

Together,
we're making
our families
stronger.



Temporary Assistance for Needy Families
Arkansas Department of Workforce Services

TANF eNews

December 8, 2014

An Electronic Newsletter from the Arkansas Department of Workforce Services

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ATTOP Update-Program: Training and Development

Meet You at the TOP!

The DWS transition to receive Eligibility Determination is in full swing, and many of you are helping by making suggestions, testing, and providing feedback. Thank you for that! Those of us who are planning and developing the tools, procedures, and related infrastructure needed to implement the revised TANF program effectively are working hard to

ensure that all of you, the people of DWS-TANF, are prepared and ready to manage the revised program well. This requires a strong training program, and we are planning that now.

For field operations, each of the following roles will have specific training that includes procedures, tools (including the new IT system), program topics, and related policy:

- Administrative Support
- Case workers
- Compliance officers
- Intake workers
- Managers
- Program Area Coordinators (PAC)
- Supervisors

Clearly, we've focused on field operations so far. That does not mean that we have no specific role training planned for Central Office and Central Processing Unit (CPU) personnel. It is not yet assessed as thoroughly as that for field operations.

In addition, we are developing a series of developmental training courses that can benefit our clients as well as ourselves. These courses are provided in addition to role training. In particular, we ask that those of you who work directly with TANF clients take the time to go through all of the online developmental courses. That experience will help you to recognize opportunities to recommend this training to clients who could benefit from it. You may even learn something useful for yourself. Developmental training for clients who are willing and able to complete it will help them help themselves. It will also help you to be successful in developing self-sufficient participants.

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ATTOP Update: Training and Development Continued from page 1

Generally, developmental skills are life skills that one can apply to work, home, and community activities, school, clubs, wherever one chooses. Some may be simple and easy, requiring perhaps only awareness. Others may be more difficult and require a lifetime of learning in order to master them. These skills are important in today's world of work. The developmental courses identified in our assessments so far include the following:

- Basic math skills
- Business writing skills
- Keyboarding skills
- Soft skills—
 - Empathy and emotional intelligence quotient
 - Professionalism
 - Communication
 - Teamwork
 - Problem solving
 - Time management
 - Attitude and work ethic
 - Adaptability and flexibility
 - Self-confidence
 - Ability to learn from criticism
 - Networking
- Customer service skills
- Organizational skills
- Microsoft Office skills

Review the identified skills and roles listed above, decide what else you think you want or need, for yourself and for your clients, and send an email to the ATTOP email box (address below) to tell us what to add to or remove from this list. Our goal is to make training available for all of you to receive whatever you need to succeed in our new environment, and to help you help our clients.

Part of the goal of the transition and adoption of the digital services model is to develop a world-class workforce in Arkansas. That is, to take what we have from good to great. Of course, our clients form a part of this workforce, too, and we want to make them as successful as possible. Strong TANF workers will be in a better position to lead, assist, and support TANF clients.

All of this readiness training is designed to be fun, so start thinking about learning new skills and practicing skills you may have learned earlier but have not used recently. After all, you want to put your best self forward into the new DWS-TANF environment!

Many of you have already used the ATTOP email box to communicate your questions and thoughts about ATTOP and transition—please continue to do that by emailing to ADWS.attopinfo@arkansas.gov. Thanks!



ATTOP Update–IT Development: Help System

Meet You at the TOP!

The ATTOP team has designed a help system for your new IT system. This system follows our digital-by-default model and incorporates thoughtful feedback from DWS TANF workers in the field. It provides both page- and field-level contextual help in the form of policy, process, and procedure.

For example, each page for collecting applicant data focuses on a particular aspect of the information you must collect. When you are on the Demographics page, you can click the link for page-level help. This action opens a document that provides policy and procedural information related to demographics. When you click the link for Help related to a particular field on this page, such as SSN enumeration status, Help provides specific information related to this field. This means that while you are in the IT system, you can always link to policy and procedural information related to whatever you are working on at the moment.

As we mentioned in an earlier article, we will soon move the initial developed IT modules into User Acceptance Testing (UAT). We expect to provide testers the help document for these modules at the same time, so they can review the help system as they review the IT system itself. This way we can identify and apply or design changes needed for both systems together.

Release Notes provide information to testers to compare functionality of the new system with that of Answer. This helps testers identify what they should be able to do in the new system at this stage of its development and what information the related help document should provide. The team is also working with PACs and other TANF stakeholders to review and adjust the help information for accuracy and usefulness.

Send us your ideas about help that actually helps by emailing us at ADWS.attopinfo@arkansas.gov with your concerns, suggestions, and ideas. We look forward to hearing from you.

A man in a dark suit and tie is smiling and holding a red marker. He has just finished crossing out the word 'PROBLEM' and is in the process of writing the word 'SOLUTION' in large, red, hand-drawn letters. The background is a blurred office setting.

~~PROBLEM~~
SOLUTION

ATTOP Update–Program: Training Environment

Meet You at the TOP!

In our November issue of this newsletter, we provided an article to answer some of your questions related to process and procedures for managing Eligibility Determination with the transition of this function to DWS. Another group of questions and suggestions relates to training of the new IT system. A couple of you suggested that hands-on IT system training would be useful. We completely agree with that idea.

Included in our planning is development of a training region to be dedicated to training the IT system. This provides a safe environment where you can practice using the system without interfering with the production system where real, active cases are stored. The training region will have its own database to allow you to enter, search, delete, and change training data, tasks you do on the job. This training will be integrated with process, policy, and procedures so that when you return to your work space, you know how to use the new tools to do the work assigned to your role. See also the article in this newsletter titled ATTOP Update—IT Development: Help System for information about how IT system tasks, process, policy, and procedures are integrated in the Help system.



Role training teaches each user, by assigned role, the procedures and tasks associated to the work of that role. As noted in a related article in this issue, ATTOP Update: Training and Development, some of the roles identified for field operations to date include the following:

- Administrative Support
- Case workers
- Compliance officers
- Intake workers
- Managers
- Program Area Coordinators (PAC)
- Supervisors

CPU (Central Processing unit) and Central office roles are not yet fully defined. They will follow the same training needs assessment process as that for field operations, when the new units are integrated into currently existing ones or established as new, separate units.

Training is still in analysis phase, and there are many decisions yet to make. Weigh in with your ideas by emailing us at ADWS.attopinfo@arkansas.gov with your concerns, suggestions, and ideas. We do consider all suggestions. Yours may be just the one we need now.

From the TANF Assistant Director

By Phil Harris, Assistant Director, DWS-TANF

I would like to begin by thanking the TANF E-Newsletter committee for not only increasing the frequency of our newsletters but also for publishing quality articles with each issue. We have multiple initiatives all going on at the same time, and increasing the newsletter frequency is helping us better share the best and most accurate information we have on all of these matters. If you have any recommendations or topics you would like us to cover, please drop us an email and the team will be glad to consider your suggestions.

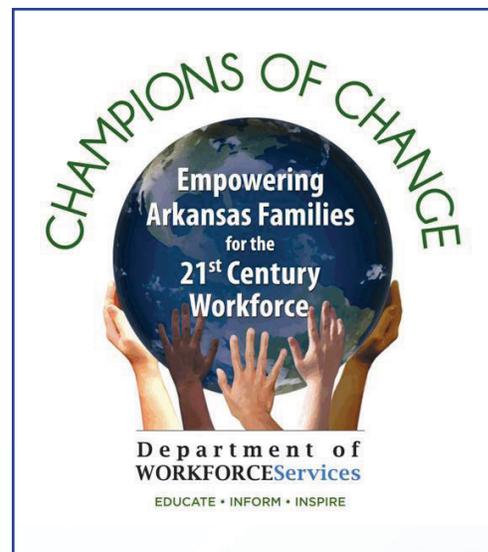
Doing the TANF program transition with IT modernization in itself raises a lot of questions, concerns, and rumors. If there is one thing I can do to help you enjoy the holiday season without stressing on the possible impact on your 2015 work life, it is to not overload you with a tsunami of information, but to provide you clear, direct, and relevant information, coming directly from me. Using our ATTOP email is another way for you to get clarity on any questions you may have.

You all must have already heard about the upcoming Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) legislation, but maybe you are not sure about how it directly or indirectly impacts us. What does it mean to us at the operational and programmatic level when the legislation says that TANF will be a mandatory partner? Is this an additional change and workload for us to bear, and is this something we need to do along with eligibility and learning the new IT system?

I will try to put all these projects in context. Our ATTOP initiative began as bringing TEA eligibility from DHS over to DWS, and we thought that would ease a lot of cross-agency co-ordination challenges. But then, in the spirit of going from Good to Great, we said that we would use this transition instead to optimize the strong workforce development services offered through the TANF program. The transition is not just about bringing the TANF program over to DWS, but rather to lead the effort to offer the citizens of Arkansas a one-stop-shop experience for all their workforce development needs. We did this not because the legislation mandated that TANF be transformed, but because we understand the purpose of TANF and how it fits in with DWS, Arkansas' premier workforce provider. We took the lead in laying the building blocks for an IT system—not based just on the needs of TEA, but based on a reusable, extendable digital services model.

I want us to have an optimized policy and procedures manual that encourages our TANF applicants not just to come and receive better service with our program, but to go beyond it—to partner with WIA, Employment Services (ES), Career Readiness Certificate (CRC), and all the other workforce development programs and tools we already have in the agency. Purpose is realized not because the legislation mandates it, but because we believe in it. Legislation in this case, the Workforce Innovation & Opportunity Act (WIOA), is only fast tracking us to co-operate and operate with the participant needs in mind, and in the process, all the different workforce programs end up becoming transparent to our participants.

I have already started talking with Director Williams, AD Cindy Varner, and other senior managers on how, as a mandatory partner, TANF can help with the implementation of WIOA. I strongly believe that one of the biggest fears of change other than attitude is the “unknown” factor. I am working with a very talented communication and training team to ensure that our staff members have all the necessary resources to be successful and to manage change. I want to develop our team and workforce so they will be better positioned to help our participants. In the coming issues, I will start sharing with you how ATTOP and TANF align with WIOA in more detail, and how we plan to roll out change incrementally. Keep embracing the change!!



December 08, Trivia Questions

The TANF-related trivia questions listed below replace our puzzle in this issue. Answer those that you already know, and research to find the answers to the others. Then email your answers to the ATTOP e-mailbox, ADWS.attopinfo@arkansas.gov.

1. Use a list of numbers 1 – 7 and write your solution for each question by the appropriate number
2. Add your signature
3. Click Send to email it

The correct answers to these trivia questions, along with the names of the first three solvers, will be published in the December 17 newsletter.

Questions

1. What does TANF stand for?
 - A. Transitional Assistance for Needy Families
 - B. Temporary Assistance for Needy Families
 - C. Temporary Assistance for Necessities in Families
 - D. Transitional Aid for Native Families
2. The Social Security Act is the federal legislation enacted in 1935 designed to:
 - A. Meet the economic needs of older people, dependent survivors, people with disabilities, and needy families
 - B. Meet the economic needs of employers suffering under the Great Depression
 - C. Meet the economic needs of government employees, railroad workers, and the self-employed
 - D. None of the above
3. The Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) program enacted by the Social Security Act of 1935 was originally designed to support:
 - A. Families living in rural areas where no jobs existed
 - B. Children of families in which one parent was absent, deceased, unemployed, or disabled
 - C. Parents who were unemployed due to the Great Depression
 - D. None of the above
4. Which DWS-administered programs were originally enacted under the Social Security Act of 1935?
 - A. TANF and TAA
 - B. TANF and UI
 - C. TANF and WIA
 - D. TANF and ES
5. In 1996, the “welfare” program was replaced under PRWORA. What does PRWORA stand for:
 - A. The Personal Responsibility and Work Only Reconciliation Act
 - B. The Personal Responsible and Work Act
 - C. The Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act
 - D. The Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Responsibility Act
6. Which of the following towns DOES NOT have a DWS local or satellite office?
 - A. Fayetteville
 - B. Hope
 - C. Wynne
 - D. Monticello
7. Which of the following is DWS’ core values?
 - A. Accountability, Discipline, Agility, Passion, Teamwork
 - B. Accountable, Discipline, Agility, Perseverance, Teamwork
 - C. Accuracy, Discipline, Aptitude, Passion, Tact
 - D. Accountability, Discipline, Agile, Passionate, Team-Oriented