

## Summary and Analysis of information in Data Report

Submitted pursuant to 42 U.S.C. sec. 411 (c) (2) (A)

The following is a summary and explanation of the Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) data report submitted for April, May and June 2011 to the Administration for Children and Families pursuant to 42 U.S.C. sec 411 (c) (2)(A). The reported data derives from a sample of Reach Up families and is represented with an average for the three months. Reach Up is Vermont's program that provides services and financial assistance to low income families with children. The sample families receive grants funded with only either TANF or TANF-MOE funds; Reach Up and Postsecondary Education program families whose grants are funded only with state funds not claimed as TANF-MOE (SSF) are not included in the data sample.<sup>1</sup>

The data report looks at the engagement of an average of 436 work eligible individuals (WEIs) in families receiving TANF or TANF-MOE funded assistance (TANF families). The data indicate that an average of 11.6 percent of the sample members were engaged in activities that though focused on moving the family toward self-sufficiency are not included as countable activities for purposes of the TANF work participation measure. Of the seven categories of non-countable activities, treatment activities are the most frequently reported; over 65 percent of the sample members engaged in non-countable activities were in this category. This shows that a significant number of the WEIs (in excess of 7 percent) were in treatment for mental or physical health or substance abuse issues. Another noteworthy finding is that 4 percent of the overall sample fell within the category of accessing work support activities; a category that includes locating child care and transportation, both significant challenges for low-income families seeking employment in a rural state.

The data on WEIs engaging in non-countable activities necessary to move toward self-sufficiency and work demonstrate the consequential effects of the statutory limitations and structure related to countable job search activities. The current limitations mask the efforts of WEIs to gain employment and the state's efforts to support them in seeking and preparing for work; there is no official recognition of these efforts.

Similarly, the data results explaining why WEIs are not participating in any activities support states' ongoing claims about systemic challenges to engaging families. For example, 19 percent of the WEIs not engaged in any activities are in their first month of receiving financial assistance. Precipitating events that bring a family into Reach Up include pregnancy, divorce and abandonment, domestic violence, eviction, homelessness, job loss, relocation, or other situation or condition not yet assessed that impairs the WEI's ability to engage immediately. Necessary due process and notice requirements also may

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<sup>1</sup> After passage of the Deficit Reduction Act of 2005, Vermont decided to retain certain policies viewed as supportive of families, yet recognizing they would be detrimental to the state's performance in the work participation rates. To guard against federal fiscal penalties, the state decided to fund these policies with state funds. Accordingly, this report and summary does not necessarily fully reflect the effort of the state and participating families to work toward self-sufficiency. For example, families engaged in activities such as pursuing a college degree or working with vocational rehabilitation to address disability issues and pursue alternative support are not included in the data.

cause a period of non-engagement in the pre-sanction stage which possibly explains the group of WEIs not participating, but not sanctioned. Twenty-five percent of the unengaged do not have a work requirement because they are in a two-parent family where the other parent is meeting the full requirement for the family; it is likely that these WEIs are supporting the working parent by caring for the children and managing the household.

- Analysis statement regarding the extent to which the information changes measures of total engagement in work activities from what was (or will be) reported by the State in the quarterly report submitted under subsection (a) for the comparable period

**42 U.S.C. sec. 411 (c) (2) (B)**

Considering that the reported data do not include hours of the WEI's engagement and that there is no precise standard for what constitutes engagement, it is difficult to analyze the extent to which the report's information would change the current measures of engagement. One way to respond to this request is to simply compare caseload engagement measured by the all families work participation rate to caseload engagement measured by the percentage of families engaged in any activities. In the sample, 73 percent of the WEIs were engaged in some activity as compared to the 40 percent of the WEIs that were engaged in federally recognized work activities to the extent that they would be counted as meeting the federal work requirement. Hence, by broadening and generalizing standard of engagement to all activities listed would show a net increase of 32 percent engaged.

- Narrative describing the most common activities contained in the report that are not countable toward the State participation rates under section 607 of this title

**42 U.S.C. sec. 411 (c) (2) (C)**

Vermont's data in this report show that the most common activities that are not countable toward the state participation rate are as follows:

- Treatment activities
- Activities related to accessing countable work activities
- Family life skills activities
- Other activities related to necessary process such as conciliation
- Job search activities beyond federal limitations

## DATA

Total number Work Eligible Individuals in each month	
April	431
May	432
June	444
Average	436

Item 13 - Participated in an activity that moves the family toward self-sufficiency				
	April	May	June	Ave
Total WEIs	11.4%	11.8%	11.7%	11.6%
Adult Basic Ed/ESL	6.1%	3.9%	3.8%	4.6%
Post-Secondary ED	4.1%	3.9%	3.8%	3.9%
Treatment Activities	59.2%	72.5%	65.4%	65.7%
Family Life Skills Activities	28.6%	31.4%	25.0%	28.3%
Accessing Work Support Activities	32.7%	33.3%	23.1%	29.7%
Assessment	24.5%	11.8%	26.9%	21.1%
Other Activities, specifically conciliation	6.1%	2.0%	0.0%	2.7%

Item 10 – Participated in countable activities but had insufficient hours to count toward the rate.	
April	9.0%
May	7.6%
June	9.5%
Average	8.7%

Item 9 – Reached maximum time limit allowed.	
April	1.9%
May	1.4%
June	0.7%
Average	1.3%

Item 11 – Hours in activities that exceeded statutory limits.	
April	0.2%
May	0.0%
June	9.5%
Average	3.2%

Item 14 - Not participating in any activity				
	April	May	June	Ave
Not participating in any activity	33.4%	33.1%	32.0%	32.8%
Of the above:				
in their first month of assistance and no work activity assigned	25.0%	14.7%	18.3%	19.3%
assigned to an activity that had not yet begun	1.4%	1.4%	0.7%	1.2%
State/Local agency failed to engage	1.4%	3.5%	2.1%	2.3%
family disregarded from participation rate	10.4%	16.1%	10.6%	12.4%
exempt, single custodial parent w/child under age 1, not disregarded due to 12-month limitations	0.0%	0.0%	1.4%	0.5%
in process of being sanctioned or is subject to a sanction for refusing to work, not disregarded due to statutory or subject to a non-work sanction limitations	2.8%	3.5%	2.1%	2.8%
state exempt due to illness or disability of the WEI (including but not limited to, in process of applying for SSI/SSDI)	10.4%	7.0%	11.3%	9.6%
exempt, domestic violence waiver	0.0%	0.0%	0.7%	0.2%
exempt, state exemption	0.0%	0.0%	0.7%	0.2%
other reasons as outlined below	47.9%	49.7%	52.1%	49.9%

-part of a 2P family that is meeting WPR with the other adult activities	39.1%	47.9%	43.2%	43.4%
-beginning conciliation	11.6%	7.0%	0.0%	6.2%
-caretaker grant	1.4%	1.4%	1.4%	1.4%
-case closed (non-coop)	13.0%	18.3%	5.4%	12.3%
-case manager didn't enter activities	1.4%	1.4%	1.4%	1.4%
-case pending closure due to unemployment	1.4%	0.0%	0.0%	0.5%
-case status changed during the month	5.8%	4.2%	0.0%	3.3%
-not participating but not subject to sanction for reporting month	24.6%	15.5%	40.5%	26.9%
-withdrew application	1.4%	1.4%	0.0%	1.0%
-establishing good cause for non-participation	0.0%	1.4%	0.0%	0.5%
-case manager didn't enter hours	0.0%	1.4%	0.0%	0.5%
-client didn't keep schedule appts	0.0%	0.0%	4.1%	1.4%
-drug rehab, jail	0.0%	0.0%	4.1%	1.4%