



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

Committee Members Present (voting and non-voting)

Names	Organizations
9 individuals (5 voting)	Customers
CM Yvette Alexander/ Yulonda Barlow	Councilmember Yvette Alexander
Brian Campbell	DHS
Curt Campbell	Legal Aid
Tamitha Christian	DHS
Andrea Gleaves	DC Coalition Against Domestic Violence
Monica Kamen	DC Fair Budget Coalition
Won-ok Kim	DHS
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 and 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.

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.

1. 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.
- 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.

Questions:

- Ed Lazere (DCFPI): Expressed concerns about the process, especially hemming into a \$10 million budget mark. Recommendation was made that an approach should also decide what the best policy is and then price it. So, we need to figure out what is the best time limit policy and go from there? This could be all exemptions or not. Regarding the third meeting voting, would like to report out the consensus items and then list the non-consensus items separately (without voting on them).
- Barbara (Facilitator): 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. 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.

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 around the time we go live with DCAS).
- 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 than 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.

Idea K: Nadeau bill

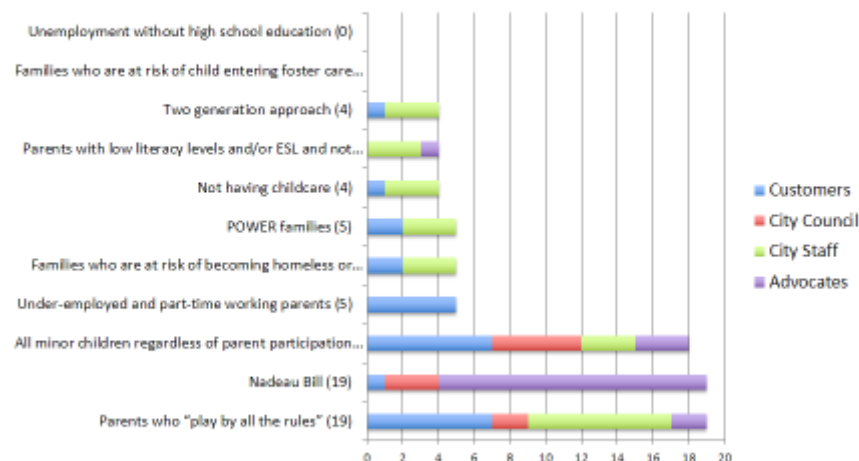
Questions:

- 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]

Analysis of Dots Exercise



- 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.