



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES
Office of the Commissioner


S. Duke Storen
COMMISSIONER

June 1, 2019

MEMORANDUM

TO: The Honorable Ralph S. Northam
Governor of Virginia

Members, Virginia General Assembly

FROM: S. Duke Storen 

SUBJECT: Report on Employment for TANF Participants Program

Item 346 (K) of the 2018 Appropriation Act appropriated Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) funding to provide for competitive grants for community employment and training targeted at current and former TANF participants. Item 346 directs the Department to report on implementation by June 1 of each year.

I am pleased to submit the Department of Social Services' report on this program. If you have questions, please contact me.

SDS:kc
Attachment

Implementation of the Employment for TANF Participants Program

June 2019

Report Mandate

Item 346 (K) of the 2018 Appropriations Act

K.4. Community employment and training programs and ESOs shall report on annual program performance and outcome measures contained in the memorandum of understanding with the Department of Social Services. The department shall report on the implementation of the programs and any performance and outcome data collected through the memorandum of understanding by June 1 of each year.

Background

In 2017, the Virginia General Assembly, in Item 348 (M) of the budget bill, appropriated \$7,500,000 from the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) block grant for state fiscal year 2018. These funds were to provide funding for competitive grants for community employment and training programs designed to move current and former TANF clients and those with incomes 200% or less of the poverty level into meaningful employment with the prospect of a career path and wage growth. Of the appropriation, \$2,000,000 was set aside to provide for competitive grants to be provided by Employment Services Organizations (ESOs). Only four ESOs applied for funding. All received awards for a total of \$1,281.462.00. By the end of state fiscal year 2018, approximately one-third of the funds remained.

In 2018, the General Assembly added \$3,000,000 for the first year and \$3,000,000 for the second year from the TANF block grant to provide for a second round of grants for community employment and training programs. The new funds provide additional resources to expand and enhance evidence-based innovative types of service delivery efforts to address more fully the needs of the target population prior to their entry into work and during employment. In January 2019, twenty projects were selected for awards. They are:

- Career Support System, Inc. – The purpose of this project is to expand the implementation of a successful service delivery model that has a proven record of community-based employment supports for individuals with complex challenges to employment. The current program has been expanded to underserved areas of the State; delivers fee-for-service employment supports to low-income participants; and delivers comprehensive advocacy and support to bolster employment outcomes and expand levels of interagency coordination, collaboration, and integration of systems and services.

- City of Charlottesville- Expands its Growing Opportunities (GO) program providing training to unemployed and underemployed low-income residents of Charlottesville to facilitate employment in industries earning a living wage leading to self-sufficiency.
- City of Hampton- Resources are leveraged to minimize or remove barriers to employment. Staff support the customer's specific needs, including a career path and service plan that includes assessments and education focused on employment. A team of customer-centered, outcome focused and community-based staff utilize all systems available to operate a care approach to service delivery.
- City of Lynchburg- Funds are being used to expand the Wealth Building Program which provides a direct link between low-income job seekers and middle/high skill employers. The TechHire model consists of a job seeker being provided with wrap-around services through, for example, a case worker; identifying career aptitude and interests; and placing them in a full-time job with a partner employer.
- City of Martinsville- The goal of the program is to connect low-income participants with resources that improve employment attainment, wages, and retention. Working with numerous community based organizations with significant experience in helping low-income families, participants will be connected with services that will result in improved employment and outcomes. On the job training, support services and job skills training will be offered.
- City of Norfolk- Led by the Community Services Board (NCSB) partnering with the Norfolk Redevelopment and Housing Authority (NRHA), Norfolk Works will provide targeted services to residents of NRHA public housing who are facing behavioral health disorders resulting in employment barriers. An employment support team will be added to the project.
- City of Williamsburg- Working with a partnership between the local departments of social services in Williamsburg, James City County, and York-Poquoson; Virginia Career Works; and Thomas Nelson Community College, training/skills building needs and job retention abilities are addressed through assessment to determine what services are needed; a Customer Services Academy (CSA) relevant to all jobs; assistance with training, job placement and job retention; the acquisition of certificates for the CSA; job search support and access to adult education and special education support, as needed.
- Danville Community College- The purpose of the program is to provide participants with enhanced workplace essential skills with an emphasis on a career pathway leading to a living wage. Low-income individuals are provided high quality workforce credentials and other services and activities to stabilize the individual and enable the person to complete for higher wages and benefits.
- Louise W. Eggleston Center- Funding supports the Collaborative Community Connections (C3) program in the city of Portsmouth. This program provides homeless individuals with support services to obtain and maintain employment. Help is offered

with applications for employment, preparation for interviews, and elimination of barriers to employment. Resources and soft skills training are offered.

- Job Assistance Center, Inc. - Working with local Department of Social Services on the Middle Peninsula and Northern Neck, services are offered to prepare participants for entry into employment with the prospect of maintaining employment that can lead to a career path. Comprehensive assessments, work readiness and life skills training, occupational training and career advancement, job placement and enhanced job retention services are available to eligible clients.
- Literary Council of Northern Virginia (LCNV) - Through its Destination Workforce Program, the LCNV work with participants in Fairfax, Arlington, Alexandria, and Falls Church to obtain English language literacy and job skills to enter or advance in the workplace. Targeted, intensive, and customized workforce readiness instruction is offered to help participants get on a fast track to employment.
- Melwood Horticultural Training Center, Inc. - In cooperation with the Virginia Department of Aging and Rehabilitative Services (DARS), local social services agencies and others, this project provides employment services to Prince William County's eligible participants with disabilities. The program replicates one offered in Arlington and Alexandria to help screen, identify and provide wrap-around supports to persons of differing abilities. Intensive case management/barrier resolution; employment readiness/life skills training/positive self-esteem development; job placement/follow-up; educational/vocational skills training opportunities; SSI/SSDI application support; and crisis intervention are included.
- MVLE Inc. - Through MVLE Rise Services, three potential tracks have been developed for use in Loudoun County. Participant tracks are determined on information gathered during outreach, intake, screening or assessment. Employment and Training is offered to those job ready, and those requiring vocational/career assessment and/or training services. Medical Case Management is for those requiring assessment and referral to medical services prior to, or instead of, employment. Benefits Planning and SSI Application Support are for those requiring help with SSI/SSDI applications.
- Newport News- Through the Brooks Crossing Innovation and Opportunity Center (BCIOC) flexible and customized education and training services, appropriate assessment, and wrap-around support services will be offered, as needed. Emphasis is placed on obtaining credentials, higher education certificates, and/or degrees that will lead to gainful employment.
- Northern Virginia Family Services- Provides transportation assistance through dependable, road-ready vehicles. Transportation is an essential commodity for families to obtain and maintain employment. Vehicles for Change will manage the acquisition and maintenance, delivery and repair warranty of vehicles. Northern Virginia Family Services will screen prospective recipients of a vehicle. The award will be used to pay the difference in the cost of the vehicles and what the family is asked to pay.

- NW Works, Inc. - NW Works will provide person-centered, intense case management and employment support to address the unemployment needs in Northern Shenandoah Valley. Referrals will be made by partner agencies and these agencies will assist in providing wrap-around services
- Service Source, Inc.- With its partners, Service Source will provide situational assessments; soft-skills development; job skills training; job analysis; job placement; employment outreach, job development, and expanding access to better jobs; job coaching; internships, practicums, work-studies, and apprenticeships; job follow-up; and job follow along.
- SkillSource Group, Inc. - Funding is utilized for employment and training services for two targeted populations in Fairfax and Prince William Counties. Adult jobseekers with a disability and returning citizens are being targeted. Services include career and diagnostic assessments, soft skills training, vocational/educational skills training; subsidized and unsubsidized work experience, job development, placement and retention services.
- The Choice Group- Training, placement and post-employment follow-up services to support greater employment retention will be provided. The Choice Group works with any eligible participant; however, as the largest Department of Aging and Rehabilitative Services (DARS) vendor of Supported Employment services, they support individuals with the most significant disabilities and help them find competitive employment.
- Worksource Enterprises- Project continues and expands the successful joint efforts in working with low-income participants with a particular emphasis on employment leading to wage growth and career paths. Partners include the local departments of social service and DARS.

As these projects did not begin until early 2019, the first quarterly reports are not due until May 2019; therefore, these new projects are not included in the performance measures below.

Implementation of the 2018 Projects

As of December 31, 2018, at the end of the 6th quarter, all projects were fully staffed and operational. Those with experience in operating these types of grants continue to outpace those with little or no experience. However, all have increased participation and success stories are common.

The following organizations and agencies received grants in 2018

- City of Charlottesville, Office of Economic Development-The Growing Opportunities (GO) training program is designed to provide training to unemployed and underemployed residents of Charlottesville to help them obtain employment in various industries earning a living wage.

- Career Support Systems, Inc.-Designed to expand, in underserved areas of the state, existing successful, flexible, and portable funding and service delivery that has been proven to promote individuals with complex challenges to employment.
- City of Lynchburg-Through its TechHire model, willing and able job seekers with existing wrap around support such as a case worker will be identified; their career aptitude and interests explored; and they will be placed in full-time employment with a local employer who is willing to spend 6-8 weeks training the participant in technical skills. All jobs offer opportunities for career advancement.
- City of Norfolk- Targets qualifying individuals with mental illness and/or substance abuse disorders receiving Community Service Board and/or Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) services to assist them with services to overcome barriers to employment.
- City of Richmond Office of Community Wealth Building (OCWB) - The purpose of the program is to reduce poverty in Richmond by preparing participants to work in occupations that are both in demand and offer self-sufficient wages. The Center for Workforce Innovation in OCWB is the primary engine to move people out of poverty through direct services.
- Danville Community College- The SCALE UP Program is designed to provide short term in demand industry credentials, interpersonal skills training, and employment search support to ameliorate regional unemployment and underemployment.
- Goodwill of Central and Coastal Virginia- Designed to build on the success of the Transition and Employment (TIE) Program by increasing engagement in skill-building work experiences and building career pathways leading to increased wages and promotions.
- Learn to Earn, Inc. - Through its Career Transition Skills Program, Learn to Earn will utilize a partnership network of businesses, education and training providers, and workforce services to increase the number of low-income individuals who are experiencing problems in finding employment due to multiple barriers.
- Melwood Horticultural Training Center, Inc. - To expand services to TANF recipients with significant barriers to employment residing in Arlington County and the City of Alexandria. Specifically, participants with long-term unemployment, poor job retention, and/or those with 6 months or less remaining before benefits end will be targeted with the ultimate goal of placement in livable wage employment.
- People Inc. of Virginia- The purpose is to aid the most at-risk individuals to overcome barriers that prevent employment. Training, support and access to resource will be provided to help the participant find a job on a career path.
- Portsmouth Department of Social Services- The goal of the “A Step Ahead” program is to address barriers such as poor job retention, low education levels and limited access to the transportation system. An intensive job readiness component will be employed including soft skills training, and job placement. The goal is for the participant to

become employment for more than 6 months at wages that are 10% above the current minimum wage.

- Rappahannock Community College –The goal is an increase in skills and credential attainment, employment and employment retention, reduction in poverty, and the entry into a career pathway. Goals will be accomplished by enrollment and retention in the program; educational assessment and gain; Career Pathways identification and goal setting; skills development and credential attainment; and employment placement and advancement.
- Rehabilitative Services and Vocational Placement, Inc. - The goal of this program is to provide a collection of services including GED completion; career readiness training; post-secondary educational opportunities; and supported employment services. Vocational Assessment and Vocational Evaluation/Testing will be used to assess skills and abilities, and to develop individual career planning.
- Shenandoah Valley Social Services- The Medical Outreach and Financial Independence Program (MOFIP) goals are to address medical and mental health needs to help move participants towards employment; to assist with applications for SSI/SSDI, when necessary; and to provide financial literacy programs to assist participants in gaining tools needed to understand economic independence. In addition, community medical and mental health providers will be educated about the program.
- The Improvement Association- Will assist participants from Southside Virginia with pre-employment (soft skills development) and job skills training and/or basic education leading to a GED. Other barriers to employment will also be addressed including transportation and childcare.
- The SkillSource Group, Inc.-Expansion of an existing program that will serve participants in Fairfax with others coming from Prince William and other areas of the region. SkillSource will provide subsidized and unsubsidized employment opportunities resulting in increased skills and increased self-sufficiency through employment. In addition, specific emphasis will be on job placement with a focus on increasing educational attainment and credentials leading to a reduction of dependency on public assistance.

As part of the grant requirements, organizations are required to complete a quarterly report with certain components identified.

Report

The following chart represents the combined results of all grantees reporting through the first six quarters of the project, July 1, 2017-December 31, 2018. Not all individual components were reported by all grantees.

Component	1 st -6 th Quarter	Ending 12/31/18	% Achieved
	Planned	Actual	
# Participants	1138	1119	98%
# Entered Employment	680	641	94%
# Unique Employers	273	309	113%
Average Hourly Starting Wage	\$9.90	\$11.79	119%
# With Benefits	221	174	79%
# Employed Part Time	296	287	97%
# Employed Full Time	387	354	92%
Average Wage Increase	\$.78	\$2.34	300%
# Obtaining Wage Increase	147	127	86%
#Jobs in a Career Pathway	272	239	88%

Case Example

The following is a typical example of a success story that illustrates the influence the employment grants have in the lives of participants.

DD was a walk-in client who learned about the program from a posted flyer at a job center. Although a US citizen, DD moved to Mexico for a customer service job. She stayed for more than 10 years and gained excellent customer service skills. Though bilingual (English-Spanish) she was unable to find employment and hoped the program could help her become more self-sufficient and be able to provide for her children.

The Job Developer updated her resume, assisted in the job search and recommended job readiness workshops to improve confidence and familiarize her with the hiring process. She was assisted with interview preparation and participated in mock interviews. She received an offer as an activities assistant making \$14.00/hr. plus benefits.

Conclusion

As all projects are fully operational, enrollment and expenditures increased at a more rapid pace and results continue to improve. Of special note are the Average Wage Increase and the Number of Unique Employees.