

BPRO TANF / VIEW Committee Minutes

Wednesday, August 8, 2021

Program Updates – Mark Golden

- Transmittal #72 effective 10/1/21
 - Still waiting on FNS for poverty levels, but will include an increase to the poverty level, increase in VIEW disregards, increase in standard deductions.
 - VIEW Screening Guide which will include screening tools relating to workforce development
 - Updates will be made relating to minimum wage language. Guidance will be more specific due to Virginia minimum wage increasing. State minimum wage clarification passed in 2020 but is being phased in, starting 5/1/21 \$9.50/hr, then going to \$11/hr on 1/1/22, then \$12/hr on 1/1/23. This will impact the calculation of CWEP hours and self employment hours for VIEW clients.
 - Full Employment Program
 - Lots of changes passed General Assembly which is impacting policy, including an increase in stipend for the employers and participants keeping their TANF while participating. There will also be new DSS positions created to be Job Developers, but they have not been posted yet. The positions are currently going through HR but will be posted on www.jobs.virginia.gov once they are ready. Kick off sessions have been held with workers and employers to inform everyone of the changes. 94 employers participated in the session and many have expressed interest in becoming partners. Localities will be receiving contact information for the employers to develop partnerships. It was suggested to Mark that there be an area on Fusion where the participating employers can be posted so local workers can see what employers may be around them. This way, clients who are willing to travel to another locality to work may have more options available to them if their VIEW worker has access to the entire list of participating employers.
 - IDA Savings Accounts (Individual Development Accounts)
 - Savings accounts for TANF clients who set a goal of Home purchase, Education, Transportation, or starting a business. Screening will be required for meeting the requirements under the VIEW program. There will be an 8 to 1 savings rate, ex. Client saves \$500, they get matched \$4000 by the state. The program will be run through Community Action agencies so the hope is that the only involvement the locals will have will be through the referral process. They are working on a standardized application form and will send out the information about the participating Community Action Agencies when it is available. The state is also working through some banking issues and getting some questions answered before the program is operational.
 - American Rescue Plan
 - Virginia received \$15.7 million which must be used for short term, non-recurring benefits. Currently General Assembly is in a special session and needs to appropriate the money. Two uses for the money have been discussed:

- Relocation Assistance Pilot for a limited number of families
 - One Time payment to current TANF households
- Virginia was selected as one of the states for participation in a TANF data consortium with the University of Chicago. Surveys were sent to former TANF / VIEW participants to collect data.
- COVID-19 – The pandemic has been difficult and affected the state tremendously. This past year and a half has forced us to use technology more. Our knowledge as a whole has increased and we have managed to expand trainings and meetings, making it easier for more workers to participate in a more meaningful way.
- ESP Committee with the League
 - Working on Professional Development series to get training out to the locals. In July 2021, they put out the Supporting Job Seekers in a COVID World training.
- TANF Tune Ups
 - Professional development trainings that will be coming out bi-monthly starting in September. 2 sessions are being offered for the September training, which will focus on the 4 purposes of TANF and the use of the TANF Block Grant.
- TANF EA is still available

VLSEE ESP Committee Updates – Tonia Alexander

- Tonia is on the sub-committee for training and is working on the professional development training series. They are working on a virtual conference to take place in December, so keep your eyes open.
- The committee is looking at opportunities to work together with Workforce Development regarding ABAWDS, SNAP E&T, VIEW, and focusing on participation.
- The committee is also trying to look for ways to make things better for the workers.
- Tonia is the voice for BPRO at the ESP meetings, so if there is anything we'd like her to bring to the table, please reach out.

Committee Charges

- Truancy Notification Letter and Truancy Individualized Plan – draft attachments were sent for review prior to the meeting. Suggestions include adding a signature line for the school representative on the Truancy Individualized Plan, adding a spot to type in the 5 business day deadline, and some revisions to verbiage so the forms align with agency formats. The sub-committee will meet again soon to discuss these suggestions and finalize the forms. Once complete, they can be sent off to the Executive Board to be vetted before going to the state.

Round Table Discussion

- Discussion of CommonHelp electronic T# change vs TANF Add a Person Application when a customer is requesting to add a person to the TANF case. A worker had submitted the question of whether or not she could use the T# change from CommonHelp to add a newborn to an ongoing case, and was told by a Regional Practice Consultant that the TANF Add a Person Application needed to be sent to the client in order to add the baby. A discussion was held during which members of the committee expressed differing views. Some members have been using the T# from Commonhelp to start the process, while others have been sending the TANF

Add a Person Application. Christie will forward Mark all of the information so he can narrow down where the reply came from and issue a full clarification of what can be used when adding a person to an ongoing case.

- TANF forms – It came up during discussion that TANF requires so many forms for the clients to complete. Mark requested that our committee think about all the paperwork and come up with a list of forms that we think are repetitive or unnecessary. He would be interested to see what our thoughts are and would be willing to look it over to see if there were any changes that could be made.
- Non Citizen ID Discussion – Stephanie Kurtz brought up a discussion surrounding ID for non-citizens. Stated that her agency recently got clarification regarding acceptable documents to VR ID for non-citizens that was not helpful and contradictory. Mark requested she pass along the information she received so he can research it and provide better clarification.
- BPRO Membership Reminder – Tonia Alexander reminded us all that distribution lists for committees are built from membership applications and will be re-set after 8/31/21. If you haven't already renewed your membership, please do so and indicate what committees you would like to serve on in order to get added to the distribution lists. Also, BPRO is looking for a new BPRO State President as well as a few other positions on the executive board. Tonia is available to answer questions about offices or membership, so please reach out to her at alexant@charlottesville.gov
- VIEW Spending – A brief discussion was held about VIEW Spending. We should be encouraging our VEIW clients to participate, even though it's not mandatory now, so they can have access to supportive services money. Mark directed us to look on Fusion if we're interested in how we've been spending our money. Go to Fusion, Division of Finance, Budget, Local Reimbursement, Laser Local Reimbursement, Laser – Budget Expenditure reports
- October Meeting – The next meeting will need to be rescheduled due to BPRO conference. Christie will send out a new date once it is set.