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ABSTRACT

The Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) block grant, and the Maintenance of Effort (MOE) funds that states are required to spend in order to draw down their full TANF allocations, are potential funding sources for youth corps. Youth corps address the goals of the new welfare law and are eligible to receive TANF funds. TANF and MOE funds can be used to meet any 1996 welfare law purposes. In order to receive TANF-funded services, recipients need not receive TANF cash assistance or be parents. TANF fund recipients need not even be living with their families. For some services, recipients do not have to be needy. Most corps want to serve some youths from families that do not receive cash assistance. Such youth may be subject to TANF work, school, living, and child support requirements and time limits. Youth and young adults receiving only non-assistance services are not subject to TANF prohibitions, requirements, and time limits. TANF funds may be allocated at the state or local level. They may be allocated directly to youth corps in a state or local budget or via a contract or interagency agreement from the welfare agency. (Contains 15 references.) (SM)

Making TANF Work for the Corps:

When and How TANF Funds Can Support Youth Corps Initiatives

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January 2000

Center for Law and Social Policy
CLASP

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: MAKING TANF WORK FOR THE CORPS

The Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) block grant, as well as the “Maintenance of Effort” (MOE) funds that states are required to spend in order to draw down their full TANF allocations, are a potential source of funding for youth corps that wish to expand their services. The existence of a large pool of unspent TANF funds (about \$7.3 billion nationally) presents an opportunity for youth corps, along with other programs for disadvantaged youth. Compared to its predecessor, Aid to Families with Dependent Children, TANF can be used to serve a wider population and to provide a greater variety of services. Youth corps address the goals of the new welfare law, and are thus eligible to receive TANF funds.

Can TANF and MOE be used to pay for youth corps activities?

Federal TANF and state MOE funds can be used to meet the any of the purposes of the 1996 welfare law. These purposes are:

1. to “provide assistance to needy families so that the children may be cared for in their homes or in the homes of relatives” (Purpose 1);
2. to “end the dependence of needy parents on government benefits by promoting job preparation, work and marriage” (Purpose 2);
3. to “prevent and reduce the incidence of out-of-wedlock pregnancies and establish annual numerical goals for preventing and reducing the incidence of these pregnancies” (Purpose 3); and
4. to “encourage the formation and maintenance of two-parent families.” (Purpose 4).

Depending on the circumstances, youth corps could be reasonably considered to meet any of the purposes of the law.

Who can receive services funded by TANF and MOE?

Federal TANF and state MOE funds can be used for a broad range of people. In order to receive TANF-funded services, a young person need not be a recipient of TANF cash assistance or a parent. In the case of TANF funds but not MOE, the recipient need not even be living with his or her family. And for some types of services, the recipient does not even have to be needy.

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How does Corps participation fit with TANF work, schooling and other requirements and prohibitions?

While TANF funds can be used for people who do not receive TANF cash assistance, most corps will want to serve some youths from families that do receive cash assistance. Such youth may be subject to TANF work, schooling, living arrangement and child support requirements and time limits. (Youth who do not receive cash assistance are not subject to these requirements, even if they do receive TANF-funded services, as described in the next paragraph.) Other than teen parents, a state must require a parent or caretaker receiving TANF cash assistance to work (as defined by the state) when he or she is deemed ready or has received assistance for 24 months—whichever comes sooner. Corps participation can potentially be used to meet this work requirement for young adults receiving TANF cash assistance and also to help states meet the federal requirement that an increasing percentage of household heads receiving TANF assistance be working. Depending on the state, Corps participation may or may not be an approved alternative for those teens who are subject to schooling requirements, which include unmarried teen parents who are not yet 18 and lack a high school degree, as well as certain youth in TANF families in most states.

If TANF funds are spent on youth corps, do the participants become subject to welfare requirements?

Youth and young adults receiving only services that are not considered “assistance” are not subject to TANF prohibitions, requirements, and time limits. HHS has defined “assistance” as “cash, payments, vouchers, and other forms of benefits designed to meet a family’s ongoing basic needs (i.e., for food, clothing, shelter, utilities, household goods, personal care items, and general incidental expenses.)” Services provided by youth corps would not generally be considered assistance and would thus not lead to the imposition of requirements or prohibitions. In addition, programs are not required by federal law to provide detailed data on the characteristics of youths receiving “non-assistance services.”

How can youth corps gain access to TANF funds?

TANF funds may be allocated at the state or local level, depending on the state. They may be allocated directly to youth corps in a state or local budget or via a contract or interagency agreement from the welfare agency. Youth corps should (1) approach their welfare agency leadership to find out how they could meet the needs of young people receiving TANF assistance and other low-income youth; (2) develop a concrete proposal for using TANF funds and (3) let the leadership of the welfare agency know how the corps can help them meet their goals.

MAKING TANF WORK FOR THE CORPS: WHEN AND HOW TANF FUNDS CAN SUPPORT YOUTH CORPS INITIATIVES

Among the resources that are available to expand programs for at-risk youth is Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), the successor to Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC). While AFDC mainly provided cash assistance to needy families, federal TANF funds can be used for a much wider variety of purposes and a larger population, not just current or former welfare recipients. Moreover, many states have not spent all their available TANF funds, with a total of about \$7.3 billion remaining unspent nationwide. If states are able to show that they can find effective ways to use the funds, Congress is less likely to cut them back when the program is re-authorized in 2002. Youth Corps address the goals of the new welfare law, and thus are eligible to receive TANF funds. This publication describes the law and regulations on TANF funding, and provides some examples of youth corps that are using TANF funds.

ALLOWABLE USES OF TANF AND MOE FUNDS

Each state receives a federal TANF block grant generally based upon its caseload in the early 1990's. In order to avoid a federal fiscal penalty, states must also spend at least 80 percent of the state funds they were spending in 1994 (or 75 percent if they meet federal work participation requirements). The funds that states spend in order to draw down their federal allocations are called Maintenance-of-Effort (MOE) funds.

TANF and MOE funds can be used for a variety of services to youth. However, there are some restrictions on the purposes and clients that can be served, as well as conditions on some expenditures. The final TANF regulations (see 64 Fed.Reg. 17720 et seq.) took effect on October 1, 1999. While the regulations clarified many issues, some areas remain unclear. In the Preamble to the regulations, HHS states that to the extent that a provision is not addressed in the regulations, a state can follow its own reasonable interpretation of the statute and will not be penalized for doing so. The various restrictions and conditions on TANF funds as they relate to youth corps are discussed below. This discussion reflects CLASP's understanding of the law and final regulations.

Can TANF and MOE be used to pay for youth corps activities?

The 1996 welfare legislation establishes different rules for federal TANF funds and for state MOE funds. It allows a state to use TANF funds in any way that the state was authorized to use the funds under AFDC and a set of related programs, unless otherwise prohibited. A state may also transfer up to 30 percent of its TANF funds to the Child Care and Development Block Grant and the Social Services Block Grant. In addition, the state can use TANF funds in any way not specifically prohibited that is reasonably calculated to accomplish the purposes of TANF [42 U.S.C §601(a)] which are:

1. to "provide assistance to needy families so that the children may be cared for in their homes or in the homes of relatives" (Purpose 1);

2. to "end the dependence of needy parents on government benefits by promoting job preparation, work and marriage" (Purpose 2);
3. to "prevent and reduce the incidence of out-of-wedlock pregnancies and establish annual numerical goals for preventing and reducing the incidence of these pregnancies" (Purpose 3); and
4. to "encourage the formation and maintenance of two-parent families." (Purpose 4).

In addition to TANF spending, the regulations require that all MOE spending must be reasonably calculated to accomplish a TANF purpose.

In a guide called *Helping Families Achieve Self-Sufficiency: A Guide on Funding Services for Children and Families Through the TANF Program* (available on the internet at <http://www.acf.dhhs.gov/programs/ofa/funds2.htm>), the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) states that "Activities, benefits, or services that are reasonably calculated to accomplish a TANF purpose are those that directly lead to (or can be expected to lead to) achievement of a TANF purpose. This language includes all activities that are obviously related to a purpose. It also includes activities whose relationship to a purpose may not be obvious, but for which there is evidence that it achieves a purpose."

Depending on the circumstances, youth corps might be supported under any of the TANF purposes because they can be seen as contributing to all of these purposes in some way. To the extent that they serve young parents, corps may help them care for their children at home (Purpose 1). Corps participation promotes job preparation and work (Purpose 2), although a state may choose to interpret this purpose as applying only to parents. Youth corps activities for young people who are not already parents could be supported under Purpose 3, the prevention and reduction of out-of-wedlock pregnancies. The evaluation of youth corps by Abt Associates (Jastrzab, et al., 1996) found that corps participation reduces out-of-wedlock births among African-American women. Moreover, in its guide, HHS says that programs that "improve the motivation, performance, and self-esteem of youth" can be funded with TANF funds because they "would be expected to reduce school dropout and teen pregnancy rates." Purpose 4 is also a potentially useful rationale for TANF funding since some scholars (see Wilson, 1987) have attributed declining marriage rates to the lack of employment opportunities for inner-city men from disadvantaged backgrounds. Programs like youth corps which provide opportunities and motivation for disadvantaged young men to continue their education and enter the labor force might make them more likely to form a stable family.

If TANF funding is spent on youth corps, do the youths become welfare recipients subject to welfare requirements?

The 1996 welfare law created a concept called "assistance." TANF funded activities can be either "assistance" or "non-assistance" and various prohibitions and requirements are imposed on people receiving TANF "assistance." In the regulations, HHS has defined "assistance" to include "cash, payments, vouchers, and other forms of benefits designed to meet a family's ongoing basic needs (i.e., for food, clothing, shelter, utilities, household goods, personal care items, and general incidental expenses)," as well as supportive services, such as child care and transportation, for people who are not employed. Families receiving only services that are not considered

“assistance” are not subject to the TANF prohibitions, requirements and time limits. Similarly, receipt of TANF-funded “non-assistance” does not make a person part of the TANF caseload for the purposes of calculating the work participation rate that a *state* must meet. Specifically excluded from the definition of assistance are services such as counseling, case management, and peer support. Payments made by a TANF agency that are contingent on community service work are considered assistance, but payments made to a third party, such as a youth corps, that in turn pays wages for community service work are not considered assistance. Thus, neither the counseling, education, nor the wages paid by youth corps would be considered “assistance,” and corps need not fear that providing services to youths not currently receiving TANF cash aid would subject them to TANF requirements. Nor would the child care and transportation assistance that corpsmembers receive from the TANF agency be counted as assistance if the state considers them to be employed.

Who can receive TANF and MOE-funded benefits and services?

Many people are under the misapprehension that TANF funds can be spent only on recipients of TANF cash assistance, but this is not the case. Expenditures which are allowable under the first and second purposes of TANF must be for members of “needy families” (Purpose 1) or for “needy parents” (Purpose 2.)¹ States have broad discretion in defining when a family is considered “needy.” Under HHS regulations, a state must impose an income limitation when defining “needy families,” and the state may choose to impose an asset test. HHS has not set an upper limit for what is an acceptable income definition of needy. Moreover, a state may create separate eligibility standards for different services, so that, for example, a family can be ineligible for cash benefits but still be eligible for other services. A number of states have set eligibility criteria for some TANF-funded services at levels above those used for cash assistance, such as 200% or 250% of the poverty level.

Furthermore, TANF funds spent on Purposes 3 and 4 do not have to be for needy families. A state does not have to determine financial eligibility for these services as long as it has other objective eligibility criteria, according to HHS guidance. However, a state may decide to limit TANF spending for these purposes to people below a certain income level. Alternatively, a state may decide to target a Purpose 3 or 4 program geographically, focusing on neighborhoods with low incomes or high concentrations of social problems.

MOE spending, in contrast to TANF, is always restricted to needy families. But as with TANF funds, the state sets the eligibility standards for determining “need.” The state may use different income eligibility standards for different benefits and services, and the income eligibility standards can be different from those used for TANF-funded benefits or services.

It is important to note that, if otherwise allowable, TANF funds can be spent on services not only for youths living with their families but also for young people living on their own, young custodial parents, and young non-custodial parents. However, those TANF expenditures that fall within the definition of assistance must always be for *families* in which a minor child is residing with a parent

¹ Expenditures under Purpose 2 must be reasonably calculated to end the dependence of needy parents on government benefits by promoting job preparation, work and marriage. It has been suggested that expenditures for children designed to prevent them from becoming needy parents could also accomplish Purpose 2, but HHS has not addressed whether it would consider expenditures for non-parents permissible under Purpose 2.

or relative (or is temporarily absent), or in which there is a pregnant woman.² A minor child for purposes of TANF is an individual who is under 18 or is under 19 and is a full-time student in a secondary school or in the equivalent level of vocational or technical training.

Somewhat different rules apply for purposes of MOE. MOE funds, whether for assistance or non-assistance, must be for needy families in which a child is residing with a parent or relative (or temporarily absent) or in which there is a pregnant woman. However, for MOE purposes, a state can use a definition of “child” that is broader than the TANF “minor child” definition. The state may select another definition applicable under state law, but must be able to articulate a rational basis for the age chosen. (See 64 Fed. Reg. page 17817.)

Table 1: When Can States Use TANF and MOE to Serve Different Groups?

Group	Can it receive TANF-funded benefits and services?	Can it receive MOE-funded benefits and services?
Needy families	Yes	Yes
Needy families not eligible for TANF assistance	Yes	Yes
Non-needy families	Can receive non-assistance benefits and services under Purposes 3 and 4	No
Custodial parents	Yes	Yes
Non-custodial parents	Can receive non-assistance; can receive assistance if counted as member of TANF family	Can receive both assistance and non-assistance if counted as member of TANF family
Minor child* living with family	Yes	Yes
Minor child* living independently	Can receive non-assistance; can receive assistance if temporarily absent from family	No, except during temporary absence from family
Youth who is not a minor child* and not living in a household with a minor child	Can receive non-assistance; can receive assistance as member of TANF family if a non-custodial parent	No, unless a non-custodial parent

*A minor child is defined by the federal welfare law for TANF purposes as an individual who is under 18 or is under 19 and is a full-time student in a secondary school or in the equivalent level of vocational or technical training. For MOE purposes, a state can use a broader definition. See discussion on page 6.

² A special set of rules applies to non-custodial parents. A state may choose to count a non-custodial parent as a member of a TANF family, and by doing so can provide to the non-custodial parent TANF-funded assistance and both assistance and services funded by MOE.

An additional set of issues arise in determining when TANF and MOE funds can be used for services and benefits to certain categories of immigrants. For more information, contact Shawn Fremstad at the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, 202-408-1080 or Dinah Wiley at the National Immigration Law Center, (202) 216-0261.

How does Corps participation fit with TANF work, schooling and other requirements and prohibitions?

While TANF funds can be used for people who do not receive TANF cash assistance, most corps will want to serve some youths from families that do receive cash assistance. Such youth may be subject to TANF work, schooling, living arrangement and child support requirements and time limits. (Youth who do not receive cash assistance are not subject to these requirements even if they do receive TANF-funded services, as described in the next paragraph.) The requirements include:

- An unmarried custodial parent who is not yet 18 years old and does not have a high school degree must attend school or an approved alternative in order to receive federally funded TANF assistance. In addition to the schooling requirement in the federal law, some states have established broader schooling requirements. According to the State Policy Documentation Project, a joint project of CLASP and the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, 40 states and the District of Columbia have established school attendance requirements for youths in TANF families who are not parents. (See the State Policy Documentation Project website, www.spdp.org.) In most cases, these requirements apply to elementary, middle and high school students but in some cases they apply only to high school students or some other subset of students. If not approved as an alternative to school, corps participation might affect TANF eligibility or benefit levels for such youth.
- An unmarried custodial parent who is not yet 18 must live in an adult-supervised setting, subject to limited exceptions. The young parent must live with a parent, legal guardian or adult relative unless such a relative is unavailable or there is a record of abuse or the likelihood of harm to the teen parent or her child. In such a case, the teen parent can live in an alternative adult-supervised living arrangement. Residential corps might meet this requirement for such teenage parents. However, most of them would probably need child care.
- A state must require a parent or caretaker receiving assistance to work (as defined by the state) when he or she is deemed ready or has received assistance for 24 months--whichever comes sooner. Corps participation may satisfy this requirement depending upon state TANF policy.
- A family receiving assistance must assign its child support rights to the state. This requirement applies to all young parents—those who head a household as well as those living within a larger TANF household. Corps participation can potentially help young men meet their child support requirements.
- A family cannot receive federally funded TANF assistance for more than 60 months. Generally, the months in which TANF is received as a minor child do not count against the 60-month limitation, unless the minor child is the head of a household or married to the head of a household. Corps participation can help young adults receiving TANF assistance find stable jobs before their benefits run out.

TANF assistance also imposes certain requirements on *states*. Most importantly, states must demonstrate that an increasing percentage of heads of households (including minors) receiving TANF assistance are participating in work activities. This required participation rate is 40% in Federal Fiscal Year 2000, and will be 45% in 2001, and 50% in 2002. Work activities include unsubsidized employment, subsidized public or private sector employment, work experience, on-the-job training, job search and job readiness assistance, community service programs, “vocational educational training,” and the provision of child care to community service participants. In addition, “job skills training directly related to employment,” “education directly related to employment,” or high school or GED classes can count toward 10 of the required hours. For household heads other than teen parents in school and single parents with children under 6, at least 30 hours per week are required. For single parents with children under 6, only 20 hours are required. A teen head of household is deemed to be engaged in work if she is maintaining satisfactory school attendance or is participating in education related to employment for the required number of hours. It is important to note that states can require more hours than the federal government requires for meeting participation rates.

Minor parents can count toward the state’s required work participation rate only if they head households, and since few of them do, their participation in employment programs will not usually help states meet the federal requirements. Nor do youths that are *not* parents count toward the required rates. However, young parents aged 18 and older do count toward the state’s required work participation rate, and corps participation is likely to fit the federal definition of work activities.

Can TANF recipients participate in postsecondary education, and can TANF funds help them do so?

Corps involved in the Corps-to-Career initiative may be interested to know that the TANF 24-month work requirement need not force a state to restrict access to post-secondary education. While an adult receiving assistance must be “engaged in work” by the time he or she has received assistance for 24 months, a state can choose to define postsecondary education, as well as other education or training programs, as work for the purpose of this requirement. Participation in postsecondary education only counts to a limited extent toward the *federal* work participation requirements, but many states are meeting these rates so easily that they can “afford to” let TANF recipients participate in postsecondary education without having them count toward these rates. Alternatively, states can allow TANF recipients to go to college while also being engaged in countable activities for the required number of hours. In addition, a state may use both federal TANF funds and state MOE funds to support participation in postsecondary education. States can use TANF or MOE funds to support such education outside of the welfare system in order to avoid requirements linked to “assistance.” A growing number of states are expanding access to postsecondary education within their TANF and MOE programs. For more information on this issue, see Greenberg, Strawn and Plimpton, 1999.

Do TANF and MOE funds trigger burdensome data requirements for programs?

Some corps may fear that TANF and MOE funds carry with them burdensome data requirements. In reality, the federal welfare law requires states to provide detailed data only on the characteristics of families receiving "assistance" as defined above, not on youth or families receiving other types of services. However, states may impose their own data requirements on programs.

What other restrictions apply to TANF and MOE funds?

A variety of other restrictions apply to TANF and MOE funds. Among those that are relevant to the corps are the following:

- A state cannot use TANF or MOE funds to construct or purchase buildings or to purchase real estate.
- States are not required to spend all of their TANF funds in the year for which they were allocated. They are allowed to let these funds accumulate in their accounts either as "rainy day funds" to be available in case of future upturns in the caseload or simply as funds that are available for other future needs. However, TANF funds carried over from prior years can be spent only on "assistance" and its related administrative costs, unless the funds were "obligated" (committed to a specific use) in the year in which they became available. This may not be too much of a constraint in many states, since states can use their carryover funds for "assistance" and their current-year funds for services and other supports. In contrast to TANF, states must meet their MOE obligations every year or face financial penalties.

What factors should corps consider in deciding whether to suggest that a state or county use TANF or MOE to fund corps programs?

The Center for Law and Social Policy (Greenberg, 1999), has published a comprehensive analysis of the differences between allowable uses of TANF and MOE and the factors that should be considered when deciding which of these funding streams are to be used. In brief, a state can use TANF but not MOE if it wants to spend money on non-needy people (for limited purposes) or on a program that was previously authorized under AFDC but is not permissible under the MOE purposes. A state can use MOE but not TANF when it wants to provide cash assistance to minor teen parents who are not in school or living in supervised settings or immigrants ineligible for federally funded TANF. In many cases, a state can use either TANF or MOE, but if TANF is used and the service falls within the definition of assistance, the recipient becomes subject to TANF requirements and prohibitions. Since youth corps do not generally provide "assistance," this is not usually a concern for them. In addition, states which have large amounts of unspent TANF funds, but have fulfilled their MOE requirements, might prefer to use TANF funds.

Summary: How could TANF or MOE be used for my program?

Youth corps can ask the following set of questions to determine whether TANF or MOE funds would be available, and desirable, to support a particular program or activity.

- Is the program an allowable expense under TANF, and if so, is it allowable for all youth or only some youth?
- Is it allowable under MOE, which is always restricted to needy families?
- Are there considerations that would affect the choice of TANF or MOE funds? These might include whether the state wants to fund services to the non-needy or people who are ineligible for federal TANF funds, and whether the state has a large pool of unspent TANF funds.
- Based on this analysis, what funding source would be best: TANF or MOE?

(Chart adapted from Greenberg and Lazere, 1999).

Who decides how TANF funds will be spent?

The process of allocating TANF funds will vary from state to state. There may be an initial proposal for spending the funds in the Governor's budget. The legislature may also become involved by modifying the governor's budget to allocate TANF funds to specific purposes. Some state welfare agencies control large amounts of TANF funds that have been allocated for assistance but not spent because of declining caseloads. The welfare agency can allocate these funds to other agencies for youth corps programs via an interagency agreement or a contract. In some states, TANF funds are distributed at the state level, while in other states some or all TANF spending decisions are devolved to the counties. Thus, a youth corps may get TANF funds through a direct allocation in the state or local budget, or via an agreement or contract from the state or local TANF agency.

GAINING ACCESS TO TANF FUNDS FOR YOUR PROGRAM

In order to gain access to TANF funds, corps should find out who controls the funds in their state or community. Then they should develop a plan for accessing TANF funds that includes meeting with TANF agency leaders, developing a realistic proposal, and letting the TANF agency know how corps can help meet its goals. Specifically, corps should take the following steps:

1. **Determine whether state or county action is needed.** Find out whether you must go to the state or local level to obtain funding for your program. In some states, TANF funds are allocated at the state level, but many states have devolved much of welfare policy and spending to the local level, to county governments or other entities such as welfare reform boards in Florida.
2. **Meet with the highest welfare department official in your state or community who is willing to meet with you.** Come prepared to show how effective your program is and how useful it would be to include it as an option. The corps that have accessed TANF funding so far have usually done so via a contract or agreement with the TANF agency. Use the meeting not only to sell your program but also to gather information about the availability of funds, the contracting process, and who the key decision-makers are. Find out if the agency will be issuing a Request for Proposals (RFP) to which you might respond. Also ask the welfare officials what parts of their population they see as relatively under-served with work activities: youth in low-income families, teen parents, or non-custodial parents. If the welfare agency does not respond positively to your overture, legislative action may be needed to enable your corps to access TANF funds.
3. **Develop a realistic proposal.** Develop a proposal that is responsive to community needs and the priorities expressed by the welfare agency. Consider whether you could achieve your goals by expanding an existing program that already has documented success and obtained the support of public officials. Target your program to the needy, but not necessarily only TANF recipients. Consider designing a TANF-funded program that reaches youth below a certain income level (such as 200 or 250 percent of poverty), not just recipients of cash assistance. This allows you to reach a larger population but ensures that the program targets low-income youth.
4. **Let the welfare agency know how youth corps can help them achieve their goals.** Point out that youth corps help out-of-school youth avoid early parenthood and future TANF dependency. Youth corps can also help states meet their TANF work participation requirements for young parents and help non-custodial parents fulfill their child support requirements. Finally, attempts have already been made in Congress to cut TANF funds or allow them to be spent for other purposes. While these attempts to raid TANF have failed so far, they will continue unless states begin spending more TANF funds. Moreover, if large amounts remain unspent, states may find it difficult to justify continuing their current TANF allocations when the program, which expires in FY 2002, is considered for re-authorization.

EXAMPLES OF YOUTH CORPS PROGRAMS WORKING WITH STATES AND COUNTIES WITH TANF FUNDS

BALTIMORE CIVIC WORKS + CITY DEPT. OF SOCIAL SERVICES

Baltimore Civic Works had a two-year contract, which has now been extended to three years, with the Baltimore City Department of Social Services to work with up to 83 TANF recipients and place at least 63 of them. The contract expires on June 30, 2000. The Civic Works program has two stages. The first stage is a one-month life skills/job readiness training program covering areas such as professionalism, conflict resolution, effective communication, resume writing, and interviewing skills, as well as the technical skills required on the job site they will be attending. The second stage is participation in one of three alternative placements:

- A YouthBuild program providing 11 months of employment at the minimum wage to convert vacant houses into transitional housing for the homeless. Participants learn home construction skills under the supervision of master carpenters and also participate in life skills and academic enhancement activities. When they complete the program, participants will be placed in construction industry jobs.
- A Youth Apprenticeship Program in which participants are hired by Civic Works as full-time employees for six months at the minimum wage to work on landscaping and other projects at public housing facilities. Participants who successfully complete the program will begin a 30-month apprenticeship with the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) and the Housing Authority of Baltimore City as maintenance mechanics, at a starting wage of \$8.00 to \$8.50 per hour.
- A Ground Maintenance Certification Program which provides six to nine months of guaranteed employment starting at \$5.92 per hour as grounds maintenance workers at one of five municipal golf courses.

The wages that participants earn count as income and thus result in reductions in their cash benefits; however, participants maintain many of their non-cash benefits such as Medicaid and receive childcare and transportation benefits as well as additional social services from the TANF agency. Civic Works receives payment based on the number of participants meeting certain benchmarks. Civic Works can earn up to \$950 per participant—20% for completion of a one-month training component, 30% for placement in an unsubsidized job, 20% for remaining in unsubsidized employment for 13 weeks after program graduation, and the final 30% for remaining in unsubsidized employment for 6 months.

Participants were originally supposed to be referred by the Baltimore City Department of Social Services, but these referrals did not materialize. As a result, Civic Works began to collect the appropriate data so that it could identify the TANF recipients among the young people it was recruiting on its own and thus gain reimbursement. Aside from the lack of referrals, there has been no major problem in serving TANF recipients. The TANF recipients who are in the program are mostly young mothers who head TANF households. They do not seem harder or easier to serve than the general population served by the program and their outcomes are quite similar.

Baltimore Civic Works developed this program in response to an RFP from the Baltimore City Department of Social Services. Dion Wright, the Corpsmember Development/YouthBuild Director at Civic Works, attributes its success in gaining access to TANF funds in part to the fact that Youth Corps filled a niche -- serving people aged 17 to 25 -- that few other programs serve. In addition, Youth Corps got in on welfare reform at the beginning, so that it was able to enroll some of the more motivated young people and was able to demonstrate enough success to justify continued funding. Contact Dion Wright, Corpsmember Development/YouthBuild Director, 410-366-8533.

WISCONSIN CONSERVATION CORPS + STATE DIVISION OF ECONOMIC SUPPORT

The **Wisconsin Conservation Corps (WCC)** had a statewide interagency agreement with the Wisconsin Division of Economic Support (DES) to serve TANF and Food Stamp recipients. According to the agreement (which expired in June 1999 but will almost certainly be renewed according to WCC staff) WCC receives a reimbursement to cover overhead for each cash assistance or food stamps recipient enrolled in the program. Under the previous agreement, WCC received between \$1,000 and \$2,000 per month. The new agreement will include a monthly cap of \$3,000. WCC served over 100 TANF and food stamp recipients under the previous contract, with about 20 participating in any given month. WCC participation is usually treated as unsubsidized employment under W-2, Wisconsin's welfare-to-work program. WCC pays participants the minimum wage for 36 hours of work plus four hours of education. This usually is enough to terminate their cash benefits, although participants usually retain non-cash benefits such as Medicaid. The low wages make it hard to recruit TANF recipients, who often cannot support a family on this amount, but WCC is having some success in selling the program to potential participants as paid training combined with the opportunity to obtain a high school equivalency diploma.

About half of those served under the previous contract have been food stamps recipients and half TANF. Almost all of the TANF recipients are young mothers. Noncustodial parents are usually served as food stamps recipients. WCC has not noticed any major differences between TANF recipients and their other clients. John Vingelen, the WCC Training Coordinator, attributes WCC's success at gaining this contract to the fact that WCC approached DES and was able to work out an agreement at the state level. For more information, contact John Vingelen, WCC Training Coordinator, 608-266-7730.

FRESNO LOCAL/CALIFORNIA CONSERVATION CORPS + WELFARE TO WORK

The **Fresno County Local Conservation Corps and the California Conservation Corps** have created a partnership that uses Welfare-to-Work funds from the U.S. Department of Labor to provide training, placement, and job retention services to non-custodial parents ages 18 to 35. The program has three phases: (1) employment with an industry-specific training component, combined with life skills education and adult basic education; (2) transition into unsubsidized employment, and (3) post-employment services. Each participant will spend a maximum of 6 months in the program. Potential participants are referred by the Family Court. While this program is funded with Welfare-to-Work rather than TANF funds, this type of program could be funded with TANF funds under Purpose 2, ending the dependence of needy parents on government benefits by promoting job preparation, work and marriage. For more information, contact Robin Young, Project Coordinator, California Conservation Corps, (559) 292-0854.

WEST VIRGINIA CCC + MULTIPLE STATE AGENCIES

The **West Virginia Citizen Conservation Corps (WVCCC)** operates the West Virginia Courtesy Patrol, which is made up of 133 former TANF recipients. The patrol, which is on duty 24 hours a day, 365 days per year, maintains 25 trucks that cruise the highways to help stranded motorists. The patrol began on November 21, 1998. Slightly over 40% of the participants are women. The participants are not all young people: they range in age from 19 to 47. There is no fixed term of stay on the patrol, although the goal is that participants will make the transition to better jobs.

The Courtesy Patrol is a partnership between WVCCC and the Department of Health and Human Resources (DHHR), the Bureau of Employment Programs, the Division of Highways, the West Virginia State Police, Southern West Virginia Community and Technical College, the Department of Education, the Department of Motor Vehicles, and the Governor's Office. DHHR and the Bureau of Employment Programs identify potential participants and refer them to WVCCC for interviews. DHHR uses TANF funds to pay for uniforms, pagers, transportation, child care, and other support services. The state police provide pre-employment training including first aid and CPR, while the Department of Education provides training in hospitality, customer service, and sexual harassment. The community college provides 3 hours per week of education at 11 different sites around the state. Corps staff have found TANF recipients to be somewhat harder to serve than other clients, requiring more nurturing and counseling. However, they have found ways to work effectively with this population, including finding mentors for most of the TANF participants.

The program is operated under a \$3.6 million contract from the Division of Highways. That money pays for the wages, trucks, gasoline, and other expenses. The Bureau of Employment Programs pays for the education and training with federal Welfare-to-Work dollars. Participants start at \$5.50 per hour, and then have the opportunity to move up to \$6.50 after the first year. They generally lose their TANF grants but keep Food Stamps and Medicaid. For more information, contact Jennifer Douglas, Director, West Virginia Courtesy Patrol, West Virginia Citizens' Conservation Corps, (304) 254-9196.

WASHINGTON SERVICE CORPS + DEPT. OF SOCIAL & HEALTH SERVICES

The **Washington Service Corps (WSC)** (in Washington State) uses TANF funds to support AmeriCorps members who provide tutoring and mentoring to 13-to17-year-olds from TANF households, including some teen parents. Recipients of these services must be struggling students from families currently receiving TANF cash assistance or have received it in the past two years.

The TANF funds support 50 AmeriCorps members statewide. Each member tutors 10 or more students. Members provide about 32 hours of service per week. They work with students both in and out of the classroom. They also work with young people who are not in a traditional school setting, including teen mothers who are not attending school. One member works with students at a juvenile detention center in Seattle. The students are referred mainly by their schools, and some referrals are made by truant officers. When they receive referrals, WSC staff work with local Department of Social and Health Services offices to verify the student's eligibility for services.

The program received \$500,000 in its first year and received an increase to \$1 million for the current program year. Eugene Suzaka, Project Manager, attributes part of the Corps' success in gaining access to TANF funds to the fact that WSC is housed in the same agency that administers TANF, the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS). When proposals were solicited for using a reservoir of unspent TANF funds, WSC sought input to determine where services were most needed. At-risk youth and teen parents, ages 13 to 17, were identified as an underserved population, so WSC designed its proposal accordingly.

WSC staff plan to expand the program for the 2000-2001 Program Year to 95 members serving in nine projects utilizing almost \$2,000,000 of federal TANF funding received by Washington State. One of these projects is slated to enroll a team of 10 members recruited from current or former (within the past two years) TANF households.

For further information, contact Eugene Sazaka, WorkFirst Project Manager, at (360) 438-4072 or e-mail him at esuzaka@esd.wa.gov.

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