

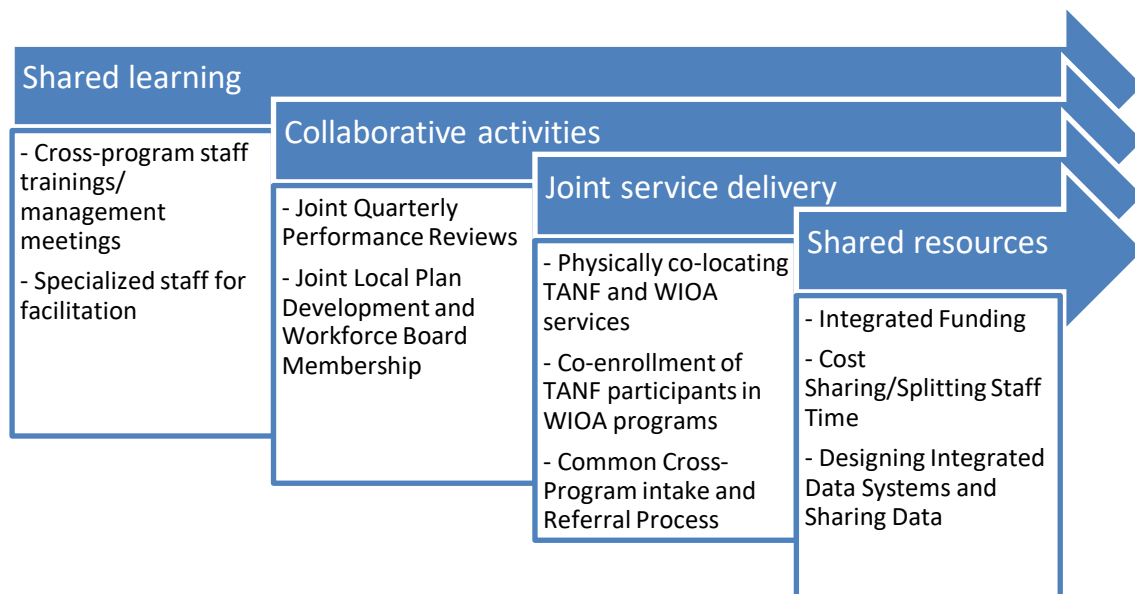
Four Key Strategies That Support State Integration of WIOA and TANF Services

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The national workforce development system aims to support job seekers in their efforts to obtain quality jobs and careers. The system assists individuals with education, training, and support services necessary to achieve these goals. To aid this effort, in 2014 Congress encouraged closer coordination between the workforce system other federal support programs including Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF). TANF, a cash assistance program targeted towards low-income families, has similar aims to the public workforce development system. In Pennsylvania, the primary TANF program that provides workforce services is branded as the Employment, Advancement, and Retention Network (EARN).

The merging of WIOA and TANF services has potential to provide substantial benefits to those most in need. By leveraging the unique strengths of each program, the combined efforts help to provide participants with additional support services (such as childcare and transportation); reduce the duplication of services, thereby increasing available resources; and generate cost savings for states.

While there has been a high level of interest in integrating these programs, most efforts to integrate have been modest.¹ The research presented in this brief highlights four key strategies states can implement to bolster their integration efforts. The four strategies build from least intensive shared learning to most intensive shared resources, as shown in figure 1 below.²



¹ Anna Cielinski, Coordinating TANF & WIOA, Center for Law and Social Policy, 2017

² [TANF Works! TANF/WIOA Collaboration Series](#), Office of Family Affairs

Figure 1: Increasing Levels of Integration

1. Shared Learning

Shared learning between program staff fosters greater understanding of the aspects of partner programs. This enables staff to support customers on a deeper level. Examples include:

- Cross Program Staff Trainings/Management Meetings
 - ◆ Staff in Lower Shore Maryland hold regular events in the job centers where staff from partner programs, including WIOA and TANF, meet to gain knowledge of each other's programs. Managers in the Department of Social Services (DSS) of Lower Shore also participate in the local job center's leadership group. Members of the group share information about administrative and service-delivery developments within their agencies and issues with the shared job center facilities.³
- Specialized Staff for Facilitation
 - ◆ Some WIOA programs are implementing dedicated staff focused on fostering facilitation across system partners, including TANF. In Kansas City⁴, workforce support specialists play key roles in advancing collaboration by:
 - Conducting case reviews of both WIOA and TANF customers and providing both staff with feedback based on the reviews.
 - Interpreting relevant updates to policies governing WIOA and TANF programs, as well as impacts to Job Center staff.
 - Leading cross-program trainings that educate TANF and WIOA staff on their respective programs and practices on how to collaborate.

2. Collaborative Activities

Collaborative activities among program staff allow for WIOA and TANF programs to further boost staff alignment and program efficiency. Examples include:

- Joint Quarterly Performance Reviews
 - ◆ In Tulare County, CA, WIOA and TANF staff have formal quarterly meetings to review joint program performance data.⁵ This allows them to work together to resolve service coordination and service delivery challenges for their shared customers and develop better practices to increase their effectiveness.
- Joint Local Plan Development and Workforce Board Membership

³ [TANF/WIOA Collaboration Maryland Brief](#), Office of Family Assistance, June 2019

⁴ [TANF/WIOA Collaboration Missouri Brief](#), Office of Family Assistance, August 2019

⁵ [TANF/WIOA Collaboration California Brief](#), Office of Family Assistance, June 2019

- ◆ In Lower Shore, Maryland, County Directors who oversee TANF programs are part of the workforce board's leadership team, where program leaders of both systems develop the local plan for the area.⁶

3. Joint Service Delivery

Providing WIOA and TANF services to American Job Center (AJC) customers simultaneously allows for a more seamless experience for AJC customers. Workforce programs are implementing various practices to braid TANF and WIOA service delivery together:

- Physically Co-locating TANF and WIOA services.
 - ◆ Several American Job Centers house both TANF and WIOA staff who can enroll customers into either program based on their eligibility.
- Co-enrollment of TANF participants in WIOA programs.
 - ◆ Some innovative AJCs make a strong effort to co-enroll customers in TANF and WIOA programs simultaneously. For example, the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) operates the Choices program which enrolls TANF applicants into the WIOA workforce system and gives any applicant an orientation to the program.⁷
- Common cross-program intake and referral process.
 - ◆ In Nevada, the AJCs developed a referral system that is shared across its system partners through a standardized electronic form. Staff and partners are able to edit customer information, provide updates on service and report outcomes.⁸

4. Shared Resources

Sharing resources allows the workforce system to take further advantage of the partner framework outlined in WIOA to better coordinate services that are tailored to customer needs.

Various workforce boards have implemented strategies to share resources including:

- Integrated Funding
 - ◆ WIOA and TANF funds are integrated by many AJCs in Missouri. Kansas City, St. Louis City, and St. Louis County braid WIOA funds with their TANF program to increase service options. For example, in Kansas City workforce job coaches can refer customers to services funded by TANF, WIOA, or other streams to serve a TANF customer. In the city of St. Louis, workforce and TANF staff work together to determine which funding streams, TANF, WIOA, or another set of funds, can be used to provide wrap around services such as bus tickets or work apparel for a customer.⁹

⁶[TANF/WIOA Collaboration Maryland Brief](#), Office of Family Assistance, June 2019

⁷ Texas Workforce Commission, Choices Guide, October 12, 2021 (Revised)

⁸ [TANF Works! Nevada Brief](#), Office of Family Assistance, June 2019

⁹ [TANF/WIOA Collaboration Missouri Brief](#), Office of Family Assistance, August 2019

- Cost Sharing/Splitting Staff Time
 - ◆ An additional strategy for sharing resources is TANF and WIOA programs sharing costs and splitting staff between the programs. In Weld County, Colorado for example, all TANF and WIOA staff work directly for the county and staff split their time between two or more programs. For example, Business Services staff, which are funded primarily through WIOA Title III, are able to charge blocks of time to TANF when they speak to clients at TANF orientations or when they work directly with TANF case managers on work-based learning placements.¹⁰
- Designing Integrated Data Systems and Sharing Data.
 - ◆ Some workforce programs are creating integrated data systems that allow for seamless transfer of information between partner programs. In 2016, Nevada began building a single information system for WIOA and TANF services and case management. Features will include an integrated common intake system, universal assessments, case management support, and service tracking.¹¹ While the system is being built, data is shared across programs monthly between program administrators.

Efforts to integrate WIOA and TANF programs in recent years have been spurred by Congress' action to formally include TANF as a mandated partner for WIOA programs as established in the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014. The rigorous process states undergo to develop their state plans for WIOA allow for intentional conversations on how best to align the two systems. However, while states can and should play a large role in fostering integration, the most intensive collaboration efforts are often driven by local leadership within specific counties, as the examples above illustrate. For example, in Tulare County, California the local workforce staff are able to coordinate effectively with their TANF counterparts and share data due to the county's unique staffing structure in which workforce staff are county employees.¹² Examples of states leading integration efforts include Nevada and Texas, as described in the examples above.

¹⁰ [TANF/WIOA Collaboration Brief, Colorado](#), Office of Family Assistance, June 2019

¹¹ [TANF/WIOA Collaboration Nevada Brief](#), Office of Family Assistance, June 2019

¹² Adam Peck, [2021 - 2024 WIOA Local Plan Tulare County](#)