

## CRITICAL ACTIONS ON TANF:

### Strengthen connections among welfare-to-work, job training, and homeless assistance programs

Families experiencing or at risk of homelessness need adequate incomes to pay rent. Many of the adults in these families want to work, and they need access to employment and training services that are effective for people who face barriers to getting and keeping good jobs. They may also need work supports such as child care and transportation assistance, and some families need other services to address additional barriers to employment and housing stability.

### Why should we strengthen connections among programs?

Strong linkages and ongoing collaboration among housing and employment services will:

- ◇ Provide families with the supports they need to care for children in their own homes and to pursue opportunities for self-sufficiency; and
- ◇ Help each system achieve its goals. Housing solutions provide a stable platform for parents to achieve employment goals. Connections to employment and work supports such as childcare and transportation assistance increase families' incomes and promote housing stability.

### How can we do it?

- ◇ TANF agencies should be active partners in statewide, regional, and local efforts to prevent and end homelessness, through **participation in the Continuum of Care and other cross-sector structures** for planning, coordinating, and investing in housing and services for families experiencing or at risk of homelessness.
- ◇ TANF agencies and homeless assistance programs can **create interagency partnerships** to coordinate and streamline services delivered across the two systems, using formalized referral processes to expedite connections to appropriate services and agreements to share client-level data with consent.
- ◇ Welfare-to-work and other employment and training **services can be co-located** with homeless assistance programs that serve families with children.
- ◇ **Navigators** can help families experiencing homelessness meet TANF requirements and use employment and training services effectively, while also offering individualized and flexible supports.
- ◇ **Cross-training for front-line staff** can help TANF workers better understand the needs of homeless families and the resources and strategies available to prevent and end family homelessness, while also helping staff in homeless assistance programs better understand TANF program rules and the resources and supports that can be available to families in need.

For more ideas about partnerships and examples of state TANF agency initiatives, see this [TANF Information Memorandum](#) from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Administration for Children and Families.