

PARTNERSHIPS AND COORDINATION

ACF and its partners began "focusing on results" before the Government Performance and Results Act was in effect. Efforts to reach consensus on outcomes prompted extensive discussion of strategic objectives, legislative requirements, data sources, and availability; led to a fuller understanding of outcomes and the relationships to process and output measures; and fostered closer partnership collaborations. Continuous program improvement has required ongoing consultation, technical assistance, and coordination across partnerships resulting in some performance measures being modified, dropped, or replaced.

Partnerships with states: Results-oriented partnership agreements and targets have been negotiated with individual states. Each program has developed an individualized process for engaging partners in goal setting and definition of measures and targets that are meaningful and useful at the state and local community level. For example, ACF undertook a legislatively-mandated, partner-oriented process to develop the measures and funding formulas used to award TANF high performance bonuses to states. Also, the child support program developed with states a national strategic plan with indicators and targets. The refugee program involved both state refugee programs and community-based service organizations in the development of measures and targets. In some programs, such as child care, which were new but had no mandated requirement for consultation like TANF, a preliminary set of proxy measures was developed for the first performance management planning years, while the program undertook a consensus-building process with the partnership constituencies.

Partnerships within ACF: ACF's key priorities cut across program boundaries and service areas. For example, ACF is integrating its performance systems relating to child care to include resources from the Child Care Bureau, TANF, and SSBG, as well as activities under Head Start. The Assets for Independence program, which manages the Individual Development Accounts, collaborates with LIHEAP to ensure energy efficiency and a sound return on investment for low-income homeowners.

Partnerships within HHS: Across HHS, a large number of programs share related objectives. Interagency consultation has taken place within ACF, (e.g., child care and Head Start, child support and TANF) and within HHS (e.g., between TANF and Medicaid) through seminars and forums convened by the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Budget, Technology, and Finance (ASBTF) and the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation.

Special efforts have been directed to assure that children have access to health and child development services. Head Start and the Child Care Bureau work with HHS health agencies e.g. the Maternal and Child Health Bureau, Community Health Centers, the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMSHA) and the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) to achieve health targets. Child Care and Head Start coordinate with the Health Resources and Services Administration's (HRSA) Maternal and Child Health program to improve health and safety in child care by creating strong links with health communities. Increasing the number of women who receive early and comprehensive prenatal care is an important goal of the Early Head Start program, which serves low-income families with infants

and toddlers. ACF programs provide outreach for the State Child Health Insurance Program (SCHIP) administered by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services. Head Start and Child Care jointly sponsor the QUILT (Quality in Linking Together) project that helps Head Start and child care grantees form program partnerships to provide high quality full-day, full-year early childhood services. This coordination at the implementation and delivery level is producing significant results.

ACF has coordinated and partnered with HHS budget officials and all other HHS Agencies in the design and development of a Performance Budget integrating performance management information and budget information.

Partnerships with other Federal Agencies: Given that ACF measures have been developed in collaboration with partners, the consultation process with ACF program partners has been more extensive than with other Federal agencies. ACF works closely with Federal Departments such as Labor, Treasury, Housing and Urban Development, Education and Transportation in implementing, operating and improving welfare reform, early child development, child care, and child support. Consultation with Federal agencies outside of HHS on specific performance plan issues has not been a formal process. Program-specific data and measurement issues, as well as differing statutes and populations served, make the development of common measures more challenging. ACF has worked with the OMB, and the Departments of Labor, Education, Housing and Urban Development, Interior and Veteran's Affairs to develop a common set of measures for job training and employment for adults, youth, and lifelong learning programs. Beginning in FY 2004, ACF will be using these four common measures: entered employment, retention in employment, earnings increase and program efficiency.

ACF has found that intensive consultation and coordination on program design and objectives provide a climate for close alignment among programs with similar goals. Performance measurement issues are central to cross-agency discussions, e.g., identifying state unemployment records as a data source for TANF performance measures. There has been extensive programmatic collaboration, including TANF and welfare-to-work grants with the Department of Labor; child care and Head Start with the Department of Education; and child support enforcement with the Departments of Justice, Treasury, and Defense. These collaborations have helped develop results-oriented strategies that contribute to the success of performance goals. ACF has been an active participant in cross-program efforts to develop broader indicators of child well-being, e.g., *Trends in the Well-being of America's Children and Youth*; *America's Children: Key National Indicators of Well-being*; *Healthy People 2010* and the Children's Indicators Consortium study. ACF is committed to working collaboratively with its partners in the refinement of these broader performance measures and the identification of annual performance targets.