

State TANF Diversion Policies and Programs

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Context for TANF Diversion Strategies

- **DRA provisions**
 - Inclusion in work participation rate of those previously excluded
 - Higher effective work participation rates
- **States' TANF caseload mix**

The Study

- **Conducted from 2006 – 2008**
- **Documented states' strategies**
- **Data collection methods:**
 - **A survey to catalogue state activities**
 - **Telephone interviews to collect state policy details**
 - **Local site visits to document implementation of selected policies**

Study Investigated Four Strategies

- **Non-recurring lump-sum payment**
- **Applicant work requirements**
- **Solely-stated funded programs**
- **Short-term pre-TANF program**

Number of States with Each Strategy

Type	Number of States
Lump-sum diversion program	35
Applicant work requirement(s)	39
Solely-state funded program(s)	26
Pre-TANF program	9
States with no program	2

Source: TANF Diversion Study, 2008.

N=50 states plus D.C.

Lump-Sum Diversion Programs

- **Most pre-date DRA**
- **Targeted to TANF-eligible applicants with temporary barrier to employment**
- **Voluntary alternative to TANF**
- **Cash or voucher payment is typically:**
 - Based on applicants' documented needs
 - Multiple of the monthly TANF grant
 - Not counted toward the TANF lifetime limit

Low Take-Up Rate for Lump-Sum Programs

- **Work-attachment criterion can restrict eligibility pool**
- **Efforts to inform and screen applicants may limit participation**
- **Eligible applicants may determine that TANF is their better option**

Applicant Work Requirements

- **Work-eligible applicants complete as condition of eligibility**
- **Purpose: to inform applicants about requirements and encourage work**
- **Typically completed within the 30- or 45-day application period**
- **Typical activities: orientation, employment plan, job search**

Type and Frequency of Requirements

Requirement	Number of States
Orientation	29
Employment plan	28
Job search	20
Any requirement	39

Source: TANF Diversion Study, 2008.

N=50 states plus D.C.

Intensity of Requirements Varies

- **Of states with requirements, about half are "soft"**
- **20 states require an up-front job search**
 - **Most require moderate or intensive effort**
 - **Typically begin with an assessment**
 - **Activities are individualized**

Solely-State Funded (SSF) Programs

- Paid for with state funds, not TANF or maintenance-of-effort (MOE) funds
- Targeted populations excluded from TANF caseload
- Common target populations: 2-parent, hard-to-serve, and students

Prevalence of SSF Programs

Target Population	Number of States
Two-parent families	24
Hard-to-employ	14
Students	7
Any population	26
Two or more populations	15

Source: TANF Diversion Study, 2008.

N=50 states plus D.C.

SSF Programs Differ by Target Population

- **Two-parent family programs**
 - Mirror TANF
 - Are mandatory
- **Hard-to-employ programs**
 - Are voluntary
 - Allow some flexibility in meeting work requirements
- **Student programs**
 - Are voluntary
 - Are time limited
 - Monitor students' academic performance

Pre-TANF Programs

- In early 2008, 9 states had a pre-TANF program
- Several were discontinued following May 2008 program instruction
- Program goal:
 - (1) To divert applicants to work, or
 - (2) To prepare applicants for the TANF work requirement

Summary

- **States use a mix of strategies to meet needs of different populations**
- **Next step for research is to understand effects on:**
 - **TANF caseloads**
 - **Participants of diversion programs**

TANF Diversion Report

- Rosenberg, Linda, Michelle Derr, Donna Pavetti, Subuhi Asheer, Megan Hague Angus, Samina Sattar, and Jeffrey Max. “A Study of States’ TANF Diversion Programs.” Princeton, NJ: Mathematica Policy Research, Inc., December 8, 2008.
- Available at:
 - <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/>
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