Presentation at the APDU Conference

July 18, 2018
Data is everywhere in our modern world, but it is seldom harnessed to its fullest potential to improve programs and participant outcomes. Sponsored by the Administration for Children and Families, the TANF Data Innovation (TDI) project will support better analysis and integration of TANF data. TDI will fund pilots to support TANF agencies selected for operational data-driven projects.
Goals

• Spark and support analysis of TANF data and integration with other social program data to improve program administration, integrity of payments, and outcomes for low income families.
• Build such capacity at federal, state and local level by providing technical assistance and trainings that anticipate and respond to needs.
• Help mount 8 proof of concept pilots.
• Leave a legacy of easily accessible and well designed tools and other dissemination products for use by federal, state, and local staff.
How? By,

• Helping managers hone analytical mindset and building capacity to articulate key questions that data can answer.
• Creating integrated data bases and user-friendly visualizations.
• Determining target groups through predictive analytics.
• Developing caseload dynamic tools.
• Producing real-time dashboards for program performance.
• Developing products for federal reporting and payment integrity.
We will build capacity through training and technical assistance (T/TA)

The project will provide three years of **data-related training and technical assistance** to TANF agencies on how to:

- Integrate TANF data
- Ask the right questions
- Visualize data
- Understand caseloads
- Improve targeting
- Test improvements
- Derive insights
- Ease data reporting
How will the training be offered?

Training will be offered in interactive and engaging formats:

- Learning labs
- Funded pilots
- Micro-lectures
- Peer-to-peer

- Tools/templates
- Case studies
- Hands-on training
- Code notebooks
Driven by the results of a needs and readiness assessment of user capacity, TANF agencies will receive help developing and using:

- **Descriptive tools**: describing caseload characteristics, error-detection algorithms, job placement rates, expenditures per client; time to self-sufficiency, services and benefits received, etc.

- **Predictive analytics tools**: using existing data to identify risk and predict things like likelihood of successful completion of education, training, job placement, or other milestones. Tools will be developed for both agency managers (caseloads) and case managers (individual clients) and use machine learning to ensure that they improve over time.

- **Caseload dynamics tools**: managing rate of entry, length of stay, and exit (after-care or postplacement services to reduce recidivism).

- **Testing tools**: designing and testing interventions that reduce risk and increase the likelihood of successful completion.
SPECIAL FEATURES

• **TDI Pilots:** Up to 8 state/local agencies will be selected as TDI Pilots to receive resources and address real-time questions with intensive technical consultation, data use workshops, and peer-to-peer learning groups.

• **Data Use Course:** An intensive, multi-day course on data integration and advanced analytics using real-world social program data and open source, interactive coding tools. Priority registration for TDI Pilot sites.

• **TDI Learning Collaborative:** A one-stop website portal to TDI activities, including announcements of new trainings or events, links to tools and other time-saving supports, agendas and materials for annual convenings, newsletters, links to other relevant websites, special workshops, and on-demand access to all training and technical assistance provided.
But First, We Have to Understand Needs

- Numerous stakeholder discussions (local, state, federal officials, staff in other federal self sufficiency program areas, vendors, researchers).
- National web based survey.
- Topics: current policy challenges & questions, ways they currently use data, extent of data base integration, types of analyses used, kinds of support, training and TA needed.
- Goal: meet TANF agencies where they are and address topics that matter to federal, state, and local officials.
Approaching Capacity Building with Several Principles

• TTA as a progression (i.e., not a one-shot effort) and that is problem-centered with immediate practical application. What, why, how...
  – Goal = sustain and build capacity over time
• Provide TTA in bite-size pieces to adapt to current capacity of staff.
  – Goal = meet states where they are at. Realistic about bandwidth.
• Leverage participant expertise and experience
  – Goal = encourage peer-to-peer learning
• Utilize diversity of formats (e.g., videos, webinars, tools & tool kits, interactive/peer-to-peer sharing, case studies, technical consultation, latest technologies, etc.)
  – Goal = multichannel engagement
• Adapt to new developments in the field over the course of the project
  – Goal = maintain currency and relevancy
Training/Technical Assistance (TTA)  
Initial TTA Topics, Q1 2019

We will start with the following topics to support project launch in Q1/19

- Overview of TDI (and Pilot Application Process)
- Introduction to Big Data Tools
- Integrating Data (Governance and Data File Preparation)
- Understanding Caseload Dynamics
- Federal Reporting
Selection of topics TBD based on needs assessment and ongoing input from ACF and the field - some options:

- Leadership Training: Seeing the potential in data use for program improvement
- Basic statistics for human services professionals (free TANF-focused stats classes to build capacity in the field. We have material to draw on that can be adapted for TANF agencies’ needs)
- Targeting Cases – using predictive analytics
- Data Visualization & Communicating Results
- Improving Payment Integrity
- Program Performance/Improvement Metrics & Dashboards
Project timeline

- Launch T/TA and Pilot applications (Q1, 2019)
- Launch website (Q1, 2019)
- TA continues for 30 months
- Pilots overlap with TA period
- Payment integrity and capacity building work extends through 2022
Pilots

• Propose 8 state pilots; two cohorts of 4 pilots
  – Each pilot’s duration is 18 months
  – Cohort overlap for 8 months; 2\text{nd} cohort begins 6-9 mos after first cohort starts
  – Provide payments for each pilot
  – We still need to refine pilot selection criteria
Pilot TA Overview

- Pilot learning community
- In-person & virtual convenings
- Accelerated learning labs
- Intensive TA (remote/on-site)
- Specific state projects
- Pilot liaison
Pilot TA

- Pilots continue to have access to all TDILC TA
- Central is Pilot Expert Liaison for each pilot providing
  - customized TA through on-site visits, video-conferences and other electronic means;
  - assist in
    - formulating policy/data questions;
    - translating them into research questions/data needs;
    - integrating and linking data, developing technical approaches,
    - selecting & applying technical methods, and
    - writing up and presenting findings
Pilot TA (continued)

• Pilot Learning Community
  – Periodically share projects and lessons
  – Combine cohorts
• One day of annual convening dedicated to pilots
• Specialized learning laboratories reflecting pilot needs (e.g., predictive analytics, A/B testing, etc.)
• Pilots continue to have access to all TDILC TA
Payment Integrity: Goals

• Examine state practices for assessing proper TANF payments and program integrity
• Determining what states are currently doing
• Identifying how state practices could be improved in the future
Join us!

Sign up for the TDI Learning Collaborative today by emailing: info@tanfdata.org
Discussion

• Do you have any input on what the key priorities should be for this project, given the goals and objectives?
• What kinds of training do you feel would be most useful? (Content and format)