

# December 2003 Summary Report

## **IAWF Accomplishments:**

Total number of Project Participants served: 1,793

Total number of Family/Household Members and Agency Staff impacted: 7,252

Average Family/Household Members: 4.0

Since its inception in October 2001, IAWF has devised and implemented various successful demonstration projects designed to:

- Improve social responsibility and economic self-sufficiency among TANF and Low-Income Wage Earners (LIWE)

**Note:** Low-Income Wage Earners (LIWE), often called the “Working Poor”, are individuals or families that work full or part-time, but still are not able to meet the recommended minimum financial needs of their families. Such individuals or families are often eligible for certain public welfare programs based on their income level.

- Enhance the service delivery capacity of the Commonwealth’s service providers
- Systematically involve other Philadelphia institutions in the Commonwealth’s economic self-sufficiency agenda

## **Types of Programs developed, managed, or Piloted:**

### **Outreach Initiatives**

- **MMP-E/JRARRE Recruitment and Referral Strategy** (Funded by the Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare, Bureau of Employment and Training Programs).

Scope of Work: To connect 190 eligible TANF recipients and Low-Income Wage Earners (LIWE) with one of the twenty-three Philadelphia County JRARRE Service Providers via regionalized outreach efforts including: Mass Mailings and Noticing, Neighborhood Canvassing and Home Visits, Community Forums, and On-Site Referrals.

Project Outcome: Served 658 eligible participants, impacting 2092 family/household members utilizing an innovative outreach model enabling IAWF to exceed its goal by 346%.

### Survey Studies

- **MMP-E/JRARRE Participant Enrollment Success and Level of Participant Satisfaction Survey** (Funded by the Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare, Bureau of Employment and Training Programs).

TANF Population:

- 197 Participants
- 737 Family/Household Members
- 31.5 % Enrollment Rate
- 85.4 % Satisfaction Rate

Family Works (LIWE) Population:

- 461 Participants
- 1355 Family/Household Members
- 28.2 % Enrollment Rate
- 90.8 % Satisfaction Rate

Policy Implications:

If the Commonwealth is going to use a recruitment and referral strategy, it has to ensure that its vendors are equipped to serve. IAWF recruited participants beyond the system's ability to meet the demand for service, as demonstrated by the 30% participant enrollment, despite the fact that 100% of those connected with vendors qualified for service.

### Auditing Services

- **Participant, Vendor, & CIS Verification of JRARRE Service Provider's Successful Enrollment: TANF and Family Works Participants** (Funded by the Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare, Bureau of Employment and Training Programs).

Project Description: Verify the accuracy of the data recorded in the Commonwealth's tracking system.

Project Outcome: Significant discrepancies discovered between survey results and CIS participant reports. For example, the Service Provider and the participant were in agreement about the participant's enrollment status, where CIS was not. These discrepancies were presented in reports submitted to the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, Department of Public Welfare, Bureau of Employment and Training Programs.

### **Healthy Marriage Research, Service Delivery and Program Development**

- **Family Formation and Healthy Marriage Initiative** (Funded by the Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare, Bureau of Employment and Training Programs).

Project Description: The Family Formation, Healthy Marriage and Extended Service Program is a Research, Service Delivery and Program Development Demonstration Project aimed to: Amass data to inform the development of viable approaches to achieving the marriage promotion goals of **PRWORA/TANF**.

Project Outcome:

- Interviewed 68 couples, totaling 172 Family/Household Members
- There was an 81% participation rate among families not closed in TANF, and a 92% participation rate across the Project Survey
- Generated several Reports detailing outcomes of statistical analyses and barriers to family formation
- Provided services in eight languages: English, Spanish, Russian, Albanian, Farsi, Vietnamese, Arabic, and Urdu
- Held seven focus groups in four languages: English, Spanish, Russian, and Albanian
- The Commonwealth was able to utilize the project and its results in its reporting to the Federal Government

### **Fatherhood Initiative Programming**

- **Project to Re-Unite Working Fathers with their Children** (Funded by the Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare, Bureau of Employment and Training Programs).

Project Description: The Project to Re-Unite Working Fathers with their Children is a voluntary evening and weekend education, training and extended service program that includes intensive case management, psycho-social assessments, and a forensic profile which addresses barriers to employment, concurrent with a job retention, advancement and rapid re-attachment to employment insurance component.

Project Outcome: Participant Service and Family Plans for Re-Unification and Re-Conciliation were developed and monitored. Thirty-three individuals volunteered, impacting 186 Family/Household Members.

- **Men Working Toward Economic Self-Sufficiency (MwTES)** (IAWF volunteer initiative for men's Support Group).

Scope of Work: IAWF organized a new tier of service designed as a life-long Economic Support Group for TANF recipients and Low-Income Wage Earners, who received voluntary or mandated services from DPW/BETP Service Providers. The goal of the MwTES project is to continue assisting men who have shown their dedication in fulfilling their social responsibilities of being caring and responsible fathers; and as men assume responsibility for the welfare of their children, whether they are the custodial parent or not.

Policy Implication: Support of this project allows men who have either voluntarily participated or were mandated to enroll in a DPW/BETP program with a supportive group that continues to support their effort to take on the responsibility for their own economic survival and that of their families, at little or no cost to the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

- **Men Against Domestic Violence, Inc. (MADV).** (IAWF volunteer initiative that provided technical assistance to MADV, Inc., to combat the number of reported batterers (47,000) in the City of Philadelphia.

Scope of Work: Provide assistance in obtaining 501 © (3) tax status, drafting and developing corporate bylaws, developing administrative protocols, facilitating the development of a strategic plan, as well as, creating a board of directors. Additionally, IAWF agreed to assist with finding resources to establish a safe shelter for male abusers and adult male victims of abuse.

Policy Implications: Research has shown that domestic violence is a prevalent barrier to sustaining employment. The MADV Project will decrease the rate at which domestic

violence impedes continuity of employment for TANF recipients and Low-Income Wage Earners, who are most susceptible to loss of employment.

### **Forensic Services to Welfare-to-Work Recipients and Low-Income Wage Earners**

- **Forensic Education Employment Clinic Series** (Funded by the Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare, Bureau of Employment and Training Programs).

Project Description: The Forensic Education Employment Clinic Series is a demonstration Project designed to test a model to address forensic barriers that impede TANF recipients, and low-income persons that qualify for the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania's Family Works Program, from obtaining and retaining a job and advancing in the workforce.

Project Outcome:

- 348 Individuals participated in the Series, totaling over 2638 Family/Household Members and/or Agency Staff
- Six (6) Clinics and 16 workshops were conducted
- Clinic Topics Included:
  1. Obtaining and Retaining Employment: Disclosing Criminal Convictions/Arrests
  2. Family Formation Matters-Protection From Familial Abuse
  3. Non-Custodial Parents and the Challenge of Parenthood: Wage Garnishments
  4. Offenders, Witnesses, Victims-Surviving the Criminal Justice System-Bench Warrants
  5. Philadelphia Adult Probation and Parole Activities-Mandated Probation/Parole Reporting
  6. Consumer and Public Utility Shut-Offs-Rights and Responsibilities
- **A Partnership with the Courts and DPW/BETP Service Providers** (Funded by the Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare, Bureau of Employment and Training Programs, DPW/BETP).

Project Description: 100 participants with legal barriers to employment will receive three forensic services, beginning with an individual forensic profile, analysis and assessment of their forensic record, and a one-on-one Navigation through the judicial system.

Project Outcome: 28 Participants totaling 72 Family/Household Members were served as a result of legal services provided.

Policy Implications: Now that the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania acknowledges legal matters as significant barriers to employment; funding of legal services as a standard service component to Welfare-to-Work TANF recipients and Low-Income Wage Earners can and should be considered as a permanent resource for job recruitment and placement.

- **Domestic Attorneys Eliminating Legal Barriers to Employment (daEIBE)** (Funded by the Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare, Bureau of Employment and Training Programs).

Scope of Work: daEIBE is a demonstration project designed to augment services to TANF and Low-Income Wage Earners, provided by the Department of Public Welfare, Bureau of Employment and Training Programs (DPW/BETP), service providers, which address legal barriers to employment. daEIBE is designed to connect Philadelphia participants of DPW/BETP service providers with volunteer Pennsylvania licensed attorneys who have been trained by IAWF on IAWF policies and procedures to facilitate the delivery of forensic services to TANF recipients and Low-Income Wage Earners who are single parents, members of two parent households, non-custodial fathers or members of non-traditional family units.

Benefit to the Commonwealth: Pennsylvania benefits by the creation of a volunteer legal professional workforce, at little or no cost, that addresses the legal and forensic barriers to a sustained workforce. Further, young attorneys, and those changing their normal client base, are being trained to work with a TANF and low-income population to enhance employment and economic self-sufficiency.

### **Research Study**

- **Family Formation and Healthy Marriage Initiative** (Funded by the Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare, Bureau of Employment and Training Programs).

Introduction:

This research component was undertaken to provide recommendations regarding the development of viable approaches to promoting family formation and Healthy Marriage among TANF recipients. The study population consisted of 68 two-parent TANF

households in the City of Philadelphia. The research component was designed to explore the following questions:

1. How do the couples define their relationships and their roles within the relationship?
2. How do the children describe their parents' relationships?
3. Do the couples consider their relationships healthy?
4. Using objective criteria, are the adult relationships considered healthy?
5. What type of services are the couples likely to use to strengthen their relationships?

#### Conclusions and Recommendations:

The general conclusions of this study are that the families in this study are indeed healthy by their own standards. The adult relationships are healthy as reported by the participants and as assessed by one paradigm for assessing family strengths. The adults are interested in financial independence for their families and are very willing to work either in employment situations or as entrepreneurs. The couples in the study are not generally interested in professional counseling services, but indicated a willingness to participate in more informal educational and support programs designed to assess family functioning and support efforts to strengthen family dynamics.

Based on the findings of this study, there are several recommendations for next steps for couples with similar backgrounds and strengths. These findings address three key areas, as listed below:

1. **Healthy Relations:** It is recommended that TANF families, especially couples in two-parent households be offered opportunities for assessment and education around strengthening relationships. Families in the study saw themselves as already healthy, but were willing to explore non-intrusive opportunities to improve and strengthen their family relationships. Any incentive for participation in activities should provide opportunities for quality time for the couples with and without their children.
2. **Work and Independence:** It is recommended that TANF families, be offered opportunities for assessment around career interests and meaningful counseling to explore areas of interest. Meaningful career counseling and placement in educational and training settings should follow the dialog of standardized scales such as the California Inventory for Family Assessment or the Myers Briggs Inventory.

3. Use of Professional Counseling Services: The families in this study expressed reluctance to use professional counseling services. However, informal support groups and parenting education programs were welcomed. It is recommended that this service delivery model, presenting content on strengthening families, enhancing parenting, and improving financial stability be conducted in professionally lead group sessions. Yet informal formats should also be designed and tested for effectiveness with TANF two-parent household populations.