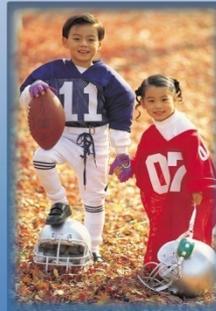
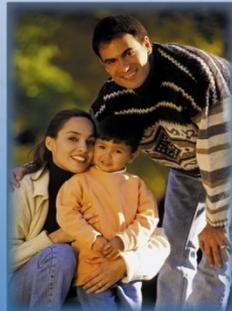




# Client Assessments and the Reemployment of Low-Income Workers: Lessons from the Field

OWRA: An Online Tool for Supporting Self-Sufficiency

Chicago, Illinois  
Heartland Conference 2010  
April 8, 2010



# Acknowledgement

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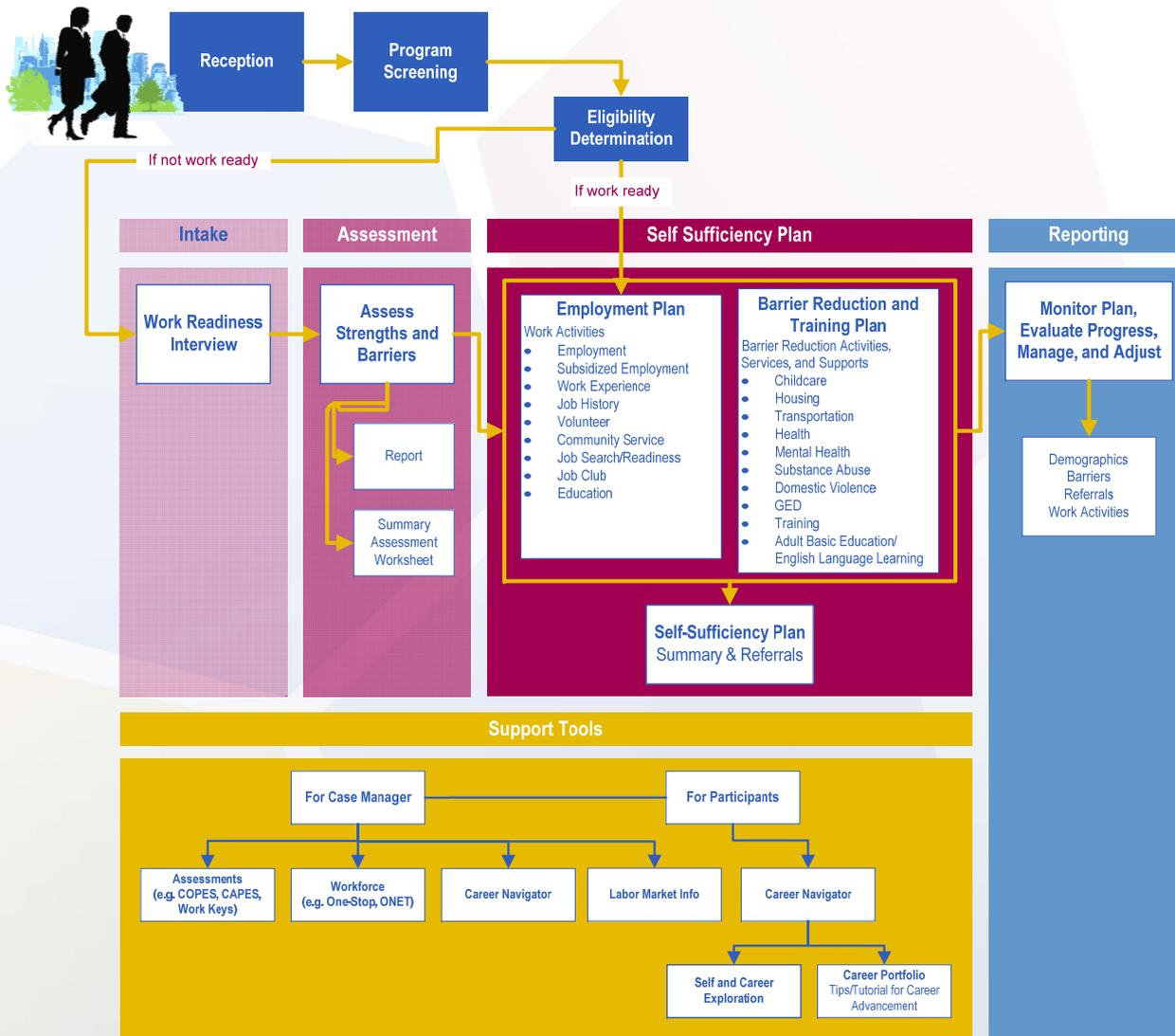
- 
- **OWRA Overview**
  - **Setting the Stage**
  - **Showcase Tool**
  - **Next Steps**

# Online Work Readiness Assessment (OWRA) Tool

Web-based suite of resources, tools, assessments and guidelines that will help TANF agency staff engage participants in work-focused activities leading to long-term self-sufficiency



# OWRA Schema



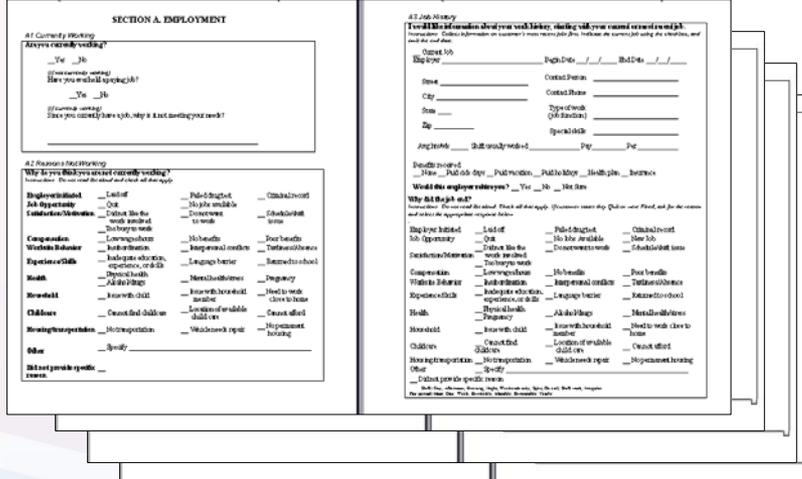


# Intake and Assessment

- Interactive dialog between case manager and participant

- Nine topic areas:

- Demographics;
- Employment;
- Education;
- Housing and Transportation;
- Health
  - General Health;
  - Mental Health;
  - Substance Abuse;
  - Domestic Violence & Safety; and
- Child Care, Child Support, Parenting, and Well-being



The image shows two pages of the OWRA intake and assessment form. The left page is titled 'SECTION A. EMPLOYMENT' and contains questions about current and past employment, including job type, duration, and reasons for leaving. The right page is titled 'SECTION B. DEMOGRAPHICS' and contains questions about personal information, including name, address, phone number, and insurance status. Both pages feature checkboxes for 'Yes', 'No', and 'Not Sure'.

# Summary Assessment

E.MENTAL HEALTH						
Notes: These are the child care and well-being notes						
Mental Health	Ref	Recommended action	Activity codes	Hours per week	Plan Start	Plan End
EMOTIONAL HEALTH CHALLENGE	E1	Refer customer to family services or a mental health specialist or resource.  If customer has no medical insurance at the time of application, the worker should provide the customer with a purchase authorization and invoice to take to medical doctor.  Provide the customer with medical report forms			/ /	/ /
		Comments:				
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(E1) Score:</li> <li>Verifications</li> </ul>				

G.DOMESTIC VIOLENCE / SAFETY			
Notes: These are the G			
Domestic Violence / Safety	Ref	Recommended action	
DOMESTIC VIOLENCE-RELATED CONFLICTS	G1 G2	Offer a referral to family services, a mental health specialist, or a domestic violence specialist.  Request an ex parte against the abuser  May offer temporary domestic violence exemption to work participation as appropriate.	
Comments:			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(G1) a. Afraid about something going on at home</li> <li>(G1) b. Police have been called to house</li> <li>(G1) c. Threatened or physically hurt by another</li> <li>(G1) g. Person is very jealous over customer</li> <li>(G1) h. Person checked up on what customer was doing</li> <li>(G1) i. Avoiding making person angry or upset</li> <li>(G1) o. Customer forced to engage in sexual activities</li> </ul>			
Verification - Monitor progress with written documentation on a regular basis.			

C.HOUSING & TRANSPORTATION						
Notes: Customer temporarily staying with mother in mother's 2 bedroom apartment. Customer cannot stay permanently. Did not pay parking tickets.						
Housing & Transportation barriers	Ref	Recommended action	Activity codes	Hours per week	Plan Start	Plan End
UNSTABLE HOUSING	C1 C2	Offer a referral to a local housing agency, family preservation, or shelter resources.  Offer referrals for rental assistance, payments of back rents, or moving allowances, as appropriate.	—	—	/ /	/ /
		Comments:				
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(C2) Challenge explanation: cannot stay past august</li> <li>Verification - Documentation of housing searches</li> </ul>				
TRANSPORTATION CHALLENGE	C3 C4 C5 C6	Offer weekly transportation stipend, transit/bus passes or tokens, gas card as appropriate.	—	—	/ /	/ /
		Comments:				
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(C6) Challenge: bus schedule</li> <li>(C3) Drive my own vehicle</li> <li>Verification - Receipts as appropriate (e.g., gas purchase)</li> </ul>				

# 2009 Pilots

- **Piloted:**
  - February 1 – July 31, 2009
  - 16 sites in 5 States and the Quinault Indian Nation
- Kickoff Meeting with State/Tribal/county leadership mapping out business processes
- Customization of assessment for each State/Tribe
- On-site training (User Guide, Mock Interviews, On-site Job Coaching)
- 4-8 weeks of usage:
  - weekly check in calls, Virtual Help Desk with 1-800 number ongoing technical assistance and technical support
- Close-out Focus Groups:
  - Caseworkers and supervisors
  - State/Tribal/county leadership

- Comprehensive assessment – thorough questions with recommendations helped create work opportunities for participants
- Standardization of assessment – critical when population is transient in nature
- Consistency across caseworkers in terms of diagnosing untreated barriers among participants
- Effective roadmap providing detailed information to guide employment planning for participants

# Lessons Learned – Caseworkers and Participants

- User-friendly
- Assisted caseworkers to think more holistically about participants’ desires, objectives, and strengths and barriers
- Helped identify “risk” characteristics resulting in higher number of referrals for mental health and domestic violence
- Encouraged dialogue with the participant which ensured participant engagement
- Generated more buy-in to recommendations among participants—resulting in participant success in assigned activity

- Added questions for:
  - Life circumstances: responsible parenting, child support and joint custody
  - Other benefits
  - Employment opportunities in Tribal and rural communities
- Accommodation of two-parent households
- Printing sections of the interview and assessment
- Allowing for multiple versions
- Improved technical architecture:
  - Functionality
  - Performance
- Web services feature



Demo of OWRA

# Self-Sufficiency Module

**Purpose:** To serve as an online, virtual **guide** on how to navigate through a hub of resources, assessments, activities, information, and partners in order to link individuals' abilities and experiences to a employment and career map that will meet federal, state, local, and Tribal policies and practices.

**What:** Using the self-sufficiency plan, Module 3 will create a **employment and career map** that **links** individuals' unique interests and abilities with respect to local workforce and labor market needs.

# A Closer Look at the Self-Sufficiency Module



# Reporting Module

**Purpose:** To assist caseworkers and managers in conducting **summary and trend analyses** of the demographics, barriers, employment history, and skills assessments of the TANF population.

**What:** Focusing on monitoring and tracking TANF participant's activities, Module 4 will feature a **"dashboard"** that will allow for **data to be collected and compared** across caseworkers and geographic regions.

# Current Activities and Next Steps

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- Development of Module 3 and 4
- National Rollout of Modules 1 and 2
- Pilot Modules 3 and 4

Al Fleming  
Office of Family Assistance  
202-401-4977  
[Al.fleming@acf.hhs.gov](mailto:Al.fleming@acf.hhs.gov)

Christina Techico  
ICF International  
703-225-2260  
[ctechico@icfi.com](mailto:ctechico@icfi.com)

TANF TechConnections Web Site  
<http://peerta.acf.hhs.gov/tanftc>