

WELFARE PEER TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE SUMMARY

Event: Integration of Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services in Oregon
Date: December 15-16, 1999
Location: Medford, Eugene and Salem, Oregon

I. Background

The Welfare Peer Technical Assistance Network coordinated this site visit to the offices of the Oregon Department of Human Services (OR, DHS), Adult and Family Services (AFS) Division on behalf of staff from the Minnesota Department of Human Services (MN, DHS) and the Hennepin County, Minneapolis, MN, TEA-WERC.

The MN DHS office was interested in learning more about Oregon's efforts to integrate substance abuse and mental health treatment into their Welfare-to-Work Program. MN-DHS is in the process of implementing a program similar to OR that involves coordination among social services, employment services, welfare, and health care staff. This was the second phase of technical assistance provided to MN earlier in the year from OR coordinated and supported by the Welfare Peer TA Network. The first phase involved a video conference between MN DHS, OR AFS, and a representative from Mt. Hood Community College. In this second phase, MN hoped to actually see first-hand how Oregon's offices are set up and how co-location and their referral process works. The MN staff was interested in speaking with OR staff members who are actually involved in assessment and case management. Specific areas of interest to them were as follows: shadowing an initial client assessment, training for case managers on identification of substance abuse or mental health issues, substance abuse assessment tools, client rights issues, data privacy, costs related to increased demand for chemical dependency and mental health services, and implementation successes/failures. Of additional interest to the MN staff was to follow-up on specific issues discussed during the video conference (i.e., OR had just begun requiring mandatory mental health assessments at the time of the video conference).

The Hennepin County, Minneapolis, MN, TEA-WERC office was interested in learning more about strategies OR uses in serving its hard to serve clients. Hennepin County is in the process of transitioning its client focus toward a mixture of positive reinforcement and negative sanction in order to successfully coach/counsel its clients toward self-sufficiency. In moving toward this strategy, Hennepin County has been researching the service type and delivery methods of other agencies throughout the nation to learn from their experiences. Community involvement and partnerships with outside organizations was one aspect of Oregon's program that Hennepin County was especially interested in exploring.

II. Participants

The site visited was hosted by Bob Proctor, Program Analyst, Oregon Department of Human Services, Adult and Family Services Division. The visit was conducted in three different AFS office locations in Western Oregon in the cities of Eugene, Medford, and Salem. Mr. Proctor was joined by various staff members from each of these offices who held various positions such as operations manager, case manager, mental health specialist, and career mobility specialist. The three site visitors from MN DHS included three Policy Analysts, Joan Truhler, Kelly Cowles, and Nancy Vivian.

Dr. Robert Neal, welfare reform national practices researcher, was the only member of the MN TEA-WERC who attended the site visit.

III. Site Visit Summary

At-A-Glance

The guests visited three medium sized AFS offices. During the visit, they observed an individual initial TANF assessment with a client and case manager, observed a team staffing of one of the sites, met with staff who coordinated Welfare-to-Work Programs, discussed substance abuse screening tools (SASSI), mental health screening tools (Beck Depression Scale), job retention strategies ("income improvement plans"), domestic violence screening/referral/and staff training, and learned about Oregon's comprehensive initial screening tool it uses for client assessments ("self-sufficiency index"). The site visitors were impressed with the uniqueness of the three offices. Although Oregon is state administered, each office has its own variation of how it implements the state's overall goals and missions.

A. **Oregon's Programs/Initiatives** (The following is a sample of the background information provided to the site visitors by Mr. Proctor):

Statewide and Site Programs

1. Statewide Program Expectations:

- All TANF applicants are assessed for employment and family self-sufficiency strengths and issues; all TANF applicants and recipients receive case management services.
- All TANF applicants also receive medical and food stamp benefits from the same office (usually from the same case manager who does the assessment, case plan, and other payments).

- Most receive Assessment Program services for up to 45 days before opening ongoing TANF, consisting of labor market test (work search), job readiness activities, basic needs payments (to landlord, etc.), and support services payments (to child care provider, etc.).
- Goal of Assessment Program is to place work-ready applicants in employment rather than open ongoing TANF, assess work readiness and family issues for those not placed and opening TANF, and develop ongoing case plan for job retention, career advancement, or job placement/family stability.
- Each AFS branch offers on-site access to mental health and substance abuse screening, information and referral, and connection to assessment and treatment resources.
- Each AFS District (15 in state) offers employment services through a prime contractor (usually JTPA agency or Community College). Local sub-contracts exist for more specialized services like supported work experience, MH/A&D, family stability services.
- Prime contract includes services for job readiness and placement, paid and unpaid work experience, short-term skills training, adult basic education, and job retention/career advancement.
- For clients needing work experience in a real work setting, JOBS Plus offers placement for up to six months with mentoring, accumulation of an Individual Education Account, and a paycheck that at least equals (and usually exceeds) TANF and Food Stamp benefit amounts. AFS converts TANF to an employer subsidy up to the minimum wage.
- Each District has budgeted for placement services' contracts, support services (child care, transportation, etc.), and program benefits (Assessment Program, TANF, Employment Related Day Care, etc.).
- Each District JOBS plan specifies referral procedures, attendance reporting, communication expectations, and program decision-making and evaluation process.

2. District 5 AFS (Eugene area):

- All placement and MH/A&D services for Assessment Program and ongoing TANF occur at the local branch site. AFS and contracted staff communicate regularly concerning client progress.
- For families affected by substance abuse, the Family Support Team offers coordinated case planning and case management from AFS, SCF (child protective services), public health, housing resources, and parent support staff.
- The new McKenzie Center site offers AFS benefit programs, contracted JOBS services, child support establishment and enforcement, and teen parent services.

3. District 8 AFS West Medford Family Center:

- AFS branch office is also a community services center, serving local residents who are not necessarily receiving AFS benefits.

- Initial assessment of TANF applicants also includes a rating of self sufficiency on a scale the district developed. The assessment includes factors such as employment history, substance abuse, health, domestic violence, etc.
- Agencies represented (besides AFS) include employment and training, public health, support to new parents, mental health and substance abuse, and child protective services, etc.
- Clients are staffed by the most appropriate Focus Group for their presenting issue.
- Clients also have a Family Advocate, to provide hands-on assistance and home visits to execute plan activities and works jointly with the Case Manager and Employment Specialist providing contracted JOBS services to ensure case plan success.

4. District 3 AFS South Salem Resource and Opportunity Center:

- All employed clients, receiving case management services in the Salem area, are served by this branch.
- Case management services are provided, using an Income Improvement Plan, to identify strategies and services to move-up from low income positions.
- Branch is organized into four teams, each including a lead worker, two case managers, one family resource worker (processing benefits), and one team assistant.
- If the client loses his/her job, quick re-employment services are offered by the branch and he/she continues carrying the case.
- Branch offers on-site resource center for access to education, training, employment, and family stability services. Community college also offers testing and career assessment using the Work Keys system; monthly workshops on issues of working parents; on-site services from housing, child support, and child care agencies.
- Many of these employed clients work in entry-level clerical positions with state government in Salem. One of the largest of these is AFS' Parkway Building.

5. District 3 AFS Parkway Building:

- Many entry-level, clerical staff who process medical and day care benefits at this central location are also AFS clients. These individuals move from TANF to work or receive ongoing child care, extended medical, and/or food stamp benefits.
- On-site job retention and career advancement services are offered to all employees at the site, not just AFS. All employees in the building are eligible for 8 hours per month paid time to participate in career advancement services.
- Services include group and individual career counseling and workshops on work and life planning issues, assistance with child care options, help with applications, résumés and interviews, and on-site computer training to qualify for improved jobs.

- An AFS Case Manager is located on-site; clients can conduct business related to ongoing benefits without having to leave work.
- Partners include Chemeketa Community College for individual counseling and career planning, Employment Department for individual job development, AFS Technical Support and Training Unit for computer training

2. Oregon Site Visit Handouts: The following materials were provided to the Minnesota Site visitors. They may be found in the Appendices section of this report.

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| • Appendix A | Site Visit Agenda |
| • Appendix B | AFS Executive Summary |
| • Appendix C | “Jobs for Oregon’s Future” – brief description of the “ <i>Oregon Option</i> ” Welfare Reform Waivers Initiative |
| • Appendix D | “The AFS Perspective on Reinventing Food Stamps” |
| • Appendix E | “Family Self-Sufficiency Scale” |
| • Appendix F | Job Classification: Job Coach/Advocate |

B. State Level Staff Members Observations

1. Purpose

State staff in Minnesota were originally interested in visiting Oregon to obtain a first-hand look at a TANF program that was screening up front for chemical use and giving staff the option to mandate treatment. We were also interested in Oregon’s approach to the 60-month time limit and sanction policy. However, during the visit it became apparent that these are all pieces of a much larger approach to welfare reform. Our focus shifted toward understanding the culture change that has occurred in Oregon, the philosophy that guided this change, and how a vision for welfare reform has been developed in local offices.

2. General Observations Summary

State employees in 15 districts that cover the state's 36 counties administer the TANF program in Oregon. Staff are employed by the Adult and Family Services Division of the Department of Human Resources.

Welfare reform in Oregon was developed over a 10-year period, with major changes occurring in 1996 after the state received the "Oregon Option" welfare reform waivers from the Federal government. With the waivers, Oregon made a dramatic shift in welfare philosophy. Everyone on welfare must participate in activities leading to employment and self-sufficiency. Penalties for non-cooperation were increased. Elements of the Oregon Option include: 1) JOBS Plus, a public private partnership that places welfare clients in on-the-job training positions; 2) full participation in JOBS, which means adults on welfare are required to participate unless exempt; 3) progressive sanctions that may result in the loss of the entire cash grant after four months of non-cooperation. Oregon was also the first state to require that clients participate in alcohol, drug, or mental health treatment programs.

Oregon has a two-year time limit. However, the clock does not tick for clients who are participating in required activities. The state's waiver allows them to count any activities included in a self-sufficiency plan toward the Federal participation rate. The TANF caseload was slightly over 17,000 (about 16,400 single parent cases and 700 two parent cases) in October 1999, down from approximately 44,000 in 1994.

DAY 1: EUGENE/MEDFORD: Oregon Adult and Family Services

Activities:

- Toured Eugene office
- Heard overview of program by local TANF managers
- Attended intake interview and talked to line workers
- Toured Medford office
- Met with Medford supervisory and line staff

Key Learnings:

1. Commitment to Employment. Oregon has a seemingly absolute commitment to employment, which is evident at all levels of the state bureaucracy and service system.

2. Coordination of Services. There is a strong commitment to providing people with the necessary assistance to become self-sufficient. This commitment is evident at all levels. At the intake interview, the worker asked the participant several times, "What will you need from us in order to become employed and self sufficient?" At the

organizational level, providers of mental health, chemical dependency, childcare and many other services are all co-located and do intensive teaming to assist participants.

3. Assessment Process and Initial Job Search. The assessment process precedes TANF eligibility and can last up to 45 days. During the 45-day period, group assessment and orientation to TANF are done, resource and child support information is provided, and an intake specialist signs up anyone not screened out as exempt for initial job search. The group assessment is followed by a meeting with a case manager for individual assessment. Staff estimate about a 10% drop-off rate between group and individual assessment.

Although a cash grant is not provided during this period, up to 200% of the TANF grant amount may be used to assist with utilities, housing or other needs. Decisions regarding the amount to be expended are made by a case manager on an individual basis. The initial job search is self-paced and considered a 30-day labor market test of employability. After 45 days TANF eligibility must be determined. However, staff say that the decision is often made earlier than 45 days, and between 50-60% become employed during the initial job search period.

Case managers weigh each person's effort during initial job search against their ability to participate. This determination may result in the TANF case being opened with a disqualification (sanction) already imposed. Disqualifications are presented to clients as a choice.

4. Relative Prominence of Income Maintenance. Oregon pays close attention to payment accuracy. However, eligibility determination and paperwork is given less prominence than in MN. Generally, it is only after an intake interview, a group assessment, and an individual assessment that eligibility paperwork is discussed. Discussion before hand revolves around what activities the participant will engage in and what services will be provided to assist the person in becoming employed.

5. Worker Discretion. Whether a TANF grant is opened with a disqualification and what services the participant receives prior to TANF eligibility is determined on an individual basis by the case manager. Staff have reached a level of comfort with not treating everyone exactly the same and disputes over differential treatment are few. They appear to have excellent relationships with legal aid despite this willingness to allow workers to exercise discretion. The state gets no more complaints about inconsistency now than when they placed much greater emphasis on being consistent in every way.

6. Improved Relationships with Participants. Oregon appears to have transformed its relationships with participants such that they are far less adversarial than in the past. They attempt to stay "customer-focused" and abreast about what they can do to help the client get where he or she wants to go. They also emphasize the social contract between the participant and case manager. The positive and supportive tone was evident in the interview process we observed. The client actually thanked the worker several times

before leaving, even though she left without any promise of cash assistance. Note: She did leave, however, with an assignment to think about the top 10 things she was looking for in a job (e.g. distance from home, on bus line, etc.).

7. Commitment to Client Progress. Oregon is committed to addressing barriers to client progress head-on. It has instituted mandatory up-front screening for such issues as depression, domestic violence, and alcohol and drug abuse. While it has authority to conduct mandatory urinalysis, this is rarely done because most participants in need of services volunteer for substance abuse services. The sanction policy, while seldom used, is seen as a useful tool to ensure that clients continue to make progress.

8. Staffing. Line staff (case managers) are generalists in that they do both income maintenance and case management. However, some specialize in such areas as teens, alcohol and other drugs, etc. The shift to having eligibility workers do case management required a long term commitment (roughly 10 years) and extensive training. Locating professional social workers, chemical dependency staff and others on-site allows the case managers to serve as brokers. Workers claim that partnering increases their workload but also improves outcomes. Now that they are many years from implementation of this massive change, everyone we encountered seemed extremely enthusiastic about their work and no one wanted to return to the old way of doing business.

9. Workloads. Case managers' caseload size is about 60 now, though 90 is the usual size, only about 20-30 are TANF. Oregon has also made an effort to simplify bureaucratic procedures. Workers estimate that they spend as much as six hours each day with clients and only one hour on paperwork. While comparison is difficult, workers in Oregon appear to have a somewhat lighter caseload than in MN and a considerably lighter paperwork burden.

10. Staff Commitment. There is a willingness on the part of staff to do whatever is necessary to help families, including home visits (even on their flex days), calling to get clients out of bed for a meeting, spending considerable time teaming, doing work to involve the community in their efforts, etc.

11. Subsidized Employment. Subsidized employment is used extensively. The employer pays \$1 per hour of the wage and the state pays the balance. The placements have coaches on site and are closely monitored. The intervention is seen as especially useful with families with multiple barriers.

12. Mandatory Treatment for Substance Abuse. On the issue of treatment for substance abuse, the default is to send clients to treatment. Staff tend to believe that the so-called "successful users" are unlikely to seek public assistance. They are willing to "keep clients' feet to the fire" with regard to getting professional help with these issues. Although sanctions are rarely used, when they are, the goal is to "bring up the bottom" for clients who refuse treatment.

13. Job Retention and Progression. There is a strong commitment to providing job retention and job progression assistance after the client takes the first. There appears to be a successful pairing of social service-like activities with job retention/progression activities.

14. Linkages to Schools. Connections to secondary and post-secondary schools are strong. In Medford, when a client's child misses school, a team approach is used to do home visits. Staff believe the result is improved school outcomes for the children and improved work outcomes for parents. The partnership with the community college system is such that the community college will set up virtually whatever "learning plan" needed by any TANF recipient who is referred. While they sometimes place the participant into an established community college program, they are more likely to put the person into an individually tailored learning experience geared toward job advancement.

DAY 2: SALEM OFFICES

Activities:

- Met with staff and toured the South Salem Branch/ Adult and Family
- Met with staff and toured the Parkway Building/ Up With Wages Program
- Met with state program staff at the Adult and Family Services/State Office Building

Key Learnings:

South Salem Branch/AFS

1. Specialization of Services. The South Salem Branch provides case management and other services for employed clients. Clients who were receiving services at another location are transferred to the South Salem Branch after they have been employed for two to three months. Case managers develop an IIP (Income Improvement Plan) with the client. The plan is supported with food stamps, medical assistance, child care, and a wide variety of other support services available in the community (classes at the community college, basic education, housing assistance, energy assistance, chemical dependency, and mental health services). Although development of the plan is not required, any client requesting support service payments must have one in place. The emphasis is on joint planning to gather whatever is necessary to ensure the client can retain employment and increase income.

There are staffings biweekly to discuss how to support individual progress/next steps. This office is open late one evening each week, and offers group activities for adults and children (age 5 and over). Staff stressed that hosting fun activities for children would ensure that their parents would come back in again.

2. Staffing Philosophy. Staff at this branch emphasized that the philosophy regarding employment is the same for staff and for clients. They look at what is attractive to staff (to ensure job retention and improve wages) and use this as a model for client services. The staffing pattern in this office includes one team assistant (support staff); one family resource worker (carriers 180-250 cases that qualify for food stamps, medical assistance, and child care, but do not receive other supports); two case managers (90 cases that qualify for food stamps, medical assistance, child care, and who need additional supports); and one lead worker (40 cases similar to those of the case manager) who is also a coach and mentor for other staff. These positions also represent a career ladder within the agency.

Staff at this office, as in other offices we visited, were extremely optimistic and appear to be very involved in the planning as well as delivery of services. They are enthusiastic about their work, empowered to make decisions, and believe they are making a difference.

3. Service Philosophy. Staff clearly express and demonstrate a service orientation as opposed to an “eligibility” orientation. They consider eligibility for assistance to be just one of many services they can offer. In fact, any assistance in the form of monetary payments is de-emphasized. This is accomplished with a three-tiered approach to problem solving that staff view as a way of breaking dependence. When an issue or problem arises, client/family resources are the first consideration. If these resources are not sufficient to resolve the situation, clients must next tap into any other available community resources. As a last resort, AFS assistance is possible, but the level of assistance may be the result of a negotiation. Those who lose a job (“repeat applicants”) continue to receive services through this office. The goal is to re-engage the client as soon as possible and avoid reopening TANF when possible.

In general, the staff approach to planning and improving services is to ask, “how can we do it?” not “why can’t we do it?” Services are available to anyone, and they can be provided to the entire family

Parkway Building/Up with Wages Program (Salem)

Site-based Employer Services. The “Up With Wages” program in Oregon began as one of five similar projects funded by Public Private Ventures in Philadelphia. The projects provide site-based employer services in both private and public settings. The project in Salem began in February, 1998, and focuses on both job retention and wage progression. This location houses state employees and was chosen because: 1) the state is the largest employer in Salem; 2) many people at this location are in entry-level jobs and did not know how to move up a career ladder. This site houses the Oregon Health Plan, direct pay/child care, third party recovery, other support services, and quality control functions.

Services for the project are provided in partnership with the state Employment Department and the local community college. They are available to all employees in the building (entry level to management), many of whom are either former TANF recipients or people whose wages are low enough so that subsidized child care is being provided. The Parkway site originated the use of the Income Improvement Plans (used in the South Salem Branch office). However, the IPP portion of the program is only available to those earning less than 200% of the Federal poverty guideline.

Project staff describe the program as similar in some ways to employee assistance programs, in that the purpose is to provide support to employees who are struggling with problems that may increase after taking a job. Staff are there to coach and provide necessary support. As part of this project, the employer allows up to eight hours of paid time per month for a participating employee to be involved with career advancement activities. Word processing, keyboarding, and other computer-related classes are offered on-site, as well as workshops on a variety of topics to support goals of job retention and job progression.

AFS State Offices

1. Domestic Violence. Our impression was that a significant commitment has been made to inform and train local area staff on this topic. Oregon has produced a comprehensive packet of information on domestic violence that includes tools for clients, as well as staff, and has established statewide protocols. Clients who disclose that they are victims of domestic violence have a plan focused on safety. The plan may or may not include employment. A domestic violence service provider is co-located in the TANF office at least part-time in 11 of 15 districts.

Between 400-500 clients are involved in domestic violence intervention activities each month. State staff believe Oregon is now doing a better job of screening for this issue. They have worked with local services providers, added three questions related to this issue on the TANF application, and have trained local staff to recognize indicators of domestic violence. Domestic violence services providers have been involved at all stages and approve all materials.

Domestic violence does not trigger a mandatory report to child protective services, unless the children are considered in danger.

2. Culture Change. State staff believe they have accomplished a significant cultural change in Oregon by creating a vision that is reinforced at every level. This was not easily accomplished and did not happen quickly. AFS began this cultural shift about 10 years ago by challenging workers to take just one case and try to do things differently. AFS worked with staff to find the best fit, and invested in a great deal of cross training and team building for line staff as well as managers. Eventually job descriptions were changed and staff were required to reapply for jobs. This was a painful process (state staff said they would not do this again), and there was some

attrition, but it resulted in staff who could do case management, not just determine eligibility. Branch offices operate on a team concept (supervisors have been replaced by teams with managers), and most are co-located with staff who specialize in chemical dependency, mental health, and domestic violence.

They are expecting another cultural shift to take place as the focus shifts even further from services for people on TANF to serving low income workers.

Key Learnings: Child Protection Services and Domestic Violence

Oregon's Adult and Family Services Agency (AFS) plays an active role in children and family safety issues. Following is an outline of key observations:

1. Use of Family Resource Centers. Oregon AFS is deeply committed to the integration of *all* human service case management services through the use of Family Resource Centers. These Centers provide family advocacy services, comprehensive assessments, direct services, and a community development component. Family resource centers include state, county, non-profit, and school partners who have case management and direct responsibilities for high-risk families in their specific geographic community. Three of the four sites have staff co-located in one building.

2. Ongoing Communication and Partnerships with Services to Children and Families (SCF) – Oregon's Child Protection System. On a weekly basis, Oregon's AFS caseworkers are informed of the specific families that are involved in child protection services. The information systems are able to "cross-reference" families. The caseworkers communicate to develop consistent plans to service the family.

3. Focus on the Family Unit. Oregon AFS places a priority on improving family stability. Case management functions encompass the needs of all members of a family, not just the head of the household, by:

- Creating new and strengthened partnerships allow Oregon to collaboratively address factors that destabilize families, such as difficulties in school, housing problems or involvement with the criminal justice system.
- Developing an AFS partnership with SCF and the Commission for Children and Families on "Community Safety Nets", which target families at risk of entering the child-protective system and provide early intervention services.

4. Services to Prevent Future Welfare Caseload. Oregon AFS aims to prevent future welfare dependency among children in the welfare caseload. Oregon AFS provides staffing support for a program that provides information and skills to teen parents so they will delay additional pregnancies. Oregon AFS has a commitment to providing specialized services to teens.

5. Use of Welfare Reform/ Child Protection Early Involvement Team. Services to Children and Families (SCF), Oregon’s child protection system provides one full-time staff acting as part of an “Early Involvement Team” with AFS staff, and other agencies, as needed. The Team will work with family members to develop and implement a service plan targeting removal of barriers to self sufficiency, strengthening family functioning, providing early intervention for child safety issues, and integration of services from community resources. These services are provided to the following families:

- AFS clients referred to the community staffing team for disqualification.
- AFS families not already receiving SCF services but needing services to prevent neglect and potential abuse.
- Teen parents needing living situation assessment.

SCF team members will participate in joint staffings, outreach, home visits, assessment and intervention in case planning.

6. On the Early Involvement Team (EIT), the Responsibility of the AFS Case Manager is to:

- a) Identify clients with potential child safety issues; clients referred to community staffing team for disqualification; families with suspected abuse or neglect but not meeting criteria for SCF protective services involvement; and minor parents needing a living situation assessment and/or mediation to allow them to return home.
- b) Participate in developing team recommendations to determine whether Early Involvement Team services are needed for families referred to community staffing team for disqualification. The EIT plans to initiate service with SCF staffing team members.
- c) Some clients may be referred to the welfare case manager by SCF when SCF investigates a community complaint that does not result in mandated child protection services. The family is receiving services from AFS and is deemed appropriate for Early Involvement Services.
- d) To refer families identified in 1, 2, and 3 above, first discuss role and purpose of Early Involvement Team (EIT) with client. Add EIT and services to client’s plan.
- e) Act as AFS member of EIT, working jointly with SCF staff, client, and other agencies to develop service plan, follow-up on identified services, and communicate any family changes. Includes joint service plan as part of client’s employment plan.

7. On the Early Involvement Team, the responsibilities of the SCF child protection staff are as follows:

- a) SCF staff will participate in the community staffing team for disqualified clients and will take the lead in forming the EIT.
- b) Upon referral from AFS or recommendation from the community staffing team, SCF staff will arrange joint staffing, meet with referred client and AFS case manager, jointly develop service plan to address child safety and minor parent living issues, and identify other community resources needed and include them in Team planning.
- c) SCF EIT staff will participate in initial introduction meeting, joint staffings, outreach, home visits, and family assessments as needed to develop a plan, in conjunction with AFS case manager.
- d) SCF will provide or purchase (using flexible funding) family mediation services for minor parents who may be able to return to their parents' home if conflicts are addressed in mediation.

8. Frequent Home Visiting by Case Managers. Oregon AFS case managers will regularly visit the homes of clients if child safety and/or neglect is suspected.

9. Use of Substance Abuse Family Support Teams. Oregon AFS case managers participate on Family Support Teams to execute a plan of support for children and parents affected by substance abuse. Family Support Teams exist to provide a safety net of services for families affected by substance abuse. The Team works with and SCF caseworker to develop a mutually agreed upon plan for child and family welfare.

10. Use of Self-Sufficiency Scale. Oregon AFS case managers use a self-sufficiency scale to measure family progress in regards to self-sufficiency. The scale provides case managers with a quantifiable tool and a means to gauge the safety of the children in the family. Includes the following factors: program participation, child care, housing, employment, partner relationship, parent-child relationship, parent education/literacy, youth/risk and resiliency, attendance, family health, substance abuse, mental health, community involvement, level of public assistance, family income, criminal justice, and transportation.

11. Support to No-Parent Households or Kin Providers. Twenty-eight percent of the families receiving TANF in Oregon receive benefits but their parents do not. These are families in which relatives have custody of children on TANF. In these cases, case managers working with no-parent families create case plans that require children to remain in school and provide services, such as mental-health counseling, to address issues which contribute to educational and social problems.

12. Domestic Violence Coordination. Domestic violence professionals serve as resources to staff on individual cases. A multi-faceted strategy to help women who are victims of domestic violence has been developed and put in place, in partnership with local domestic violence service providers. Oregon counts domestic violence services as work requirements and willingly supports victims of domestic violence who are unable to work. Oregon has

developed specific guidelines as part of an overall effort to increase safety of children through collaboration between domestic violence services and child protective services.

IV. Final Remarks

As with all site visits, information sharing occurs between both the host and the visitors. During the visit, Minnesota staff shared their tool they use for learning disability screening upon learning that Oregon was looking into revising its screening methods. The program information presented in this report is by no means complete. For more information on Oregon's programs and initiatives, contact Mr. Bob Proctor at (503) 945-6115 or by e-mail at Bob.Proctor@state.or.us.

For general information on the Welfare Peer Technical Assistance Network, visit our web site at www.calib.com/peerta. For more specific information, contact Blake Austensen at (301) 270-0841.

Appendix A

**MINNESOTA VISIT DECEMBER 15-16, 1999
SCHEDULE**

Wednesday, December 15:

8:30 a.m. - 10:30 a.m. McKenzie Center, Eugene

- ✓ (Tentative) sit-in on initial TANF assessment with client and case manager
- ✓ Meet with case managers and management staff about case management, brokering for services, and joint case management with child protective and other agencies
- ✓ Meet with outstationed MH/A&D staff

11:00 a.m. - 2:30 p.m. Travel to Medford

(eat lunch on the way)

2:30 p.m. - 4:00 p.m. West Medford Branch AFS

- ✓ Sit-in on Family Resource Meeting with client family if time permits (scheduled for 2 - 3)
- ✓ Tour the multi-service site and hear about the joint approach to services
- ✓ Meet with two service teams, Welfare-to-Work and Beginnings; talk to A&D, employment, public health, AFS, and client advocate partners

4:00 p.m. - 7:30 p.m. Return to Eugene

Thursday, December 16:

8:00 a.m. - 9:30 a.m. Travel from Eugene to Salem

10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. South Salem Branch AFS

- ✓ Meet with staff, managers, and partners providing case management and services for employed clients

12:00 p.m.-1:00 p.m. Lunch

1:30 p.m. - 2:30 p.m. Parkway Building Up With Wages Program

- ✓ Tour on-site job retention and career advancement services site

3:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m. AFS State Office

- ✓ Meet with program staff for review of the following: case management concept; next steps for emphasis on career counseling; services for domestic violence; mental health, and substance abuse issues; and other questions and answers

JOBS FOR OREGON'S FUTURE

"Oregon Option" Welfare Reform Waivers

On March 28, 1996, Oregon received waivers from the Federal government allowing it to make sweeping changes in its welfare system. The state was allowed to continue to operate under those waivers even after Federal welfare reform changes became effective in August 1996.

With the Oregon option welfare reform waivers, Oregon completed a comprehensive shift in welfare philosophy, by requiring all welfare recipients to work toward self-sufficiency.

Oregon is a national leader in welfare reform. Its innovative JOBS employment training program is producing outstanding results, with more than 1,800 participants finding work each month.

Since March 1994, Oregon's welfare caseload has dropped by 50%, primarily due to strategies that move people quickly into employment. Oregon has not controlled its caseload by punitively restricting access to benefits through tightening its eligibility requirements.

The Oregon Option is unique in the nation and reinforces the state's commitment to helping families avoid welfare, leave welfare as soon as possible, and remain off public assistance.

Under the Oregon Option waivers:

- Oregon is able to require everyone on welfare to participate in activities leading to employment and self-sufficiency,
- There are stronger penalties for welfare recipients who do not cooperate in self-sufficiency activities, and
- Teen parents can be required to live in a safe, supervised setting.

(see reverse for specific provisions of the waivers)

What is the "Oregon Option?" *The Oregon Option is a 1994 agreement with the Federal government that releases the state from many counterproductive Federal Regulations and oversight processes. In exchange, Oregon made a commitment to accomplish specific results in areas such as the number of people placed in employment and the number of children immunized.*

Main Elements of the “Oregon Option”

Welfare Reform Waivers

JOBS Plus: The state’s JOBS Plus pilot program, which previously operated in six counties, was expanded statewide. JOBS Plus is a public-private partnership in which welfare clients are placed in six-month, on-the-job training positions in local businesses. JOBS Plus participants gain valuable work experience that helps them find unsubsidized employment.

Full Participation in JOBS: Adults who come onto welfare are required to participate in the JOBS Program unless there is a good reason to exempt them. Mothers are required to participate full-time in JOBS as soon as their youngest child is three months old. Requiring participation at an earlier time reduces the chance that a client will become dependent on public assistance.

Penalties for Non-Cooperation: “Sanctions: for clients who do not cooperate with the JOBS Program become progressively more strict as the non-cooperation continues. After four months of not cooperating with JOBS, the family could lose its entire cash grant. Cash benefits resume as soon as the client begins to cooperate. This reinforces a welfare client’s responsibility to make continuous progress toward self-sufficiency.

Teen Living Situations: The state can require that teen parents on welfare live in a supervised, safe place. The determination of the best living situation is made by the teen and caseworker together. The aim is to help guide teens into stable settings where they can focus on completing their education and moving toward employment.

Also under the waivers, families on welfare can accumulate a larger amount of resources to aid in their transition to employment.

Adult & Family Services Division
November 1997

The AFS Perspective on

Reinventing Food Stamps

June 1999

Prepared by Oregon Adult & Family Services for its staff and partners

The Food Stamp Program Improves Nutrition by giving people limited benefits with which to purchase food. In addition to that, Oregon would like to improve nutrition by giving people the ability to earn enough to feed themselves and their families without help from public assistance. To do this, changes are needed in the Food Stamp program.

Oregon is not alone in wanting to “reinvent” Food Stamps. As more people across the country leave welfare for work, most states are recognizing the need for change. And this is an opportune time for experimentation: Congress will reauthorize the Food Stamp Program in 2002, and the results of new strategies would be a valuable part of those deliberations.

Many of You Are Familiar with the Problems in the Current Program. The eligibility process is time consuming and out of alignment with work focus. (For example, the limits on vehicle values are so low that clients who have a reliable car often can’t qualify for benefits.)

The Food Stamp Program does not emphasize self-sufficiency. We cannot provide on-time or short-term benefits to enable clients to take or keep a job. Work-preparation activities and services to address barriers are very limited. Federal regulations make the program unfriendly to employed clients: the ongoing eligibility requirements are a burden on working people; the program does not address problems that jeopardize continued employment; and it does not help people advance to better-paying jobs.

How is Oregon Working to Bring About Changes? On the national level, we are a key participant in efforts to gain the ability to experiment with the program and then to affect its redesign.

On the local level, last year we introduced a concept for a “demonstration project” that allows us to operate the Food Stamp Program in a manner consistent with our self-sufficiency strategy. Such a demonstration project would ultimately have to be approved by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA).

The key to concept is negotiating a “performance contract” with USDA that would be renewed each year. That is the kind of agreement we used as we reinvented Oregon’s welfare program in the 1990s.

What Changes Would We like to See in a Demonstration Project? Though we do not have specifics, there are some basic changes we feel that we need:

- Simplification of time-consuming eligibility processes (this is a necessity if we are to enhance case management services),
- Changes in the eligibility requirements that harm the employed client,
- An assessment process that more fully considers the needs of the entire family,
- The ability to provide case-management services to unemployed and employed clients,
- A mix of services, designed to help clients move toward greater self-sufficiency, which are planned and delivered in collaboration with community partners,
- The ability to make support-service payments to address individual client needs,
- Changes in the quality-control process to focus more on positive outcomes for clients.

Such changes would mean modifications in the work we do with Food Stamp clients. Instead of adding new duties to the existing time-consuming eligibility process, we will simplify those processes, making it possible to redirect staff time into the self-sufficiency work described above.

In moving to a new way of serving Food Stamp clients, we want to start with a limited number of clients, as we did with welfare. The focus would be on clients who are mandatory for the current Food Stamp work requirements and those who volunteer.

What About Funding for the Demonstration Project? In the first year of operation, we would request the same percentage of total Federal Food Stamp expenditures that we received during one recent year. After that, we would request a stable percentage of the total Federal Food-Stamp budget, with upward adjustments for any increases in our eligible population.

Our proposal is NOT a block-grant. Under a block-grant method of funding, the state receives a specific amount of money that does not change even if the caseload increases.

Building Consensus on Improvements: Since last year, AFS has been working with food banks, hunger organizations, advocates, clients, and our own staff to gather input on needed improvements. This public-input process will continue, at a minimum, into the early summer. In addition, we will have direct conversations with our staff during branch and district visits.

When Can We Expect to See Changes? This is difficult to answer. At present, we are doing what we can to simplify the parts of the program over which we have control, such as extending office hours and increasing public awareness of the program. But many of the things we would most like to change require permission from the Federal government. Thus, it is necessary to continue working toward approval of a demonstration project.

Executive Summary

Helping People Find and Keep Jobs.

- ❑ AFS and its partners are helping over 1,500 people find work each month.
- ❑ More than 75% of the people AFS and its partners have helped find employment have entered full-time jobs.
- ❑ Since the creation in 1994, of the JOBS Plus program, 12,357 clients have held JOBS Plus positions.
- ❑ 93% of the people who leave TANF for employment are off welfare 18 months after their grant closes due to employment.
- ❑ During the quarter ending June 1999, the average wage for full-time job placements was \$7.46 an hour. Of these placements, 28% paid \$8.00 or more per hour.

Family Stability and Access to Services.

- ❑ AFS is involved in many new initiatives around the state. These include innovative efforts such as domestic violence intervention, the North Valley Processing Unit, and Working on Work (WOW).
- ❑ 94% of TANF teen parents have obtained the equivalent of a high school diploma or are in school.

Preventing the Need for Public Assistance in Future Generations.

- ❑ This quarter the number of families on TANF was 5.4 per 1,000 Oregonians.
- ❑ 88 cents of every dollar spent by AFS is for program benefits and eight cents is for program delivery. The remaining four cents is spent on administration.
- ❑ Over 99% of all TANF eligibility decisions are made within required limits.

To Assist Families in Obtaining Child Support Payments.

- ❑ \$73 million was collected in Child Support for TANF and Non-TANF clients for the quarter ending June 1999. This is a \$17 million increase over the second quarter collections for 1996.
- ❑ Preliminary figures indicate that 87% of all Oregon children born to unwed mothers had their paternity established during the 1997-98 fiscal year.

Executive Summary - continued

To Work in Partnership with the Community.

- ❑ ERDC childcare payments are being made for an average of 2,944 children each month during the 1998-99 fiscal year.
- ❑ Approximately 17,000 applications are received and processed by the Oregon Health Plan branch each month. Processing time for applications with unborn children averages 24 hours.
- ❑ The Child Health Insurance Plan (CHIP) program was implemented on July 1, 1998. This program expands health care coverage for needy children by increasing the income limits for Oregonians, under age 19, to 170% of the Federal Poverty Level.

To Provide Staff with Training and Other Supports They Need to Do Their Jobs Accurately and Effectively.

- ❑ AFS actively promotes diversity efforts throughout the agency with the goal of acknowledging and respecting differences among staff, partners, and clients.
- ❑ AFS is committed to having a highly trained workforce. The training sessions cover a wide range of topic areas. These courses are offered to employees of AFS, staff from other state agencies, and community partners.

Appendix F

Family Self-Sufficiency Scale

Client Name: _____ Rating: Pre-Progress Post Follow-up Date: _____
 Rater (Name/Role): _____

Circle most descriptive rating words in each area. Use N/R to indicate unable to rate. See separate two-page rating definitions guide if needed.

Self-Sufficiency Area	Self-Sufficiency Continuum and Ratings				
Area	0	1	2	3	4
Program Participation	Refusing Resisting	Minimal/ Passive	Some Involvement	Moderate Involvement	Regular/ Active
Child Care	None	Friend/Relative Unstable	Non-Certified Stable	Certified Stable	Stable with Backup
Housing	Homeless	Unstable/ Unsafe	Friend/Family Residential Program	Substandard Rental	Adequate Rental/Own Home
Employment	No/Poor Work History or Job Search	Employment Training/Job Search	SWE/VWI JOBS Plus	Part Time/Seasonal Temp	Full time
Partner Relationship	Current Domestic Violence/Stocking	Recent DV Harassment	Big Conflict/Issues Recent Sep/Divorce	Adjusting/Single	Healthy Relationship or Self-Sufficient Single
Parent/Child Relationship	Founded Case Abuse/Neglect	Issues of Abuse/Neglect Poor Parent/Child Relationship	Need Parent/Child Relationship Improvement	Adequate Parent/Child Interaction	Healthy Parent/Child Relationship
Parent Education/ Literacy	HS Drop Out/ Low Literacy	Educational/ Literacy Assessment Completed	ABE/GED/ESL Literacy Program	Finished Basic Ed Functional Literacy	Career Training/College
Youth Risk/Resiliency	Severe Risk A&D Deling/Drop Out	High Risk Multiple Problems	Moderate Risk Some Issues	Low Risk Few Issues	Successful Youth Development
School Attendance	Dropped Out Not Enrolled	Frequent Absences (without good cause)	Sporadic Attendance	Moderate Absences	Regular Attendance
Family Health	Emergent Care Only Serious Medical Prob	Neglect of Care No Health Provider	Identified Medical Provider	Periodic Health Care	Regular/ Preventive Care
Substance Abuse	Suspected/Denial No Treatment	Admitted/ Confirmed No Treatment	Screened/Started TX Little Progress	In Treatment Making Progress	Ongoing Recovery Functional
Mental Health	Severe or Chronic in Crisis – No TX	Assessed Needed TX Refused	Assessed/Started TX	In Treatment Making Progress	Ongoing Recovery Functional
Community Involvement	None/Unhealthy Community Conflicts	Minimal Some Previous	Occasional/Uses Community Resources	Involved in 1+ Community Activities	Regular Volunteers
Level of Public Assistance	TANF/FS/Day Care Med	FS/OHP/ERD C Transitional	OHP/ERDC	Off Public Assistance	Off Public Assistance 6 Months
Family Income	Unable to Meet Basic Needs	Meet Basic Needs Debt/Unpaid Bills	Able to Meet Basic Needs/Timely Debt Payment	Able to Meet Basic Needs/Some Discretionary Income	Able to Pay Bills with Some Discretionary Income/Savings
Criminal Justice	In Jail	Supervised Probation	Unsupervised Probation	Finished Probation	No Recidism for 6 Months
Transportation	No Vehicle and Suspended License	No Vehicle Has License	Unreliable Car No Insurance	Vehicle OK Has License	License/Insurance Reliable Vehicle

Pre-Test Date: _____
 Post-Test Date: _____

*Indicate Pre- or Post-Test by checking the top box for Pre- and the bottom box for Post.

Classification: JOB COACH/ADVOCATE

General Statement of Duties

Job Coach/Advocates are para-professional staff who provide direct services such as barrier resolution, like skills training, and job coaching to Job Council program participants.

Distinguishing Features of the Classification

Employees in this classification will assist employment counselors in implementing employment plans. Job Coach/Advocates often work with individuals who have significant barriers to self-sufficiency. They may assist the employment counselor in providing self-sufficiency planning, plan implementation, life skills training, barrier removal, work site monitoring, client supervision, retention services, and other related services. Coach/Advocates must be self-motivated, able to work both independently and as a team member, and demonstrate strong interpersonal communication skills

Essential Functions

The essential and other job functions required of assignments within this classification are listed below. However, specific job duties may vary considerably between different assignments. Where a specific job assignment within the classification requires essential functions or specific skills or qualifications not included in the classification description, these will be described on the job posting or job assignment description.

1. Barrier Removal – Under the direction of an Employment Counselor, work with Job Council participants in an effort to remove/resolve barriers to self-sufficiency, (e.g., fulfillment of court mandated community service hours, reinstatement of driving privileges, securing of safe affordable housing and child care, access to physical/mental health and drug and alcohol services).
2. Work Site Coaching – Spending the majority of their time working directly with clients and employers at employment counselor-developed worksites. Coach/Advocates will monitor work experience sites to ensure that Job Council participants are progressing towards their training objectives and those employers’ needs are being met.
3. Provide appropriate on-going support and assistance to program participants.
4. Maintain up-to-date written and/or computer records of clients’ activities and performance.

5. Monitor client progress and recommend strategies to the assigned employment counselor(s).
6. Transport clients to and from activities, and on occasion, make home visits.
7. Establish and maintain effective working relationships with program participants, Job Council staff, business clients, representatives of other agencies, and the public.
8. Coach/Advocate may be assigned to work physically along side their clients for extended periods of time to provide role modeling, oversight and job skills training.

Other Functions

1. May provide back-up support for other staff.
 2. With oversight from an Employment Counselor, will facilitate communication skill-building discussion groups with program participants.
 3. Provide other para-professional services consistent with this level of classification.
-

Work Environment

Work is generally performed in the community. Depending upon the work assignment, some office work may be required. Work includes stressful interactions with clients who may have significant barriers to self-sufficiency, and who may be aggressive, hostile and/or disruptive. Besides providing direct supervision, Coach/Advocates may also be required to perform physical job duties along-side participants at various worksites in the community to provide behavior modeling.

Physical Requirements

Job Coach/Advocates must be able to perform the essential functions of the classification and job assignment with or without reasonable accommodations.

Desirable Qualifications

Knowledge of: interpersonal communication skills; computer applications, components of a successful work ethic; motivation through positive reinforcement; learning styles; English composition, grammar, punctuation usage.

Demonstrated ability to: motivate the hard-to-employ; maintain case notes; facilitate client discussion groups; provide client support; gain clients' trust; exercise independent judgment; work under stressful conditions; generate written and verbal reports regarding client and program activities; work harmoniously and effectively as a team member; and with clients, work-site employers, other TJC employees, staff of partner agencies, and the public.

Experience and training:

1. Graduation from an accredited two-year college with major course work in the social science field and one year's experience in social service, or
2. Any equivalent combination of experience and training/education which provides the knowledge, skills and ability to perform the essential functions of the classification.

Some assignments in this classification may require the ability to travel, mostly within the service area. If driving personal or Job Council vehicle on Job Council business, must have valid Oregon driver's license and an acceptable driving record.

Compensation

Wage range 11. Benefits are as described in the Job Council's Personnel Policies.