WorkFirst LPA Partnership Principles for Success

WorkFirst Local Area Planning (LPA) was established in response to the Governor's need for local WorkFirst program design and implementation. Today there are 32 active partnerships across the state that meet regularly to work through local program issues and implement programs that support performance. In addition, LPAs are responsible for developing an annual strategic plan outlining local approaches to service delivery that will ensue local performance and partner accountability.

The following set of principles and tools are designed to help LPAs meet even greater success by increasing their overall effectiveness through lessons learned by other LPA best practices and lessons learned. All examples were taken from LPAs from around the state.

LPAs who meet regularly experience greater results.

Partners clearly need to understand their role in supporting local program success. Meeting regularly is a valuable way for partnerships to share information, develop communication, strategize, problem solve, and innovate. Consistence communication is the key to maintaining and building trust among partners.

Promising Practices shared by LPAs:

- Meeting regularly strengthens partnership by keeping everyone informed of the constant changes of the WorkFirst program and how those changes impact each partner and overall performance.
- Meeting regularly cuts down on miscommunication and misinformation.
- Meeting regularly requires commitment from all partners. Meetings need to add value, maintain structure and be action-oriented and focus on results.
- Anticipate more meetings during the end of the program year with end of the year reports and new program year planning – example: WorkFirst Block Grant, TWI, LPA annual planning, etc.
- The **Spokane/Lincoln County LPA** – holds monthly executive/leadership team meetings with those key partners in the LPA who are empowered to make decisions. They hold quarterly partnership-wide meetings for all partners and community organizations to network, share ideas and initiatives, provide large-scale training, etc.

LPA Tips – Set-up a regular meeting schedule with a set day/time/location. This will help partners schedule themselves accordingly.

LPAs who develop agendas for meetings get partners to the table.

Proper meeting management techniques include having an agenda at every meeting. Agendas are what keep meetings focused, on time, support partner accountability and get results. Agendas need to reflect partner issues, program initiatives, performance, general updates, and work sessions.
Keep in mind; the topics on your agenda will drive who comes to the table.

Promising Practices shared by LPAs:

- Develop meeting protocols and/or ground rules to help manage your meetings and expectations.
- Establish a note taker to capture action items and decisions. The note takers should distribute the notes to everyone after the meeting, so that those who were unable to attend can stay informed.
- Name a timekeeper who will be responsible for keeping people on topic and on time. See attached examples of a meeting agenda and meeting protocols.

Sub3protocolsexample.doc 7-27-04 Sub 3 Agenda.doc

LPA Tips - When developing your agenda, attach people to topics so that they are responsible for presenting and come prepared. Build future agendas at the close of each meeting, so partners have the opportunity provide feedback on future agenda items.

LPAs benefit from having both a Lead and a Co-Lead.

There are multiple responsibilities associated with being the LPA Lead. They include scheduling regular LPA meetings, facilitating LPA meetings, sharing information, and communicating with the LPA Liaison on local issues, project ideas, etc. One of the most important roles of the Lead is to share communications out to the LPA on a regular basis. Consistent communication is key in helping partners feel included and supported. By establishing both a Lead and Co-Lead, these responsibilities can be shared. Refer to the attached list of current LPA Leads and Co-Leads.

LAP LEADS.xls

Promising Practices from LPAs:

- LPA Lead and Co-Lead roles should be rotated annually or semi-annually so that all partners within the partnership have an opportunity to share the responsibility of leadership.
- 19 out of 32 LPAs have established a Lead and Co-Lead.
- Develop a partnership email distribution list, so that communications can be sent easily.

LPA Tip – Consider assigning certain responsibilities to each of the leads so that both have clear roles and responsibilities.

LPAs need partners at the table who can make decisions.

All four of the mandatory agency partners – DSHS, ESD, the local community and technical college(s) and the local CJ contractor, need to be sure to be at the table when decisions need to be made. When partners consistently send alternates to meetings when decisions need to be made, this bogs down the process, frustrates partners who have made the time to be there and keeps the partnership from moving forward.

Mandatory WorkFirst Partner Decision Makers:

DSHS – CSOA or the WF supervisor
DSHS – DCS representative
ESD - ESD Administrator or WF supervisor
Community or Technical College - WorkFirst Coordinator
Community Jobs – Program Manager

LPA Tip – Set key decision meeting agendas ahead, so that decision makers know when they need to come prepared to make decisions.

LPAs who engage local tribes and/or LEP Pathway contractors are on the WorkFirst cutting edge.

Tribes and LEP Pathway contractors have always been key partners in success of WorkFirst, but they have not always been present at the table. With recent budget constraints and changes to both tribal and LEP Pathway funding and contracting, these partners have more reasons than ever to be involved locally with their other WorkFirst partners. Be sure all new partners get an orientation to the goals and principles of the WorkFirst program, so they better understand their role at the table.

Promising Practices from LPAs:

- Both tribes and LEP Pathway contractors have resources that can be leveraged with other WorkFirst funding.
- They have the similar program outcomes for families – employment and self-sufficiency.
- They bring insight to cultural differences, perspectives, and needs that are integral in overall WorkFirst planning and success.
- They are partners in WorkFirst and need to be included.
- The **Thurston County LPA** is currently planning their first "New Partner Orientation" on the roles and responsibilities for the LPA in the WorkFirst program.

LPA Tips when working with Tribe(s) - Local tribes want to be acknowledged and respected as partners in the WorkFirst program. There are a number LPAs around the state who have developed relationships over time with their local tribes through continued dialogue and communication. Like other government service providers, tribes are very concerned about the welfare of their TANF families and the services available to assist them.

When establishing a relationship with your local tribe(s), LPA leadership needs to approach the tribal council with a letter requesting the tribal participation in the LPA. Once a letter is sent, the LPA Lead or Co-Lead should follow-up with a phone call to establish who will attend from the tribe. This is also the time to gather contact information and share the upcoming meeting agenda of the meeting. The tribe will then honor the request by sending either a council member or designee.

Keep in mind that when you request attendance of any new partner, giving them time on your agenda to share information on an exciting new project is appropriate. This will also help open dialogue between the tribe and the LPA on what they might need from the partners in support of their project to contribute in overall success. This is also a great opportunity for the tribal representative to share their issues or needs that the partnership might be able to assist with. As with all partners, developing a personal relationship with the representative will help facilitate on-going attendance.

LPA Tips when working with Limited English Proficient (LEP) Pathway providers - The LEP Pathway serves a large portion of the TANF caseload. What many people do not realize is that the LEP population is held to the same WorkFirst participation rules as any other WorkFirst participant. The LEP Pathway is therefore very much affected by the policy and planning decisions regarding WorkFirst participation. In the past, LEP provider participation in the LPAs has been very limited; partly due to the misconception that the Pathway is not really part of the WorkFirst program. In fact, the LEP population and their engagement in WorkFirst directly impact the WorkFirst participation numbers we are all held accountable to.

It is critical that we all work together to strategize and plan for our communities in a way that captures the entire WorkFirst population and provides the well-rounded services all communities need to be successful. **Fact:** the last census report found that in King County, one in five people (over the age of 5), do not use English as their primary language. In addition, 14 percent of the Washington State population is foreign-born.

The LEP Pathway is not a miniscule or small part of WorkFirst and has big impacts on the outcomes we all strive to reach in the WorkFirst program. It is imperative that we look at the people we serve in its entirety and develop and plan programs that meet the needs of all those we serve because in the end we are interlinked and one does affect the other both in terms of WorkFirst building strong, vibrant communities. LEP Pathway contractors are key partners who have a specific role in the success of LEP families in your local community. Finding ways to get them involved in LPA activities will be a huge success for all.

Having the right partners at the table makes all the difference.

The more partners an LPA can bring to the table on a regular basis, the stronger your LPA will be. With continually shrinking state and federal resources, LPAs need to leverage resources with other partners to accomplish the same success in the future. Two partners that are adding tremendous value to LPA partnerships are local tribes and LEP Pathway contractors.

Promising Practices for LPAs:

- New partners not only represent new ideas and perspectives; they represent resources and leveraging opportunities.
- The more community partners an LPA can bring to the table, the more inclusive service delivery will become for TANF and low-income families.
- Community Action Programs (CAPs) have been a major partner in many LPAs since the beginning of WorkFirst. If your local CAP is not represented, now might be a great time to check-in with them and invite them to an upcoming meeting.
- The **North Snohomish County LPA** sponsored a LPA Partnership Brunch last fall as a way to celebrate partnership successes and recruit new potential partners into the LPA. This is also a great time to do a "New Partner Orientation." See Thurston County promising practice.
- The **Whatcom County LPA** is planning an all-day LPA retreat as a way to bring the new program leadership up to speed on the role of LPAs in WorkFirst while doing some planning for the coming year.

Partners to consider inviting to your LPA:

Local child care referral representatives and providers
Housing Authority representatives
Homeless Shelter staff
Domestic Violence advocates
Goodwill Industries
Community Action Agencies
Tribal representatives, including local Tribal TANF program staff
LEP contractors
DVR
WDC's/Chambers/EDC's
Business Outreach staff
Local school districts
Food bank representatives
Other non-profits including faith based organizations

LPA Tips - LPAs need to be aware that bringing new partners to your LPA meetings will require some time given to understanding government acronyms. Developing a dictionary of terms as a reference for new partners might be a valuable tool.

Monitoring local WorkFirst performance is the responsibility of LPApPartnerships.

WorkFirst has always been about performance and the program has experienced major success due to our commitment to monitoring program outcomes regularly. Being accountable for local program results is every partner's responsibility. One of the roles of LPAs is to monitor local performance. Each partner needs to bring their local outcome data to meetings to help the LPA focus on results of each partner program(s).

The Tier 2 reports are available on the WorkFirst website at www.workfirst.wa.gov from the State Staff link to assist LPAs in monitoring local performance. There is also a Data Dictionary available to explain the data, how it is collected and how it is measured. These reports are updated monthly and are used by both the Sub 2 and Sub 3 as part of regular statewide performance reviews. For questions on the Tier 2 reports, contact your agency operational lead.

Note: As a result of the recent Work-Out Performance Measures meeting, new measures will be added to the current Tier 2 measures. Look for these new measures in September 2004.

Using the LPA Plan to strategically leverage resources for better program results.

Over the last couple of years, the emphasis has shifted from the intensive model of earlier years to a plan that is strategic, result-oriented and responsive to changing demands of the WorkFirst program. The current LPA Plan design emphasizes less "planning" and more on the "doing". Refer to the attached 2004-05 LPA Plan and End of Year Wrap-up Report.

200405LPAplan.doc

200203EndYearRep
ort.doc

Note: The 2004-05 Sub 3 Strategic Plan is attached below. This is just one format to consider should your LPA want to develop a strategic plan.

Sub 3 Strat Plan 7 1
04 new column.doc

Plan Promising Practices from LPAs:

- The WorkFirst program still requires that an annual plan be developed.
- Plans need to address all partners and program elements that will be used to reach the WorkFirst performance standards.
- Plans need to reflect how different program resources like the WorkFirst Block Grant, TWI, LEP Pathway, Community Jobs and other funding will be leveraged to increase the access and availability to TANF and low-income families. Plans need to reflect local strategies that will be used to meet the WorkFirst program goals as defined by the Governor.
- Plans need to be reviewed periodically throughout the program year. This way LPAs can monitor their activities and whether they have accomplished the goals they had set forth earlier in the year for themselves.
- Some questions to use when evaluating your plans mid-program year:
  - What is working well? What is not?
  - How do all local partners' individual plans support the LPA performance goals?
  - What kind of leveraging are we doing to maximize resources to support families?
  - What have we completed and what do we still need to work on?
- The **Whatcom County LPA** is just one LPA that uses their mid-year meeting to review what they have accomplished and make decisions on what they will focus on the rest of the year.

- The **Yakima County LPA** recently did an exercise that involved mapping their local WorkFirst service delivery model. This activity allowed them to see where all the partnership connections to TANF families are and where the gaps in service are. Based on what they learned, they identified changes that they could make within existing program that would enhance service delivery, increase performance and help more families.

LPA Tips – LPAs who review their plans regularly reported that they were more apt to see noticeable progress in reaching their performance targets. Another important benefit of reviewing your plan regularly is being able to recognize what you have accomplished and celebrating.

Other exciting things going on around the state!
Please your LPAs exciting approaches to serving families, supporting partnership and performance to Kelly Lindseth at kellyl@cted.wa.gov.

Clark/Skamania LPA – Maintains a monthly calendar of training available to their LPA partners to keep all service providers in the community working with WorkFirst families aware of different programs, eligibility requirements, training, and funding opportunities.

Burien/West Seattle/Renton LPA – Recently, these partners discussed the effectiveness of their LPA and some of the ongoing issues they have faced over the years that have kept them from reaching new levels of success. They had multiple CSOs, colleges, and ESD partners, which made program delivery and communicating difficult. So on June 1, 2004, Renton officially became its own LPA.

Walla Walla LPA – Recently shared that their LPA has decided be more active and in doing so requested examples of by-laws. They feel that developing clear roles and responsibilities of each partner along with a focus for their LPA will help them be more engaged as an LPA. This is another example of how LPAs are feeling empowered to create their own destiny.

Lewis County LPA – Has been operating as a model for WorkFirst/WorkSource integration. Being a small community with limited resources has not stopped this LPA from offering a wide variety of services through WorkSource to WorkFirst job seekers. They have many local service providers co-located in their office including their local Community Jobs provider and the local community college. They are anxiously awaiting the arrival of DSHS who will move into the space next to WorkSource later this summer. Another example of how different approaches works in different communities!.