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
Sharre 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
Roberta Downing	DHS
Ginger Moored	OCFO

Community Members Present

Kathy Haines	DMHHS
Kate Coventry	DC Fiscal Policy Institute
Christine Okoker	DHS
Linnea Lassiter	DC Fiscal Policy Institute
Jennifer Mezey	Legal Aid

Facilitator: Barbara Poppe, Barbara Poppe and Associates

Welcome: Laura Zeilinger, Department of Human Services Director
Updated Charge for the Working Group

Director Zeilinger opened the meeting by reminding the group of the charge of the working groups which was to develop recommendations for a TANF hardship exemption policy by September 30. More specifically, the group was to:

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.
2) Consider "hybrid" options that could be adjusted during the budget process.
3) Make recommendations on best approaches to serve families after their TANF assistance ends.

Director Zeilinger explained that based on feedback from earlier work groups, budget considerations are no longer a part of today's conversation and prioritization process. She also discussed that the meeting today would go from 9:00 AM to 3:30 PM, which is longer than the originally scheduled work group which was originally scheduled from 9am to noon. Because of feedback from the group, the meeting was extended to 3:30, to allow more time for deliberations while also keeping to the 9/30/16 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 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 understands 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.

A question was asked by a working group member: Why are the four options selected? Response from Barb: If there is time, we can discuss further, however, the four are based on what came up in the community conversations. Other options for extensions that may be discussed will be the need to extend TANF to customers beyond 60 months during times of high unemployment/recession, for families at risk of entering the foster care system, and for families with a newborn in the household. These extensions 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.

Another question from the group was raised about 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. A discussion of POWER is 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 households that "play by the rules" receive an extension? "Play by the Rules" defined as: 1.adult is enrolled in education/training or working part-time 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 households who are "risk of homelessness" regardless of whether the parent participates?

38: Should TANF be extended for all households 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% of TANF customers are currently not engaged with the program 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 from earlier meetings due to definition issues)

Conditional requirements and age limits were discussed in earlier meetings 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 , but both were willing to 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 household 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 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 the household is assessed to be at risk of homelessness, the IRP should reflect that and therefore, there should be 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 permanent supportive housing 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

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.
    - An opinion was shared regarding the five year limit: It is too short if someone has children and runs 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
  - Full-time 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 Work Group 1, Work Group 2 and brought forward. Today is a chance to 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. There 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 corrections are given to Beth if there is language that needs correcting.

Comment: Need to clarify that this document should reflect that this is a reflection of opinions, not facts.
Group consensus that they can live with the document. Consensus approval for updated document.

Hybrid Policy Options

Barb noted that in following presentation, we will be moving to a 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 the halfway point to discuss and then report out at the end. Our 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 the 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 was used as a budget placeholder for discussion purposes rather than actual grant dollars to families. In order to make these changes, we 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 a family was terminated in the past because of being a TANF recipient for 60 months, 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 month 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 from Councilmember Silverman: 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 an imperfect process because these issues do impact the issue at hand but are not on the table now.

Question from a working group member: 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 four 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 two 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 model 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 three 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 six month transitional period when no longer on POWER? – yes - Consensus approval
- Should there be a monitoring requirement for POWER providers comparable to those for TEP providers (quarterly basis, five benchmarks) to 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: split

<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
- Discussed if the Child Enrichment and Parent TANF grant should be 50% each. Parent TANF grant would be eligible to be sanctioned.
- Change percentage of sanction level of benefits: 80, 60, 40 (from 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 percentage will result in less dramatic sanctions. If the Parent TANF portion of the grant was changed from 50% to 20%, and then sanctioned level is modified to 80%, 60%, and 40%, then the minimum benefit a family who is not participating would receive would be

only 12% reduction, amounting to 88% of the full benefit. The value of the sanctioning policy would not encourage motivation to participate in services.

- 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 the household is at risk of the 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 during times of high unemployment (rate predetermined) for those without college degree 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).

<u>Assessments & Outreach slides.</u> Accepted with additions:

- Enhanced educational outcomes
  Add:

<u>Specialized Services</u> Accepted

<u>POWER and rehabilitation services</u> Accepted with additions:

- Evaluation of POWER then consider re-branding 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 Household. 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 one 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