HPOG REGIONAL ROUNDTABLE PARTNERSHIP WORKSHOP

Improving Outcomes for Low-income Families through Strengthened Partnerships

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PRESENTATION OVERVIEW

1. History of partnership in workforce development programs

2. Lessoned learned about partnerships from the Work Support Strategies (WSS) Initiative

3. Comparison of WSS lessons with HPOG 1.0 lessons

4. How strengthened partnerships improve outcomes for low-income families served by workforce development programs

LOOKING BACK

The history of partnerships in workforce development programs

WELFARE REFORM AND PARTNERSHIPS

- 1996 welfare reform law (PRWORA) emphasized partnerships between state/county HHS agencies, DOL agencies, and Adult Ed programs

  - Washington State's law creating WorkFirst adopted that philosophy and took it one step further

  - Agencies include DSHS, Commerce, DEL, ESD, OFM, and SBCTC

  - Mandated regional planning component for local partners, including community organizations & contracted providers

- 1998 workforce investment overall (WIA) created stronger partnerships through statewide and local workforce investment systems (WIBs)

CASE STUDY

Lessoned learned about partnerships from the Work Support Strategies (WSS) Initiative

GOALS OF WSS?

Improve family well-being by increasing enrollment in a full package of work supports.

Help states deliver benefits more effectively and efficiently.

Share lessons learned to inform state and federal policies.

WSS GRANTEES FOCUSED ON PROGRAM INTEGRATION & STREAMLINED SERVICE DELIVERY

Programs and agencies involved included:

- Medicaid/ CHIP

- SNAP (nutrition assistance)

- Child Care Development Fund (child care subsidies)

- Others identified by the states (such as TANF and energy assistance)

THE CHALLENGES WSS ADDRESSED

- Work supports can help low-income families meet needs, improve outcomes, and stabilize work, yet many families do not receive the full package of benefits. In 2011:

    - 35% of eligible parents did not receive Medicaid/CHIP.
    - 35% of eligible working poor families did not receive SNAP.
    - Child care subsidies (capped dollars) reached about 30% of eligible families.

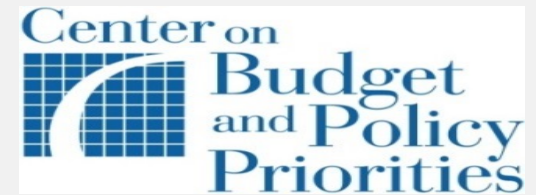- Siloed State policies, processes, systems were contributing barriers.

WSS NATIONAL TEAM

FUNDERS

- FORD FOUNDATION
- THE ANNIE E. CASEY FOUNDATION
- OPEN SOCIETY FOUNDATIONS
- THE KRESGE FOUNDATION
- JPMorgan Chase & Co.

PROJECT MANAGEMENT & EVALUATION

- CLASP policy solutions that work for low-income people
- URBAN INSTITUTE

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

- Center on Budget and Policy Priorities
- CLASP policy solutions that work for low-income people
- URBAN INSTITUTE

THE STATE GRANTEES

Colorado

Idaho

Illinois

North Carolina

South Carolina

Rhode Island

Phases I & II

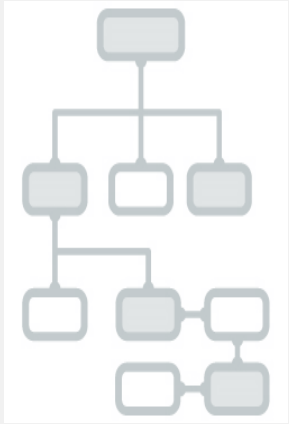Phase I only
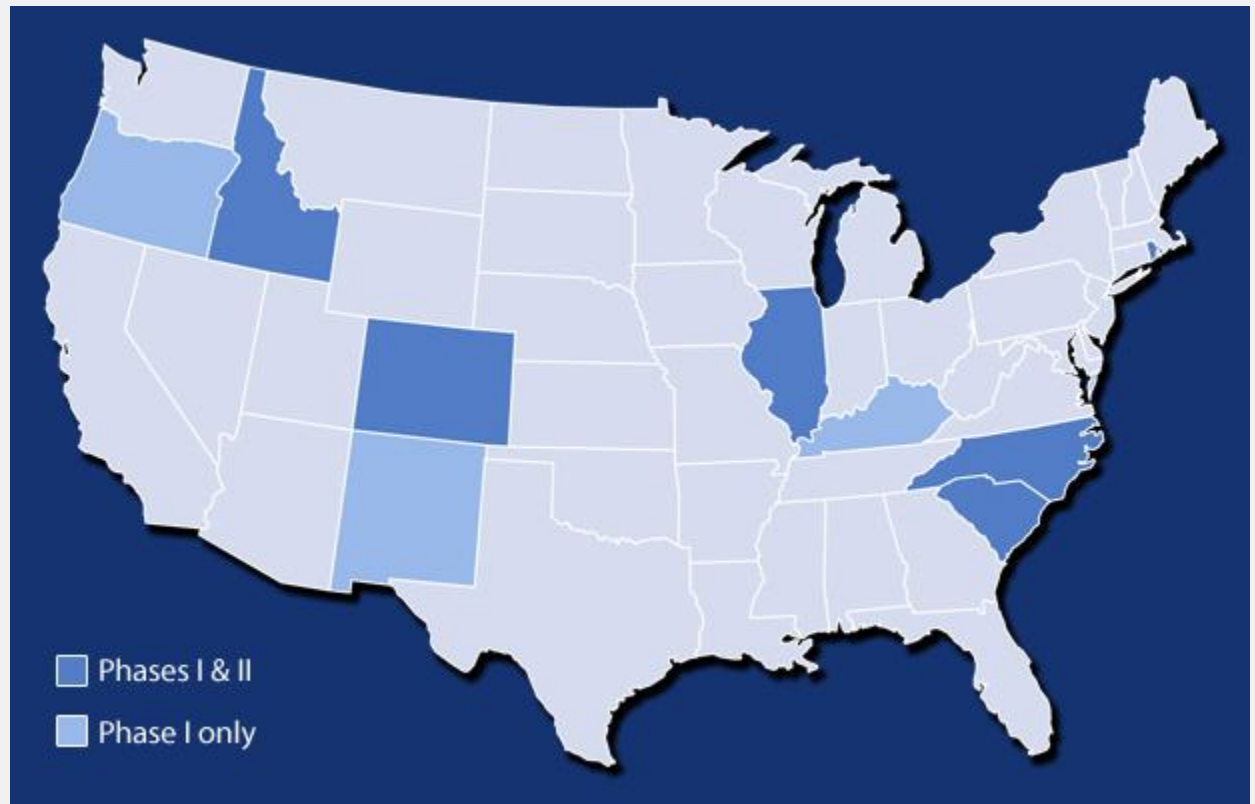
STATE GRANT ACTIVITIES

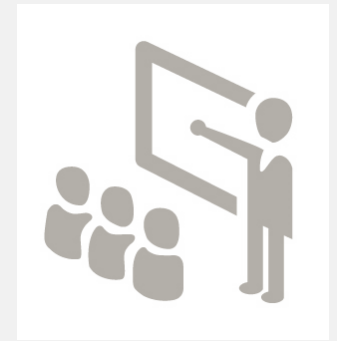Business process improvement

Policy Simplification

Technology & information systems modernization

Data and performance management

Leadership & Communications

# PLANNING YEAR EMPHASIS ON STRONGER PARTNERSHIPS

- Beginning during the one-year planning grant period, grantees focused on knitting together multi-agency and state-county teams

- WSS states started with the core goal of building strong partnerships between separate organizations

- Why?

  - Program integration requires complex, multi-pronged strategies

  - History of broken trust, years of siloed management, and habit of working separately

  - Challenged by frequent turnover, entrenched bureaucracies, limited funding, and lengthy processes to fix laws and regulations, and technology

WSS PARTNERSHIP LESSONS

OBSERVATIONS OF WSS LEADERS

FIGURE 1

Three Keys for Leading Positive Change

Shared vision

Reciprocal relationships

Mutual accountability
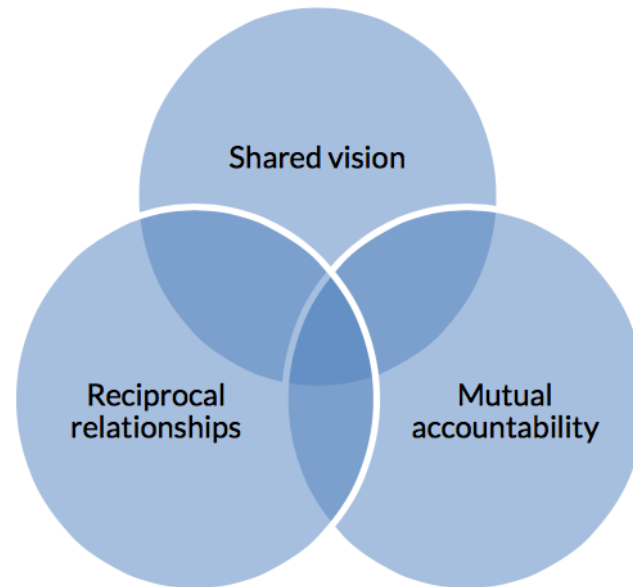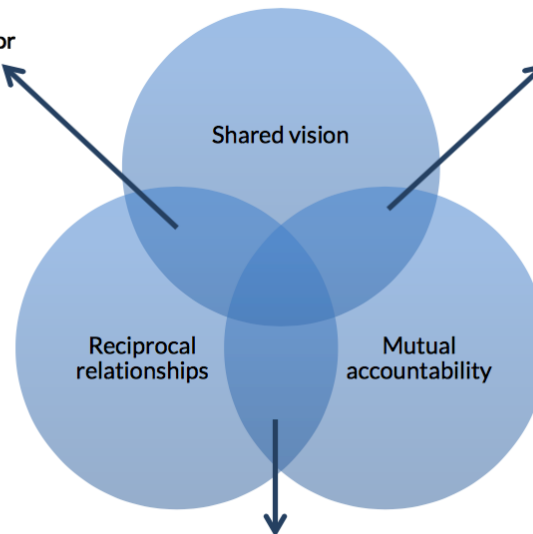
SIX TOOLS FOR PARTNERSHIPS

FIGURE 2

Six Leadership Tools for Creating Shared Vision, Reciprocal Relationships, and Mutual Accountability

Tools for creating shared vision and/or reciprocal relationships:
- Communication
- Inclusive teams

Tools for creating shared vision and/or mutual accountability:
- Framing the mission
- Mutual ownership

Shared vision

Reciprocal relationships

Mutual accountability

Tools for reciprocal relationships and/or mutual accountability:
- Transparency
- Showing results and taking risks

REGGIE BICHA, CO DHS EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

While strong partnerships and collaboration with stakeholders are critical features of any effective system, Colorado's state-supervised, county-administered human services system further accentuates the need for teamwork and communications among many agencies. The WSS initiative came to Colorado at a crucial time, and it was instrumental in helping us engage our partners in making important, systemic changes. It was an important boost to a number of separate efforts under way.

SHARED MISSION/VISION CREATES MUTUAL ACCOUNTABILITY

- Mission/vision should be **measurable**, but also framed to **inspire** those who are passionate about helping people

  - NC WSS: *Families will tell their story once to be connected to all the services for which they are eligible.*

- Leaders must regularly and effectively **communicate** the mission and vision for the initiative

  - Should be communicated in a consistent way, frequently, and through multiple channels (web chats, newsletters, site visits, emails, staff meetings)

  - Tailored to different audiences

CREATE AN ATMOSPHERE OF TRANSPARENCY AND HONESTY

- Building reciprocal relationships is key to working cooperatively, but that can't exist in the absence of trust

- Keys to building trust include:
  - Openness and transparency on the part of leaders
  - A strong physical presence (working together)
  - Commitment by all parties to keep promises
  - Good listening and a grasp of the other's policies and practices
  - Commitment to ensuring all partners have a seat at the table from Day One
  - Celebrating joint success: *CO DHS Executive Director visits county offices to celebrate wins.*
- Take risks and show results early to demonstrate concrete progress: *IDHW Lean/Agile approach to change*

USE DATA TO CREATE MUTUAL ACCOUNTABILITY

- Accountability measures (goals, budgets, individual performance plans) should be clearly connected to mission

- Monitor data to quickly identify issues and address them (fail fast, bounce back quickly).

- Leaders and staff accountable to each other; state leaders and local leaders accountable to each other

- Transparently share results with all partners and stakeholders: *CO CSTAT*

WSS LESSONS COMPARED TO HPOG 1.0

HPOG PARTNER AND STAKEHOLDER NETWORKS

- HPOG Networks included a diverse set of organizations providing a wide range of services.

- HPOG programs and networks generally strengthened their collaboration over the grant period.

- Challenges faced by grantees in HPOG 1.0 point to the kinds of partnerships in 2.0 that will need to be developed and leveraged.

IMPORTANCE OF PARTNERSHIPS IN HPOG 2.0

- Developing regional partnerships

- Engaging employers

- Cultivating meaningful and sustainable partnerships

COMPARISON OF LESSONS

- Like HPOG, WSS had mandatory partners (state SNAP, Medicaid, and child care assistance programs)

- Less likely to be contractual relationships- more informal and less hierarchical- so had to rely on influence and common goals

- More emphasis on importance of strong leadership, trust and transparency, and mutual accountability

COLORADO DHS TOOLKIT FOR MEASURING FAMILY WELL-BEING

- Developed with WSS grant funds, a practical guide for counties and CBOs to use to advance their practice to measure client outcomes rather than program outputs

- Measures provide new ways of measure client well-being holistically

- Created a common taxonomy that organization can use so they can compare apples to apples

IMPROVING OUTCOMES FOR FAMILIES

BENEFITS OF PARTNERING TO FAMILIES

- Improved working relationships between workforce development local partners will fuel systematic changes

- In WSS, improvements included:

  - Consolidating the application processes for multiple programs into one streamlined process: *Larimer County, CO; Rhode Island DHS*

  - Automatically certifying children's medical benefits from SNAP data: *SC DHHS Express Lane Eligibility for Children's Medicaid*

  - Enhanced online applications with connections to many more programs: *CO's PEAK online app; IDHW's Live Better Idaho benefits portal*

  - Reduced "churn" at reapplication due to administrative hassle factor, saving administrative costs and improving service for families

SOURCES AND MORE INFORMATION

Work Support Strategies:

Improving Business Processes for Delivering Work Supports for Low-Income Families: Findings from the Work Support Strategies Evaluation

http://www.urban.org/research/publication/improving-business-processes-delivering-work-supports-low-income-families-findings-work-support-strategies-evaluation

States' Use of Technology to Improve Delivery of Benefits: Findings from the Work Support Strategies Evaluation

http://www.urban.org/research/publication/states-use-technology-improve-delivery-benefits-findings-work-support-strategies-evaluation

Changing Policies to Streamline Access to Medicaid, SNAP, and Child Care Assistance: Findings from the Work Support Strategies Evaluation

http://www.urban.org/research/publication/changing-policies-streamline-access-medicaid-snap-and-child-care-assistance-findings-work-support-strategies-evaluation

Context on the Six Work Support Strategies States: Supplement to WSS Evaluation Publications

http://www.urban.org/research/publication/context-six-work-support-strategies-states-supplement-wss-evaluation-publications

Later this year we will release additional reports from the WSS evaluation at: http://www.urban.org/work-support-strategies.

SNAP Employment & Training Pilots:

http://www.fns.usda.gov/2014-ET-Pilots

PLANNING TO IMPROVE YOUR PARTNERSHIPS

ASSESSING THE HEALTH OF YOUR LOCAL PARTNERSHIPS

- Creating a successful healthcare professions workforce development track for TANF participants will require grantees to build healthy and cohesive partnerships with sister organizations (like the TANF agencies, healthcare employers, etc.)

  - Cohesive project teams are more effective because they overcome obstacles more quickly, not having to worry about getting partners on board at the point of crisis

  - Healthy interpersonal relationships are the key to cohesive teams- marked by an absence of politics, anxiety, and wasted energy

  - Cohesive teams have healthy disagreements and hold peers accountable for behaviors that are not conducive to team performance

5 DYSFUNCTIONS OF TEAMS

SMALL GROUP EXERCISE

Instructions: This questionnaire is a straightforward diagnostic tool to help you evaluate the effectiveness of your HPOG partnership team dynamics.

First, turn to your partner and agree on a list of partner organizations you are already working with on your HPOG grant initiative. Then, on your own use the scale below to indicate how each statement applies to your current partnerships. 3 = usually, 2 = sometimes, 1 = rarely. Then, with your partner, compare your answers and talk about the similarities and differences. Agree on an "average" assessment of your current partnership teams.

Next, using the Mutual Expectations Tool, imagine you want to develop a new, or stronger, partnership with your local TANF agency. With your partner, brainstorm a list of expectations you have for them, and what might you have to offer them. Be prepared to report out in a large group discussion.

LARGE GROUP DISCUSSION

Share an area where your group believes you have room to improve and some initial thoughts about the root cause of the problem.

WORKSHOP QUESTION

Imagine it is Spring 2020 and your HPOG grant program is being featured in the final report because of your innovative best practices around building strong partnerships.

Brainstorm Individually & Share with Small Groups:

- What happened related to your grantee partnerships in the five years between now and then?

- What key conditions were in place to make partnerships strong?

- What were the gaps that had to be filled? What creative and positive action steps were taken?

INSTITUTE OF CULTURAL AFFAIRS (ICA) TECHNOLOGY OF PARTICIPATION (ToP)

- The Technology of Participation (ToP)® teaches team members how to collaborate on projects and teaches group facilitators how to effectively lead their teams. ToP provides methods that:

  - Recognize and honor contributions of all

  - Let a group deal with more data in less time

  - Pool individual contributions into larger more informative patterns

  - Welcome diversity while minimizing polarization and conflict

  www.ica-usa.org

LARGE GROUP REFLECTION

- What is one thing that you recall about our time together today?

- What are you hopeful or excited about?

- What did you learn about the state of your local partnerships as they relate to the HPOG grant program?

- What's one thing you are committed to doing about partnerships when you return home?