TANF program in 2010, focus groups with TANF parents revealed that service providers discouraged them from getting mental health, substance abuse, and domestic violence services.[1] Families also reported that they were not informed about training and educational opportunities that could have led to more secure and better paying jobs. Despite widespread agreement that services were low quality, these months have counted towards a family's 60-month time clock.

As outlined in the report, the District undertook a major effort to re-design TANF employment services starting in 2010. These reforms have resulted in a system that provides better assessment of family needs and then provides more customized employment preparation services, although as discussed throughout the sessions and community meetings there is room for improvement. While we understand that DHS is striving to provide services in the way described in the draft report at the Section titled "Description of the DC TANF Program," comments from participants and community dialogues and the data in the Report draft indicate that DHS has more work to do. We suggest the language throughout the section be aspirational and that the report refer readers to the service improvement section later in the report. Also, given the complexity of the changes, the new system was only fully rolled out in the last three years. This means that most families who have received more than 60 months of TANF assistance have not received high-quality employment services for most of their time on TANF. In Maryland, the time clock does not run when families do not receive supportive services. Until 2015, families waited an average of 10 to 11 months to access services because of a lack of capacity at service providers. In addition, recent DHS case review data and statistics on POWER illustrate what has long been known-- that POWER exemption categories are significantly under-enrolled. POWER's severe under-enrollment means that the clock has been running for many families despite their high barriers to work.

Include other service improvements discussed

The Working Group discussed some service improvements that were not included in the report. These are:

- Home visits should administer evidence-based assessments.
- The TANF program should provide more robust services to improve literacy, even for those with high school diplomas, since many people graduated from high school in DC with low literacy.
- Referrals to college should be improved.
- Incorporate social media into communication planning.
- Ensure that definition of "high wage" and "minimum wage" are updated in TEP contracts.
- Add training on self-care and trauma for staff (will lead to decreased staff turnover).
- Ensure that all TANF staff and contractors are trained on all wage and hour laws and that they work with the Office on Wage Hour when TANF recipients report being paid less than the minimum wage.
- Ensure that all services and materials are accessible to parents with hearing loss or who are deaf.
- Add more childcare options. In particular there is a need for more slots, more hours, more slots particularly for children with special needs, and for slots that accommodate non-traditional working hours.

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[1] *Voices for Change: Perspectives on Strengthening Welfare-to-Work From DC TANF Recipients* by Katie Kerstetter and Joni Podschun. DCFPI and So Others Might Eat (SOME). www.dcfpi.org/wp-content/uploads/2009/11/11-12-09TANFreport.pdf

- Create resource guide for staff and contractors of what non-TANF programs are available in the community.
- Prioritize TANF customers to fill open positions at DHS and contractors.

On page 38, under "Other", we hope that "TEP program" could be changed to "TANF program" to reflect that DHS is thinking about language access throughout the entire TANF program such as the assessment process and POWER services as well as TEP vendors.

Include personal experiences shared during the panel discussion

The TANF Working Group benefitted from the contributions of several current TANF recipients who shared first-hand experiences and the impact a 60 month time limit would have on their families.

One TANF customer explained how until a few years ago, he was steadily employed as a security guard, which not only afforded him a living wage, but was also flexible enough to allow him to take his children to and from school. However, when he was laid off a few years ago, he had to resort to TANF to support his family and has been unable to find a job as flexible and well-paying as his previous job. He shared that losing his TANF assistance would cause serious hardship for him and his children and he's not sure what he would do.

Additionally, one of the advocates in the working group shared his own experience as a child growing up on TANF and how the economic security it provided his family enabled him to access educational opportunities and other resources that allowed him to attend college and ultimately escape poverty as an adult.

Put engagement levels into context by discussing national trends

The report references low engagement rates among DC TANF recipients (page 18), however this is observed nationwide and largely reflects the significant barriers that TANF parents are dealing with that make consistent engagement difficult.

Judith Sandalow, Sharra Greer, Damon King and Renee Murphy; Children's Law Center
Andrea Gleaves, Debbie Fox, and Erin Sweeny Larkin; DC Coalition Against Violence
Ed Lazere, Kate Coventry, and Linnea Lassiter; DC Fiscal Policy Institute
Monica Kamen, Fair Budget Coalition
Curt Campbell, Jr., Jen Mezey, and Melissa McClure; Legal Aid Society of the District of Columbia
Christine Wong; Bread for the City

Feedback from Jennifer Tiller, America Works

Recommendations for Development of a TANF Hardship Extension Policy for Washington, D.C.

Section: Executive Summary

- Please relay the process by which the outside consultant was procured so as to avoid any assumption of bias.
- Within additional recommendations, please note that it was recommended specifically that DHS/OWO revise their assessment tools to allow customers a more personalized experience and improved service coordination and referrals

Section: Key Themes

- Please specify who in the working group was surprised that overall TANF participation rates are low.

Section: Recommendations

- Please note in this document that TEP providers were disallowed from voting due to a financial interest and that they were **not** part of the recommendation process.
    - Every individual in the working group has/had a financial interest in the outcomes of this important discussion, including advocates.

General Comments

- TANF should not be cut for any family until DHS/OWO fully reviews assessments, referral processes, and works more closely with TEP providers to ensure individualized approaches to progress are enacted.
    - Assessments must include the whole household, not just the adult(s).
    - A hardship extension is serious, and the involuntary removal of households from TANF can not only cause things mentioned in the document, but also increase odds of recidivism and first time offenses. Parents will do what is needed to support their children.
- The initial workforce and service assessment phase should be conducted by TEP providers, not OWO, as the source providing the cash assistance is not an impartial assessor for our customers.
- A child enrichment grant is a step in the right direction but needs to be not only itemized for cost, but for process. This should not be implemented simultaneously to a hardship extension policy.
- The multi-generational approach needs to be added to the upcoming TEP contracts so as to allow TEP providers to invite families for services instead of only looking at the head of household on a TANF grant.
- TANF should not be extended (hardship) due to unemployment seeing that the District is experiencing growth in a variety of industries and as a region, a very low rate of unemployment. Rather, education, training, and workforce development should continue to be emphasized and supported by DHS in coordination with TEP providers.
- The District's emphasis (FY17) on education and training is appreciated and exciting. The District must take a closer look at its education providers, namely for-profit and predatory "technical" schools that are preying on low-income residents, leaving them with certificates (not degrees) in moot industries and positions, high

interest loans that default very quickly, false job placement rates, and little to no coordination with wraparound providers.

  - If a hardship extension is provided to individuals enrolled in schooling programs, the programs must be accredited, align with the IRP, and perhaps strict partners of DHS. Extension due to schooling cannot be vague. Also, a time limit of the extension should be added if this extension is approved. I recommend no more than ninety (90) days beyond the completion of the education program.

- Homelessness should not guarantee extension. Expand rapid rehousing using sliding scale income, which motivates work and promotes responsibility.
- The TEP provider listening session was rushed and left sour tastes as all providers reiterated the importance of this topic yet were silenced because of time limitations. Time constraints continued through all working groups and were a more prominent theme than this extremely important and life-altering topic.
- It was noted and interpreted that advocate opinions drove the final recommendations. While advocate voices are important, it was not seen that all opinions were taken into consideration.
  - Using constituent groups helped level the playing field so that customers, providers, and city employees were not silenced by advocate opinions.
- As a public administrator, it is very difficult to assess recommendations that have no cost-benefit analysis associated with them, or cost at all.

October 6, 2016

Roberta Downing
Economic Security Administration
DC Department of Human Services
64 New York Ave. NE
Washington, DC 20002

Via Email: Roberta.Downing@dc.gov

RE: TANF HARDSHIP EXTENSION POLICY WORKING GROUP DRAFT REPORT

Dear Ms. Downing:

We write on behalf of the Legal Aid Society of the District of Columbia.[1] The Legal Aid Society of the District of Columbia was formed in 1932 to "provide legal aid and counsel to indigent persons in civil law matters and to encourage measures by which the law may better protect and serve their needs." Over the years, Legal Aid attorneys and volunteers have served tens of thousands of the District's most vulnerable residents, many of whom have received Temporary Assistance for Needy Families ("TANF") benefits at some point in their lives.

Through this representation, we have learned that families need TANF for a variety of reasons, many of which make it impossible for them to exit the TANF program completely. Our work with these families brought us to the conclusion that District parents and children are not well served by arbitrary deadlines or "one-size fits all" job training programs. This conclusion was echoed throughout the TANF Working Group process.

Over the course of several community listening sessions and three intensive strategy sessions, we heard from people with a broad array of backgrounds and experiences. Their stories highlighted the barriers to employment TANF parents face, and the dire need for cash assistance to promote successful outcomes for their children in times of economic hardship. We heard, both anecdotally and from local and national policy experts, about the potential consequences of terminating TANF benefits before parents can support themselves through employment including: food insecurity, housing instability and homelessness, child endangerment, and poor school performance. We heard from TANF parents and advocates that job training programs should be tailored to meet the needs of individual families, and the desire of the Department of Human Services ("DHS") to undertake the work to make this aspiration a reality.

For these reasons, Legal Aid fully supports the Working Group's recommendation to eliminate the arbitrary 60-month lifetime limit on TANF benefits, and replace it with a program that makes sense for District families. The plan would divide the traditional TANF grant into two separate grants: a Child Enrichment Grant, and a Parent TANF Grant. The Child Enrichment Grant would ensure at least a base level of cash assistance to children, ensuring that we protect our most vulnerable residents. The Parent TANF Grant incentivizes parents to engage with DHS by providing more cash assistance to those families who comply with their Individual Responsibility Plans ("IRPs"), while promoting accountability by reducing

[1] Legal Aid also endorses the collective comments of the advocacy groups that participated in the Working Group – provided to DHS through the DC Fiscal Policy Institute.

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the Parent Grant through "sanctions" for parents who do not provide a valid reason for failing to participate.

Legal Aid and our Working Group partners anticipate that parental engagement will increase dramatically with the recalibration of IRPs to ensure that they correctly identify barriers to employment and aim to eliminate those barriers when possible. During this process it will also be necessary to revamp screening procedures for the "POWER" program in order to identify more accurately parents with insurmountable barriers to employment, including those that are long term (parents and caretakers with disabilities or caring for dependents with disabilities) and short term (parents and caretakers who are survivors of domestic violence or caring for a new born).

It was important to Working Group members to promote the best policy for District residents without undue regard for the short term costs, and we applaud the District for adopting this approach in the Working Group. While it is true that implementing these recommendations will not be inexpensive in the short term, they will pay dividends in successful family outcomes and savings to other safety net programs.

Finally, it will be critical to ensure that any of the Working Group's recommendations that the District chooses to adopt are well implemented – including the development of policies and procedures to ensure adequate staffing. Legal Aid stands ready to support the administration in advocating for necessary resources and providing policy development assistance as needed.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,

Curt D Campbell Jr.
Staff Attorney

Jennifer Mezey
Supervising Attorney

Feedback from Legal Aid Society

Barbara Poppe and associates
The collective for impact

Report to the DC Department of Human Services (DHS)
from the Working Group to Inform a TANF
Hardship Extension Policy for the District of Columbia

Recommendations for Development of a TANF Hardship Extension Policy for Washington, DC

DRAFT - not for distribution beyond Working Group

Prepared by Barbara Poppe and Associates
in partnership with the
Economic Security Administration (ESA)
September 30, 2016

TANF Program Services Improvements

The following represents a set of recommendations to consider for improving the overall TANF program. There was extensive feedback across the Listening Sessions, Community Dialogues, and the Working Group deliberations that families should be better served by the TANF program and that if these improvements were made; families would achieve a more rapid exit from TANF to greater economic stability. Improved communication with customers about TANF program services and community resources, improved assessment to identify customer barriers to employment and create more personalized service plans (IRPs), and additional supports were described as the primary areas needed for program improvement. Most improvements are likely not cost neutral so the Administration and Council may need to consider the cost-benefit of these recommendations during the annual budget process.

Feedback from Listening Sessions and Working Group	DHS Comments
Assessments & Outreach	
We need to do a better job assessing needs and identifying barriers	DHS acknowledges the need for a set of service options for engaged and unengaged customers that differs from the current TANF Employment Program (TEP) model. As part of that acknowledgement, the following actions steps will occur within FY 2017: 1. Enhance the TANF Comprehensive Assessment (TCA) and create a strategy to re-assess customers prior to a potential termination of benefits due to time limits. 2. Recommend in new TEP contracts that a home visit is included as part of a Provider's outreach attempts to engage customers prior to taking action for noncompliance. 3. DHS will pilot a program to reach those customers who have not achieved success (unengaged/sanctioned) through the traditional TEP model.
Customers should be reassessed 6–12 months prior to TANF termination	
Increased outreach, engagement, and case management services for customers (families) approaching the time limit or during the last 12 months before reaching the limit Change: The home visits will be to administer evidence-based assessments	
More meaningful engagement with customers long before reaching 60 months to avoid customers reaching 60 months	DHS believes that the key to assisting customers achieve success is dependent upon meaningful and engaging interactions between TEP Provider staff and customers. To address this issue, new TEP contracts (Beginning in FY 2017) will have smaller caseload sizes: 1:50 for Work Readiness Providers and 1:75 for Job Placement Providers. Smaller caseload sizes will create a space for more in-depth engagement of customers. DHS is also tightening both the case management requirements and expectations for TEP Provider engagement with community providers and service delivery partners in the new FY 2017 TEP contracts.

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Add Enhanced education outcomes here.

Specialized Services for Customers	
For some customers --especially those with mental health or other barriers – 20-30 hours of work requirements is too high a bar which sets customers up for failure from the beginning	DHS agrees that for some customers experiencing crises situations --inclusive of mental health and other barriers-- the 20, 30, and 35 hour per week work requirement (based on household size composition) is too high of a bar to set. Customers experiencing these hardships should have detailed Individual Responsibility Plans (IRP) that address the barrier(s) and not adhere to an hour's requirement. To that extent, within the next 180 days, DHS will enhance its orientation materials and process to better explain to customers facing crises situations that they have an option to engage with internal, Licensed Clinical Social Workers to address their barriers and not an hour's requirement.
POWER & Rehabilitation Services	
Intensive outreach and assessment strategy to increase POWER enrollment & Expand POWER: culture change is needed to de-stigmatize services, especially POWER	The results of the 2016 Family by Family Engagement Interviews conducted by DHS/ESA staff and partners revealed that DHS still has work to do to better promote the benefits of enrollment into the POWER program for eligible customers. Within the next 180 days, DHS will review our communication strategy around the POWER program including, our website, documentation, and orientation to ensure that eligibility requirements and service offerings are known to all customers. Additionally, in FY 2017, DHS will implement a staff training module to ensure that staff are messaging the benefits of POWER appropriately and are assisting customers navigate the application process. DHS will also require the assistance of community partners to encourage customers to seek POWER assistance when necessary.
Intensive and specialized work preparation for TANF parents with severe challenges: • Vocational rehabilitation services for customers with significant mental health challenges and/or developmental disabilities that are difficult to identify through traditional assessments and case management	DHS recognizes the need to further develop its current relationship with the DC Department on Disability Services (DDS) to enable TANF parents to receive vocational rehabilitation services. DHS will focus on expanding this relationship during the first 180 days of FY 2017.
Mental health and Substance abuse services	DHS agrees that services for customers experiencing mental health and substance abuse issues need to be

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Add evaluation of POWER : Consider rebranding to make less stigmatizing. Adding POWER to common Application.	better promoted during orientation, and periodically through mass-mailings, community engagement activities, and by TEP Providers. DHS will work to revise its orientation material and process during the next 180 days to de-stigmatize mental health and substance abuse services and encourage customers to seek help as necessary.
Enhanced Educational Outcomes	
Improved access and enrollment into GED programs for customers with low literacy levels provide more robust services to improve literacy improve college referrals	DHS is focused on increasing educational outcomes for TANF recipients, and agrees that we need to improve access and enrollment into GED programs as well as other education and training programs. New TEP contracts that will be executed in FY 2017 will include a more robust incentive package for Providers and customers to enroll and complete education and training programs. DHS will also explore ways to encourage eCASAS testing for customers to better screen for education and training needs.
Communication Strategy	
Better communication, services, and structure to ensure that customers who are trying can actually succeed Add social media strategic plan	DHS is working on a three-fold strategy for FY 2017 that includes the following activities aimed at engaging customers where they are at: 1. Enhanced documentation and management of the DHS website 2. Development of a TEP Customer Handbook 3. Continuous growth of the DHS Customer Advisory Board (CAB) 4. DHS will conduct quarterly listening sessions with customers at TEP locations and other locations in the community.
TEP Provider Employment Support Enhancements	
Training for TEP Provider staff Add: Ensure that definition of "high wage" and "minimum wage" updated in TEP contracts	DHS agrees that TEP Providers should convene routine staff trainings to ensure optimal service delivery to customers. To that end, DHS is adding language to new TEP contracts (To be executed in FY 2017) that requires potential TEP Providers to articulate how they will conduct ongoing staff training to include but not be limited to: 1. Customer Service 2. Coaching/Case Management standards 3. Cultural Competency 4. Working with customers experiencing mental health, substance abuse, and Domestic Violence issues

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Add: add trauma training on self-care and trauma for staff (will lead to decreased turnover)
add DHS staff trained on all wage and hour laws and better coordination with the Office on Wage Hour
when TANF recipients report being paid less than the minimum wage

Collaboration with DOES and Paid OJT for hard to place customers	DHS will work closely with DOES to collaborate on training and employment opportunities for customers; DHS is currently working with DOES to collocate services for customers as part of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA).
Other	
More intensive services for immigrants and ESL households Add: entire TANF program is translated/ include hard of hearing and deaf customers. - Change to slide from "TEP" program to "TANF" program	Within the next 180 days, DHS will work closely with its Language Access Coordinators to create an outreach and engagement strategy to inform members of the L/NEP community about the services offered through the TEP program. DHS will work with the appropriate Mayoral Offices to coordinate events.
Housing and utility assistance Add: More childcare options (non-traditional hours and more slots and more hours, children with special needs)	DHS will further develop relationships and coordinate services with sister agencies and government partners to further support a family's housing stability. DHS intends to add language to FY 2017 housing contracts requiring the coordinate and integration of services for customers dually assigned to the work program (TANF) and housing services.
Strict daycare benefits (6 months maximum)	DHS is currently exploring the feasibility of decoupling eligibility for child care subsidies from participation requirements to ensure that children have access to early learning services. A final determination will be made in FY 2017 between DHS and OSSE.

There were many suggestions for service improvements that the working group voted on in the 3rd meeting that were not included in this report. (See meeting minutes).

Add: Create resource guide for TEP providers of what is available through TANF community

Add: Prioritize TANF customers to fill positions at DHS and providers

DRAFT Not for distribution beyond working group

Feedback from SOME (So Others Might Eat)

SOME's staff and residents have taken a very active role in "Team TANF," but for logistical reasons SOME did not take an official role in the DHS TANF Working Group. We offer the following comments on the proposed Recommendations for Development of a TANF Hardship Extension Policy for Washington, DC (draft dated September 30, 2016):

1. To the extent the pressure to eliminate TANF benefits from families that have received TANF for 60 months is based on a desire to make recipient families less dependent on public benefits,
    a. We underline the importance of recognizing the multiple barriers those families face and the importance of providing more-effective, much-earlier, up-front services and engagement (p. 35), even more than focusing on end-period sanctions and penalties.
    b. We are concerned that the Recommendations do not pay adequate attention to some of the significant (and statistically significant) real-life pressures that make families dependent on TANF.
        i. Specifically, see the Unmet Needs of Families on TANF for More than Five Years, on p. 23 of the draft.
            1. Not all of the Unmet Needs are addressed comprehensively and specifically in the Recommendations. These Unmet Needs include: Legal Barriers, Health Barriers, and Housing Barriers.
        ii. More than half of customers in the Survey (pp. 16-26) reported that health issues prevented them from working or attending training.
            1. Many customers do not get proper treatment for their physical and mental health problems, pp. 21-22.
                a. 41% of Survey customers with physical health issues never saw a doctor;
                b. 55% of Survey customers with depression or anxiety never saw a doctor; and
                c. 63% of Survey customers with drug or alcohol abuse issues never sought drug/alcohol treatment.
            2. To the extent the POWER program is intended to include persons with mental and physical illness or incapacities, there appears to be, at best, confusion about what the eligibility terms mean; and there appears to be a lack of awareness about the POWER program and who is eligible, as discussed on pp. 33-36 of the Recommendations as well as in the Focus Group summaries.
                a. We agree with all the POWER Improvements recommendations on pp. 27 and 33-34.
                b. Some clarification is requested of the sentence on p. 36, "DHS will also require the assistance of community partners to encourage customers to seek POWER assistance when necessary." Does "require" mean "need," or "mandate"? Will DHS distribute outreach information to private-sector

organizations? Will DHS designate a liaison who will answer questions from those organizations?

3. A more-robust support system needs to be developed to link TANF recipients with medical and mental-health services that they are willing and able to access.

iii. Given the high percentage of recipients who have health-related barriers to successful attendance/completion of training and education programs, more attention should be paid to amplifying DHS and vendor attention to those issues, and doing so from early in the recipient's TANF benefits period.

1. We agree with the recommendation (p. 35) to improve assessments to identify customer barriers to employment and create more personalized service plans.
    a. We agree with the Focus Group participants who recommended that identification of barrier issues be made starting with initial Intake (Appendices).
2. We agree with DHS' recommendation (p. 35) that new TEP contracts require a home visit as part of a Provider's outreach attempts to engage customers before taking action for noncompliance.
3. We strongly agree with DHS' recommendation(p. 35) to pilot a program to reach customers who have not achieved success through the traditional TEP model.
4. We agree with the several recommendations on pp. 36-37 to provide individualized and specialized assistance to customers with mental health or substance-abuse challenges.

iv. Given that 74% of TANF customers are victims of domestic violence[1] or have experienced/are currently experiencing other trauma-inducing circumstances, the Recommendations should include a requirement that DHS and its TEP vendors be trained by knowledgeable experts on the subject of providing Trauma-Informed Services.

1. An item on p. 37 recommends that TEP vendors be required to have ongoing staff training relating to "working with customers experiencing mental health, substance abuse, and Domestic Violence issues." That requirement needs to be expanded and be more detailed: What is the nature of the "ongoing staff training," what is its purpose, and who will provide it?
2. We recommend that DHS intake and assessment staff similarly be required to be trained to offer Trauma-Informed Services.

[1] http://www.acf.hhs.gov/ofa/resource/tanf-acf-im-2014-03

3. SOME agrees with the Preferred Option of creating two separate grants, a Child Enrichment Grant and a Parent TANF Grant, for the reasons articulated on p. 29.

a. SOME notes that the Working Group was split as to the merits of high level requirements for receiving the Child Enrichment Grants. Given the results of the Survey and the Focus Groups noted in the Recommendations, as well as prior feedback from our own focus groups with regard to the enormous challenges that consumer families face daily, SOME is inclined to oppose such requirements.

4. SOME agrees with the POWER-related Recommendations set forth on pp. 33 and 34.

5. SOME agrees with Working Group participants' caution that a "warm hand-off to community services" for involuntarily exited households is not feasible (p. 39).
   a. Community organizations are not well-equipped to handle these households, with high crisis levels and in high volume.
   b. Approximately $9 million in funding to 91 programs that serve low-income District families will be zeroed out at the end of calendar year 2016 because of the closing of the Freddie Mac Foundation and closing of grant funding from Fannie Mae. It should therefore not be assumed that the capacity of those private-sector safety-net programs will remain operative at calendar year 2016 levels, let alone at levels that would be needed if the government-sector safety net were to shrink abruptly in Fiscal Year 2018.

6. To the extent the pressure to eliminate TANF benefits from families that have received TANF for 60 months is based on consideration of the public fisc,
   a. Has a cost-benefit analysis been conducted about the 20-year policy to not remove such families from locally funded TANF?
   b. Has a cost-benefit analysis been conducted about the proposed/pending cutoff on October 1, 2017?
      v. Is there a written, objective analysis of the extent to which eliminating or reducing TANF could potentially create counter-pressures on other public benefits programs?

7. Issues requiring additional thought and consideration include:
   a. Transportation
   b. Child care
   c. Housing challenges in a city with inadequate options
   d. Unresolved issues relating to homelessness
      i. We recommend additional funding of:
         1. the Emergency Rental Assistance Program,
         2. the relatively new DHS Family Homelessness Prevention Program, and
         3. other tools to avert family homelessness.

e. Ability to return to TANF if and when employment ends (in economic downturns, for example, as considered in the Nadeau bill).