Setting the Stage

Shifting Our Focus: The User Perspective

The Aim for Independence (AFI) initiative has conducted extensive research to understand the customers of the public assistance programs, including: 1) families who interact with the system; and 2) the State and County commissioners who administer it. Here is a sample of Federal, State, and user perspectives when administering and using public assistance programs.

Parents

“I’m training to be a bus driver, host, cleaner, event space helper. My hours are all over the place. By the time I get home, I still have to get my kids, clean, and make dinner. I’m tired all the time.”

“I’ve been in your office the last two weeks and you all have all told me you cannot help me and my daughters because your grants are written specifically for single mothers.”

States

“We wish we could measure Longitudinal data – what happens to families after they leave us? Are they any better off?”

“We are trying to solve complex social problems with antiquated programs that have not changed for 20 years”

Federal Programs

“How can we better coordinate across programs and use different access points?”

“The Federal government should measure reduction of poverty and family well-being. We don’t know where to go to see how we are doing.”

“Head Start is comprehensive - health, mental health, food, etc. Can we leverage lessons learned and best practices from our own program?”

“How can we change the way the Federal level perceives the customers we serve?”

Sources: 1: Parent Interviews (24 parents across 2 regions); 2: AFI-ACF Regional Listening Sessions (7 sessions held across all regions); 3: AFI Design Session (Attended by 15+ Federal Partners)
The Discover phase used field data to inform the COE design.

**DISCOVER**

**RESEARCH WITH USERS**

- **6,000+** Data Points collected
- **53** Hours of Interviews & Listening Sessions
- **55** County Survey Responses
- **7** Parent personas identified
- **3** State Personas identified

**DESIGN**

**SYNTHESIS & VALIDATION**

- **11** Key ACF Capabilities to be refined with States
- **3** Distinct Functions to be validated
- **9** Key Capabilities Identified and Tested

Numbers are an approximation to provide scope of research effort.
AFI conducted listening sessions, surveys, and individual interviews of state and county stakeholders to identify pain points, organizational priorities, and opportunities for ACF.

**Human Services Commissioner Survey**

**County Survey**
- 66 County Responses
- 15 States Represented

**State Survey**
- 55 State Responses
- 94% Response Rate

**Survey Outputs:**
- Top Challenges Administering ACF Programs
- Organizational Priorities Related to AFI
- ACF Interagency Partnership Priorities

**AFI-ACF Regional Listening Sessions**
- 8 Sessions
- 4000+ Qualitative data points gathered

**Interviews**
- 6 State Commissioners
- 2 County Reps
- 2 Program Staff
- 3 State Personas Identified

"The Federal government should measure reduction of poverty and family well-being. We don’t know where to go to see how we are doing."

"We wish we could measure Longitudinal data – what happens to families after they leave us? Are they any better off?"

"We are trying to solve complex social problems with antiquated programs that have not changed for 20 years"
Aim for Independence

Top State and County Organizational Priorities

(Scale = 1 to 100)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organizational Priority</th>
<th>State Averages (n=50)</th>
<th>County Averages (n=65)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Focusing on Outcomes &amp; Results</td>
<td>92 #1 Priority</td>
<td>79 #3 Priority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improving Family Economic &amp; Social Well-Being</td>
<td>83 #2 Priority</td>
<td>85 #1 Priority</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Outcomes & Results

Parent Outcomes

- Earnings and outcomes measures of interest included:
  - Earnings that can sustain a family and reduce dependency
  - Opportunities for career advancement
  - Job preparedness measures (skills acquisition, executive function, credentials)

- Measurements and incentives for educational attainment, including high school diploma status, post-secondary and graduate degrees, and certificates.

- Jurisdictions recommended measuring employment and earnings after families’ cases closed (at minimum 1-2 years after case closure to 5 years after case closure.)
Focusing on Outcomes & Results

Child Outcomes

- Child educational measures included Kindergarten readiness, school attendance, grade level progression, 3rd grade reading level attainment, high school diploma completion, post-secondary degree completion, other certificate completions, and employment.
- Child health outcomes included items such as access to child care, reducing pre-term births and improved child safety.
- Child outcomes included many aspects of health, educational attainment, and reactive/proactive family investments.
Outcomes and Results

Holistic and Longitudinal Outcomes

- Intergenerational poverty, the share of welfare households that received welfare as a child, and decreases in use of public assistance as adults were also deemed as relevant longitudinal outcomes to track.
- Create a self-sufficiency index (potentially standardized across agencies) that reflects state and local needs including sustainable wage earning, access to child care, health care, transportation, education, and upward financial mobility. WA, NV, and MN counties have examples that may be worth considering.
- Create family wellness (financial, educational, health, social, mental health) milestones and metrics instead of hours (of work) or arbitrary counts which are not necessarily related to exiting poverty or improving family wellness.
**Top State Challenge in Administering ACF Programs**

% Indicating the Item is a “Major Challenge”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Challenges Faced in Effectively Serving Children and Families</th>
<th>State Survey (n=50)</th>
<th>Regional Survey (n=55)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

### Variation in Federal Eligibility Requirements Across Programs

- **52%**

- **6 of 10** Regions Rated this their 1st or 2nd Highest % for a “Major Challenge”

> “If states set their own eligibility floor, we have 51 ways of defining well-being”

> The tangled up rules for systems and clients to navigate are a direct contributor of the cliff

> We need universal intake and requirements across all programs

> “Clients believe it is safer to stay parked economically than take 10 more hours of work if it means they are at risk of losing their childcare”
## Eligibility and Enrollment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Challenges</th>
<th>Proposed Solutions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Eligibility/work/age/verification requirements and definitions are not standardized across programs which cause inefficiencies and duplication of effort</td>
<td>Need a streamlined way of verifying eligibility and improved coordination of eligibility standards across programs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Create standard definitions to be used across programs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Absent a revision to eligibility rules and regulations, states need funding to build a data system that can connect across agencies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clients need to turn in paperwork multiple times a year for each agency, making it easy to relapse because the process is onerous and time consuming.</td>
<td>Need standard federal training to improve communication between agencies and consistency.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Need to create one integrated and automated customer interface and system with up-to-date data from all relevant agencies/states.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# Eligibility and Enrollment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Challenges</th>
<th>Proposed Solutions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Categorical funding does not provide flexibility and you must work very hard to piece together funds for comprehensive programs</td>
<td>Have system to screen people for multiple needs and programs at once, such as a universal intake process or master client database</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Allow funding to be used to meet actual needs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cliff Effect (Marginal Tax Rate)</td>
<td>Increase eligibility level to 200% FPL or more to prevent people from falling off when they obtain jobs/promotions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lower the co-pay ramp for child care</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Use the livable wage and fair market rent data for eligibility tied to the local area median income, like HUD. This would allow for a more regionalized approach that take local economies into account</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Eligibility and Enrollment

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Challenges</th>
<th>Proposed Solutions</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fiscal Cliff causes people to hold back in their career path</td>
<td>If rules are simplified and streamlined, agencies could better counsel clients to reduce anxieties around perceived cliff effects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Thinking creatively about how to mitigate cliff effects and incentivize families to leave the “sweet spot”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Restrictive education requirements and time requirement for TANF clients to get a job disincentivizes training/training and causes them to come right back</td>
<td>Adjust/eliminate the one-year lifetime limit on counting education as employment in TANF, as education is critical to the long-term success of clients</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Extend age requirement for being engaged and enrolled in education to 18 to prevent youth with truancy status from getting sanctioned off</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Focus on obtaining a family sustaining job, not just any job</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Challenges Administering ACF Programs

% Indicating the Item is a “Major Challenge”

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Challenges Faced in Effectively Serving Children and Families</th>
<th>State Survey (n=50)</th>
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<tr>
<td>Insufficient Collaboration Across Federal Agencies Serving Similar Populations</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>8 of 10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Regions Rated this their 1st or 2nd Highest % for a “Major Challenge”
# Recommendations for Interagency Collaboration

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Federal Collaborators</th>
<th>Issues</th>
<th>Suggestions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>HHS, USDA, DOL</td>
<td>Expensive and duplicative data systems.</td>
<td>Harmonize and centralize data systems.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Disjointed eligibility criteria for programs that serve similar/overlapping populations.</td>
<td>Better align eligibility criteria for programs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Different and sometimes conflicting outcomes.</td>
<td>Align outcomes for all three departments.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Excessive and inefficient monitoring.</td>
<td>Joint Monitoring by all three departments.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Number of States per Structure

- **TANF & SNAP**: 49 States
  - TANF & SNAP ONLY: 14 States
  - TANF & SNAP + Child Care: 7 States
  - TANF & SNAP + Child Support: 7 States
  - TANF & SNAP + Medicaid: 1 State
  - TANF & SNAP + Child Care + Child Support: 9 States
  - TANF & SNAP + Child Support + Medicaid: 2 States
  - TANF & SNAP + Child Care + Child Support + Medicaid: 3 States
  - TANF & SNAP + Child Support + Medicaid + Refugee Resettlement: 6 States
Number of States per Structure

- **TANF & SNAP + Child Support**: 25 States
- **TANF & SNAP + Child Care**: 14 States
- **TANF & SNAP + Child Support + Child Care**: 7 States
- **TANF & SNAP + Child Care + Medicaid**: 9 States
- **TANF & SNAP + Child Support + Medicaid**: 3 States
- **TANF & SNAP + Child Support + Medicaid + Refugee Resettlement**: 6 States
Number of States per Structure

**TANF & SNAP + Child Care**

- 21 States

**TANF & SNAP**

- 14 States

**TANF & SNAP + Child Care**

- 7 States

**TANF & SNAP + Child Support**

- 9 States

**TANF & SNAP + Medicaid**

- 2 States

**TANF & SNAP + Child Care + Medicaid**

- 3 States

**TANF & SNAP + Child Support + Medicaid + Refugee Resettlement**

- 6 States
Number of States per Structure

- **TANF & SNAP + Medicaid**: 14
  - TANF & SNAP + Child Support: 7
  - TANF & SNAP + Child Support + Medicaid: 1
  - TANF & SNAP + Child Care: 7
  - TANF & SNAP + Child Support + Medicaid + Refugee Resettlement: 6

- **TANF & SNAP + Child Care**: 3
  - TANF & SNAP + Child Support + Medicaid: 2
State Persona Research Overview

SYNTHESIS PROCESS

CODED NOTES FROM INTERVIEWS TO DISCOVER KEY THEMES
- Captured key details, quotes, and ideas during interviews
- Organized interview takeaways into distinct categories (i.e., what did they say, do, think, feel)

DEVELOPED KEY INSIGHT STATEMENTS
- Developed understanding of emotional and lived experiences of stakeholders
- Shaped impactful insight statements about stakeholder priorities and values

CREATED PERSONAS OF STAKEHOLDERS
- Created artifacts (personas, quotes) to depict the experiences of state commissions and eligibility workers
Customers of HHS are both families and states. AFI will grow its understanding of its state customers and distinctions among them. Personas of key state roles are available at the link below.

State Persona Artifacts

Click here to download & print state personas
OUTCOMES

Adopt cross-program longitudinal outcome measures by 2021 to understand the impact of our programs on breaking the cycle of poverty.

STATE-FEDERAL COLLABORATION

Grow human capacity across states by 2020 through state and federal collaboration.

CROSS-FEDERAL COORDINATION

Create systems and policies to support great collaboration across Federal programs.
ACF Function and Capability Outputs

Participants generated a range of desired capabilities associated with each Intent Statement. Although each group had a unique intent, capabilities coalesced around four high-level functions: thought leadership, knowledge sharing, capacity-building, and direct action.
STATE HUMAN SERVICES AGENCY RESEARCH ON HIGH VALUE CAPABILITIES
State Partner Ideation & Prototyping

Initial prototypes modeling potential **HIGH VALUE ACF CAPABILITIES** were developed to bring Design Session concepts to life.

1. **SKETCHED IDEAS**
   - Incorporated Design Session feedback into state personas
   - Ideated without regard to feasibility

2. **DEVELOPED IN-DEPTH PROTOTYPES**
   - Identified prototype elements using Design Session capability ideas
   - Developed clearer view of potential activities, resources, and notional structure
State User Testing and Validation

An iterative process is underway to address concerns and evolve COE prototypes to better fit the needs of state users.

3 USER TESTING
Tested first round of prototypes with state commissioners

4 USER VALIDATION
Validated capabilities with state commissioners

Feedback provided by state commissions informed a series of SWOT (Strength, Weakness, Opportunity, Threat) analyses and

Updated COE prototypes
TOP STATE DESIRED ACF CAPABILITIES

Providing High Value Integrated Service Delivery to the States

Three Functions - Nine Capabilities

THOUGHT LEADERSHIP

- Shape federal welfare policy and research agenda to better support and empower families, states and counties.
- Serve as a brain trust for states on existing options and levers across programs.
- Data Strategy and Outcomes.

CAPACITY BUILDING

- Aid states and counties in assessing needs and provide appropriate consultation services.
- Incubator or Accelerator Infrastructure.
- Innovation Grants.
- Coordinate Cross-Program Technical Assistance to Optimize Integration.

KNOWLEDGE SHARING

- Collaboration and Improvement Networks.
- Promising Practices Repository & Dissemination.

* See appendix for detailed definition of each Function & Capability
Providing High Value Integrated Service Delivery to the States

**Recommendation #1 - Measure Outcomes, Not Just Outputs and Throughput**

**FEDERAL LEVER:** cross-program waiver shifting toward outcomes (employment, earnings, school readiness, and work and school success).

**Recommendation #2 - Integrate Programs to Serve Families More Holistically through Streamlining Eligibility and Interagency Collaboration**

**FEDERAL LEVER:** universal eligibility and enrollment requirements across programs; federal level solutions for marginal tax rate/cliffs.

* See appendix for detailed definition of each Function & Capability
TOP STATE AND COUNTY RECOMMENDATIONS

Providing High Value Integrated Service Delivery to the States

Recommendation #3 - Prioritize People Instead of Programs

**FEDERAL LEVER:** Interagency TA to Establish Parent Leadership Councils and meaningfully engage parents in changing service delivery.

Recommendation #4 - Standardize Data Acquisition and Management.

**Federal Lever:** Large (national) data systems which address specific use cases and challenges identified by stakeholders, tailored to federal requirements and regulations, which states and partners can utilize (e.g. data clearinghouses, software packages, or database solutions).

* See appendix for detailed definition of each Function & Capability
SPOTLIGHT ON MISSISSIPPI

Gen+: Working with Action Partners

MDHS ONE System

Community Action Agency Module

Referrals

Updates

Families First

MDHS Staff

Referred Client Data

Performance Measurement

Sherry’s Story: https://youtu.be/iBcRXRSicLg
SPOTLIGHT ON MISSISSIPPI

Percent Employed After TANF Exit

- 68.1% after 1 year
- 66.8% after 3 years
- 64.1% after 5 years

Sherry’s Story: https://youtu.be/iBcRXRSicLg
SPOTLIGHT ON MISSISSIPPI

Wages After TANF Exit

Sherry’s Story: https://youtu.be/iBcRXRSicLg
SPOTLIGHT ON MICHIGAN

**Program Focus**
- Transactional and enrollment focused
- Siloed service delivery that does not solve the root problem
- Manual processes that add layers of duplication
- Program focus
- Limited supports that focus on a finite segment
- Overloaded case workers

**Person Focus**
- Holistic, proactive, and preventative approach focused on outcomes
- Government and communities collaborating to serve customers better
- Highly automated, streamlined with self-service capabilities
- Person focus
- Providing well-rounded, localized and targeted supports to maximize results
- Case workers focusing on people to improve outcomes
SPOTLIGHT ON SAN DIEGO COUNTY

SAN DIEGO COUNTY’S JOURNEY TO THE GENERATIVE MODEL IN LIVING WELL

- Beginning in 1996 with the adoption of core business principles by County government.
- Moving to the Collaborative Model in 1998 with formation of the Health and Human Services Agency.
- *Live Well San Diego* as an initiative moved first the Health and Human Services Agency and then the County to the Integrative Model culminating in adoption of *Live Well San Diego* as the County’s vision and focus for strategic alignment of its resources and recognition of 125 community partners that have adopted the *Live Well San Diego* vision to align Collective Impact efforts.
State and Local Case Studies: Putting Families and People in the Center

SPOTLIGHT ON SAN DIEGO COUNTY

ACTION FRAMEWORK

1 VISION
of a Region that is

Building Better Health
Living Safely
Thriving

4 STRATEGIC APPROACHES
Building a Better Service Delivery System
Supporting Positive Choices
Pursuing Policy & Environmental Changes
Improving the Culture Within

5 AREAS OF INFLUENCE

HEALTH

KNOWLEDGE

STANDARD OF LIVING

COMMUNITY

SOCIAL

TOP 10 LIVE WELL SAN DIEGO INDICATORS

that measure the impact of collective actions by partners and the County to achieve the vision of a region that is Building Better Health, Living Safely and Thriving.


Live Well Video: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YLYZ2Z9ugDL](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YLYZ2Z9ugDL)